all is lost as of now

by hericide

Summary

For some reason, Donghyuck doesn’t even feel sad. Mark and Renjun are obviously in love and that is enough to make him happy. He doesn’t necessarily have to be apart of the equation. Being apart of their lives, getting this little peek into their home and the family they’ve built for themselves—it’s enough for Donghyuck.

He can live with this.

Notes

for my love sonnie♡

See the end of the work for more notes.

Donghyuck’s drunk off his ass.

He knows that he’s being irresponsible, not only because he has work in the morning, but also because he’s getting drunk in front of a coworker and their boss. Even if said boss was the one who
invited him out for drinks anyway, being this ridiculously intoxicated in front of him isn’t Donghyuck’s wisest idea.

There is something incredibly unnerving about being alone with Renjun and Mark. Renjun is extremely perceptive, and expert at reading subtle changes in body language. He knows how to position himself to get the reaction he wants from you. Donghyuck wishes he’d position himself underneath—

Donghyuck takes a shot to avoid that train of thought.

And Mark—Mark’s eyes are far too keen, focusing on things (Donghyuck’s face) with an intensity that makes Donghyuck think there are mini telescopes built into them. He feels like Mark is dissecting him, examining him piece by piece under that heated gaze. They’re really very pretty eyes and—

Donghyuck takes Mark’s shot right from his hand and throws it back for himself. He shakes his head to clear away the stupid, intrusive, inappropriate thoughts, and pretends the action is because the alcohol stings. Donghyuck swallows down his embarrassment at his lack of self control. He’s not even alone alone with them, they’re in a bar that’s surprisingly packed for a Tuesday night.

Mark and Renjun make quite the dangerous pair, and Donghyuck suddenly understands why the two of them are sent in to conduct interrogations. He feels a wave of pity for any criminal who has to deal with the both of them.

He then feels a wave of pity for himself, because he’s dealing with the two of them in a workless environment and that’s almost worse. Outside of the office, they can afford to be more relaxed, more comfortable. Mark’s unbuttoned his shirt even more than it had been before they left, and Donghyuck has never seen this much of Mark’s chest. If that’s not distracting enough, he has quite the potty mouth when he’s got a few beers in him. Donghyuck curses himself for finding the word ‘fuck’ so attractive when it’s coming out of Mark’s mouth.

Renjun, the designated driver, is ‘painfully sober’, as he calls it. It’s painful for Donghyuck too, because he can’t pretend that Renjun’s sudden interest in his neck and face moles is due to the alcohol in his system. He drags the pad of the finger over each of them, like a game of connect the dots, while conversing with both him and Mark. Renjun’s touch is electric, and Donghyuck suddenly cannot stop shivering.

The hot bartender named Jaehyun refuses Donghyuck service when he slurs his way through another drink order, saying he cannot serve to someone who is already so visibly intoxicated. Jaehyun also kicks them out, all three of them, when Donghyuck starts to make a fuss about his desire for another drink. Renjun apologizes profusely, eventually managing to drag Donghyuck out of the bar. It’s a little past 2 AM when the three of them stumble into the parking lot.

Renjun swirls the key ring around on his finger. “What’s your address, Hyuck? I’ll take you home.”

Donghyuck waves his hand dismissively, swaying on his feet. “It’s okay. I’ll call Jeno to come and get me.”

Mark’s eyebrows furrow. “Don’t be ridiculous. Renjun can take you home, no problem.”

Donghyuck seems to curl into himself, wrapping his arms around his own midsection and squeezing tightly. “I don’t like to be alone when I’m drunk,” he murmurs quietly.

Renjun’s face softens, and he pulls Donghyuck into an embrace. After a moment, Mark joins,
Donghyuck’s heart nearly bursts from his chest. Might as well take the leap while they’re all cuddled up like this. “Can I go home with one of you?”

Donghyuck’s head is still buried in Renjun’s chest, so he misses the panicked look the other two share. After an intense three seconds of eyebrow communication, Mark withdraws from their hug and pats Donghyuck’s head gently.

“Sure, you can spend the night with me,” he answers, and Donghyuck looks up in surprise.

“Really?” he asks brightly, eyes twinkling. Mark swallows the knot in his throat, and Renjun stifles a snicker.

“Of course. I take care of you in and out of the workplace,” he says, walking towards Renjun’s car. Donghyuck runs past him and takes the front seat, sticking out his tongue and giggling as he passes. Mark lets him take it without argument. He’d do anything for Donghyuck; letting him sit in the front seat and allowing him to stay the night don’t even scratch the surface.

They don’t talk on the drive, but Renjun plays some kind of progressive metal record that fills the silence and keeps them awake. It’s not that long of a ride, and Renjun pulls up to a house after about twenty minutes. He pulls into the driveway, and turns the engine off. Donghyuck’s eyebrows shoot up.

“Do you live nearby, Renjun?” Donghyuck asks, then breaks into a smile. “It’s so crazy that you guys live close to each other. This isn’t even that big of a neighborhood.”

“Okay, um,” Renjun starts, looking nervous. “Donghyuck, I need you to not freak out when I say this.”

Donghyuck tilts his head to the side like a confused puppy, and Renjun’s heart squeezes at how adorable and innocent he looks. He takes a deep breath, and then spits it out.

“Mark and I kind of...live together,” Renjun says slowly, and that was honestly the last thing Donghyuck had been expecting to come out of Renjun’s mouth. His eyes widen in horror.

“Oh my god,” he says. Mark and Renjun exchange worried glances.

“What is it?” Mark asks softly.

Donghyuck buries his head in his hands. “Are you guys dating?”

“No!” Mark bursts out, beginning to blush at the mere idea. “No,” he repeats, quieter this time, when he notices the two of them staring at him.

“Mark, go open the door and find something for Donghyuck to wear,” Renjun orders. Mark obeys, staggering his way up the driveway, more drunk than he thought he was. Renjun watches to make sure he gets inside safely, then sighs, laying his forehead on his wrists.

“Tell me honestly, Renjun,” Donghyuck says, drawing his attention back to him. “Are you two dating?”

“No, we’re not,” Renjun replies, and they’re not, but that doesn’t make it any easier for Renjun to say out loud.

Donghyuck squints. “Right.”
Renjun puts his right fist over his heart and then raises it in front of Donghyuck; the BAU’s self-made signal for supreme honesty. “Mark and I are not dating. We just do...things...sometimes.”

“Things?” Donghyuck echoes, his drunk mind supplying him with a plethora of things that Mark and Renjun, two handsome, intelligent men, could get up to in their house together. Donghyuck crosses his legs and slams his forehead into the headrest. “God, please just kill me now.”

Renjun gives him a peculiar look, wondering what could prompt such a dramatic reaction. He takes one look at Donghyuck’s red ears, and the puzzle pieces slide into place. Renjun gapes like a fish. He slaps Donghyuck on the thigh, hard, much harder than the situation requires.

“Pervert,” Renjun points his index finger at Donghyuck’s chest. “Me? Having sex with Mark? Gross.”

Donghyuck blinks. “I didn’t say anything about having sex with him. I didn’t say anything at all.”

It’s Renjun’s turn to blush. “It was implied!”

“By who?” Donghyuck challenges. When Renjun doesn’t have an answer, Donghyuck grins at him. “That’s what I thought. You want to have s—”

Renjun’s hand shoots out to cover Donghyuck’s mouth before he can finish that sentence. “Do you ever shut up?”

Donghyuck ignores him. “So what kind of things do you guys get up to?”

Renjun shrugs. “We watch movies in bed a lot. Sometimes we go shopping together on off days. One time we went to an amusement park.”

Donghyuck yawns in that overdramatic, character-like way, complete with the patting of his fingers over his mouth. “So you guys live together and go on dates together, but you’re not dating. Got it.”

Donghyuck swings the door open and walks up the driveway like it’s his own. Renjun is still sitting in the car, dumbfounded by what Donghyuck just said. The younger just rolls his eyes at him.

“Are you gonna give me a house tour or not?” Donghyuck asks, and that’s all it takes for Renjun to get out of the car and lead the way to his house.

The headlights from Renjun’s car really doesn’t do their house justice. It’s pretty, navy blue with white shingles, and a ceiling so high Donghyuck mistakes it to be two stories. It’s not huge, but it doesn’t really need to be when it’s only housing two people.

It also houses two dogs as well, as Donghyuck finds out when two puppies, one border collie and one golden retriever, trot up to them when Renjun opens the door. Donghyuck coos, bending down to play with them, house tour forgotten. Renjun hangs up his keys and turns around to find Donghyuck sitting in the floor with both of the puppies nipping at his fingers and vying for his attention. He smiles fondly at the three of them.

“The border collie is Simon, and the golden retriever is Benny,” Renjun supplies, taking a seat on one of the chairs in the dining room.

“Simon and Benny,” Donghyuck echoes, giving each of the puppies a kiss on the head after saying his name. “I think they like me.”

Benny gets a little more bold, pressing his front paws against Donghyuck’s chest until he falls
backwards with a squeak. Both of the puppies start to lick at his face, and Donghyuck’s laughter is bright. Renjun’s heart warms at the scene.

He lets Donghyuck continue to play with the puppies as he recounts the story of their adoption. Once the clock begins to inch towards 2:45, Renjun has to break them up to take the puppies for a walk.

“You’re taking them for a walk? At 3AM? Alone?” Donghyuck questions, pouting when Simon starts to whimper as Renjun lifts him away from Donghyuck.

Renjun clips the leashes onto the collars. “Yes,” he says, confused as to why Donghyuck’s eyebrows are so creased. “I’ll be fine, don’t worry about me.”

“If you say so…” Donghyuck trails off.

Renjun smiles at him. “I do say so. Now go find Mark, he’ll show you to the shower.”

Donghyuck becomes hyperaware of how he must smell, like alcohol and puppy. He decides that a hot shower sounds great. His legs have been folded for so long that they ache when he stands, and he almost loses his balance. Renjun rights him and turns him in the direction of the hallway.

“It’s the room at the end of the hallway,” Renjun directs, then takes the puppies outside and shuts the door behind him.

Donghyuck doesn’t go directly back to the room, but looks at the living room first. It’s on the right of him, with a dark brown sectional, a glass table, and an absurdly large TV mounted on the wall. On the left of him is the dining area, with a red-brown wood table in the center. There’s several paintings hanging on the wall, varying in size and orientation. They fit together like a mosaic, and most of the paintings, much to Donghyuck’s surprise, are Renjun’s own work. The signature on the bottom of them is as clear as day, and Donghyuck is amused by the fact that Renjun’s work signature and artistic signature are the exact same.

Right outside of the kitchen is a flat wall which Mark and Renjun have filled up with a world map. There is a banner directly above it, labelled TRAVEL, so Donghyuck doesn’t have to look much farther to identify what it is.

He could have figured it out without the banner. It’s full of thumbtacks and colorful lines. There’s three different color threads, red, blue, and purple. Donghyuck assumes the blue is for the places Mark has been, because the blue thread reaches up into Canada. The red is for Renjun, because that thread reaches up to northeast China. And the purple, Donghyuck realizes in half awe half jealousy, is the places they’ve been together.

There are polaroids hanging beneath each thumbtack where the purple thread runs. Barcelona, Spain 220719, reads the caption beneath one. New York, NY 200321 reads another. There’s even one labeled Osaka, Japan 170715. Donghyuck’s hadn’t even known they’d known each other for that long.

The one that catches Donghyuck’s attention the most is where red, blue and purple converge; in Jilin. Underneath the tack, there’s two more people in the picture, and it’s the easiest thing in the world to find Renjun’s features on those other two faces.

Donghyuck steps back from the wall, letting the fact that Mark has met Renjun’s parents sink in. He peers closer at the caption, and nods to himself quietly when he sees the Jilin, China 230524.

That was a few days ago.
For some reason, Donghyuck doesn’t even feel sad. Mark and Renjun are obviously in love and that is enough to make him happy. He doesn’t necessarily have to be apart of the equation. Being apart of their lives, getting this little peek into their home and the family they’ve built for themselves—it’s enough for Donghyuck.

He can live with this.

At least that’s what he thinks, up until he finally makes it back up to the room and Mark is knocked out cold on the bed, sweatpants sitting low on his hips and torso absent of a shirt, and Donghyuck has to make himself not blush as he shakes Mark’s shoulder to rouse him. He sleepily blinks awake, and Donghyuck’s brain does a complete 180, finding the action adorable. Briefly, he wonders how many times that’s happened tonight.

Mark hands him a washcloth and a towel and leads him to the bathroom. Donghyuck bows his thanks, foolishly, and Mark chuckles a little before calling him cute and patting him on the head.

Once Mark closes the door behind him, Donghyuck opens one of the cabinets looking for soap. He finds tissue paper, a scale, and an open box of condoms, and decides to just use something in the shower caddy. The one he chooses smells like Renjun, and Donghyuck loves it, counts it as a small victory for himself.

He dresses himself in the clothes Mark left for him in the bathroom. The shirt is faded, but Donghyuck can still make out the logo of Renjun’s university. The shorts have to be Mark’s, because Renjun is far too skinny for Donghyuck to fit into any of his bottoms. He feels strange, being in their house and dressed in their clothes, but they smell good and remind him of what he needs to let go of before he gets too attached and falls too hard.

When Donghyuck emerges from the bathroom, Mark is reading a book. Donghyuck recognizes the cover; it’s Jeno’s first publication, *Red-handed: The Anatomy and Physiology of Telling a Lie*. Mark is still shirtless, and his specs are perched on the edge of his nose, and Donghyuck thinks it’s kind of unfair how Renjun gets to see this every day.

“Do you have a blanket or something?” Donghyuck asks. Mark starts, unaware of the younger’s presence in the room. He sits up and closes the book around his finger.

“Why?”

Donghyuck looks puzzled. “So I can go sleep on the couch?”

Mark returns the expression. “Why would you sleep on the couch?”

“Because,” Donghyuck begins, sighing like this is common sense. “Isn’t this your room? Isn’t Renjun’s room down the hall?”

Mark gives him a tiny smile. “Have you looked around this room at all?”

_Not really, just at you_ is what Donghyuck wants to say, but he figures it would be inappropriate so he keeps his mouth shut. He does look around the room, taking in the queen sized mattress, the three pillows opposite Mark on the bed, and the bedside table with gold rings sitting on the edge.

Mark doesn’t wear gold rings.

Donghyuck comes closer and sits on the bed. “So you mean to tell me that you and Renjun sleep in the same room, in the same bed, despite having a whole other bedroom in this house.”
“...Yes,” Mark says after a small pause.

“And you two go on dates.”

“...Yes.”

“And you’re not dating.”

“No.”

Donghyuck sighs. “But you want to date him.”

Mark exhales. “Donghyuck, don’t make me answer that.”

“You—” Donghyuck cuts himself off with his own laughter. “You could have just said no.”

Mark freezes, and Donghyuck cackles even louder. “The great interrogator Mark Lee, showing his ass?”

“I don’t conduct interrogations when I’m drunk,” Mark grumbles, turning over. Donghyuck follows him, poking his shoulder obnoxiously.

“You’re not drunk anymore. You want to date Renjun,” Donghyuck says matter of factly, dragging out the vowels in his name.

Mark swats his hands away, but Donghyuck continues on. He’s never felt this close to Mark anymore, physically or emotionally. “Admit it! Admit it!” he chants.

Exasperated, Mark grabs Donghyuck’s wrist and pins it down to the bed. Donghyuck’s breath hitches, and Mark leans closer to him. His nose scrunches when he laughs.

“You’re so cute,” Mark says, but makes no move to draw back. The distance between them is minuscule; if Donghyuck tilted his chin up just slightly, and Mark tilted his head down just so, they would be kissing.

It’s like the world freezes. Donghyuck can see Mark’s gaze flicker down to his lips for a split second. It’s not long, but it’s enough. His back arches, chin raising, then the door opens.

“Well well well,” Renjun singsongs. “What do we have here?”

Mark clears his throat, pulling back a little. “Donghyuck was just coming to bed,” he says, and he decides that’s something he wants to say for the rest of his life.

Donghyuck’s heart is still slamming against his ribcage from what almost just happened. He turns his body away from Mark to look over at Renjun, who hasn’t moved from the doorway. He smiles sheepishly. “Sorry for kicking you out of your bed.”

Renjun tsks, grabbing clothes out of his drawer. “What makes you think you’re kicking me out of my bed?”

Donghyuck scrunches his nose at the elder. “Surely the three of us are not sleeping in the same bed.”

“But we are,” Renjun tosses over his shoulder, closing the bathroom door behind him. Donghyuck looks back at Mark in disbelief.

Mark just shrugs. “Neither of us are giving up this bed and neither of us are letting you sleep alone.”
when you make a request like that,” he says, referring to Donghyuck’s confession earlier.

For some reason, Donghyuck is unsettled by their need to coddle him. Perhaps it’s less of that and more of the fact that he starts to feel like a bother when people dote on him. “I’m not completely incompetent, you know,” he says. “I can be alone by myself.”

Mark shakes his head. “I know you can. But you said that you don’t want to be.”

And I want to give you everything that you want. The words linger on the tip of his tongue, but Donghyuck is too unstable. He not in the right state of mind to be on the receiving end of vague professions of love, and to be honest, Mark isn’t in the right state of mind to be making them.

"I’ll just sleep in the other room. It’s fine, Mark,” Donghyuck protests, grabbing one of Renjun’s pillows. Mark catches his wrist before he can stand up.

“I know you can survive on your own, Donghyuck. Just please,” Mark exhales, licking his lips, “please let us take care of you for this one night.”

Donghyuck should say no. He should get up and leave the room and let his brain process the events of this night properly. But Mark, his boss, a man that Donghyuck is halfway in love with, is begging him to stay in bed with him. If there’s anyone on earth Donghyuck would feel safe with, it’s Mark. He worries his bottom lip between his teeth.


Donghyuck freezes, and Mark flops down into his pillow in embarrassment. He misses the sweet smile that spreads across Donghyuck’s face and the blush that tints his cheeks and the tips of his ears.

Renjun, however, does not miss it. He sees the entire exchange, leaning in the doorway of the bathroom. There’s a small smile on his face as he walks over and slips into the bed quietly.

“Come here,” Renjun whispers, reaching out an arm. Donghyuck scoots closer, and Renjun wraps an arm around his waist to pull his back to Renjun’s front. They’re spooning and Donghyuck’s brain can’t really function anymore.

His brain doesn’t really need to function when he’s trying to fall asleep though, so he lets the static take over and with Renjun curled around him and Mark on the other side of him, Donghyuck falls asleep quicker than he has in years. When he wakes up, Renjun has disappeared—likely to the kitchen, if the smell of fried eggs is anything to go by—but Mark is still in bed with him. It seems Mark had reached out for Donghyuck and drew him close in the night, or at least the duration of Renjun’s absence.

Mark is laying on his stomach, one of his arms tucked under the pillow and the other is wrapped securely over Donghyuck’s waist. His head is tucked under Donghyuck’s chin, little breaths of air puffing against the column of his throat. The younger warms from the sight alone.

Mark looks so much younger like this—asleep, vulnerable, all guards down. It makes Donghyuck feel sad to know that he even had that thought. He sometimes forgets that Mark is only twenty two, not even a year older than himself, because he doesn’t look it. Mark’s stressed, definitely, with the weight of the world on his shoulders.

Donghyuck wonders what it’s like to found a branch of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He wonders what it’s like to have people doubt your leadership abilities just because you’re young, and to doubt the quality and importance of your work for the same reason. He wonders what it’s like for
Mark to have to go head to head with the director of the FBI just to keep this unit alive and running.

This team—their team—is small, but packed full of knowledge, determination, and trust. Mark founded it, and Renjun joined soon after. The two of them worked the cases for two years by themselves, then Jeno had appeared out of nowhere with a resume and an eye smile. Donghyuck had been the fourth addition, but he comes to learn that he was a replacement, that Seo Herin had been the technical analyst before him. She was killed the one time she stepped into the field.

Donghyuck wonders what it’s like to have to bury one of your friends, and hopes he never finds out.

He supposes that’s why he undergoes the same training as the agents do. It’s in this training that he meets Jaemin, who kicks his ass and gives him a kiss on the cheek after. Donghyuck decides to go ahead and like Jaemin, and they become inseparable from there.

Chenle is kind of an accident. He, as the son of a Chinese businessman and diplomat, had meant to apply to the National Security branch of the FBI, but he clicks the wrong link for the application. He scores an interview and it’s only then he realizes that something has gone wrong and withdraws his interest. Mark leaves the spot available for him in case NS doesn’t work out, and Chenle comes running back not even a week later, saying that Qian Kun is ‘too scary to work for.’"

Jisung joining the BAU hadn’t really been a surprise. He’d been lingering around the office for years, showing up just a little after Donghyuck. Mark was not legally allowed to give Jisung a job there until he turned 18, so he just loitered around and spewed information whenever he was called on. He’s sworn in at 12:01am on his 18th birthday, as per his request, and the team is complete.

And Mark, this beautiful, beautiful man next to him is the reason for all of it.

The wave of affection that sweeps through Donghyuck makes him feel dizzy. He’s overcome with gratitude, and the feeling takes over his limbs, almost like he’s possessed. Before he can even think to stop himself, Donghyuck scratches his fingernails lightly over Mark’s scalp. Mark jolts, eyes flying open, but Donghyuck doesn’t see it so he doesn’t stop.

“Thank you,” he whispers into Mark’s hair. He’s not really sure what he’s doing or what he’s trying to accomplish, but it’s much easier to do while Mark’s asleep and not working on him with those big doe eyes.

“For what?” Mark mumbles, lips brushing against Donghyuck’s throat. At both the sound and the feeling, Donghyuck gives a shout, the way he springs away from Mark similar to that of a cartoon character.

“For what?” Mark repeats, now more alert because of all the fuss Donghyuck was making.

Donghyuck, tips of his ears bright red, shakes his head. “Nothing. I’m drunk, ignore me.”

“Donghyuck, it’s,” Mark presses the power button on his phone, making the screen light up. He has to squint, eyes unseeing without his glasses, “It’s 6:47am. You’re not still drunk.”

Before Donghyuck can open his mouth to make the stupid argument that he’s drunk on sleep, the bedroom door bursts open, revealing a very put together Renjun. He’s dressed for work already, in pressed slacks and a button down that looks a little too large to be his own. Donghyuck decides not to comment on it. There’s a mug of coffee in his left hand, and he props his right one on his hip.

“What’s all the yelling about?” he asks, leaning against the doorframe. Donghyuck notices that he does that a lot.
Mark unfolds his glasses and slips them onto his nose. “Donghyuck said he’s still drunk.”

Renjun scoffs at him. “Don’t be ridiculous. Come eat, both of you. We have to leave earlier so we can drop Hyuck off at his apartment.”

“Don’t be ridiculous,” Donghyuck mocks under his breath as he walks by, and it earns him a slap on the back of the head.

They eat in comfortable silence while Mark reads the newspaper like the old man he is. It feels strangely...domestic, even with Donghyuck there. It occurs to him that this must be what they normally do, because they aren’t paying attention to him at all. He waits patiently for them to be ready to leave, because he actually needs to go back to his apartment. If he showed up to work in Renjun’s clothes, he can only imagine the way Jaemin would scream at him after the case was over and they got around to hanging out.

Donghyuck looks a little ridiculous in his pajamas while Mark and Renjun are in their work clothes. He feels small, like a child, even more so because they’re not paying that much attention to him. They’re arguing—which really isn’t all that rare—about what music they should play. Renjun says that heavy metal is perfectly suitable for 7:30AM, and Mark argues that it’s not. Renjun wins in the end, more because it’s his car and because Mark loves him enough to put up with two minute guitar solos and less because Renjun had a good argument.

They pull up to Donghyuck’s complex, and he insists that he go in alone, that Mark and Renjun move to slow and he will be out in fifteen minutes. The apartment itself is on the sixth floor, and as soon as Mark and Renjun are out of Donghyuck’s sight, something cold washes over him. It feels...incorrect.

His uneasiness proves to be valid, because when he arrives at his front door, it’s unlocked.

That’s an instant red flag. Even though Donghyuck’s job is pretty behind the scenes, it’s still a risk. He is constantly on the lookout for vengeful unsubs and their counterparts, and it’s really not that far fetched that one of them would want to hurt him.

Donghyuck suddenly wishes he were armed, because if this intruder was still in his home, entering in a big T-shirt and nothing but his keys to defend himself is definitely not a bright idea. Of course, there’s Mark and Renjun down in the car, but Donghyuck cannot bring himself to burden them with a safety issue like this, especially after their generosity from the previous night.

He opens the door and—

There’s no one in there.

No one is inside, and there seems not to be any damage to any of his property. Everything is in place, untouched, not even a little bit off. Somehow, this is scarier than the mass destruction he was expecting. He knows something is wrong—people just don’t break into homes for no reason—but the fact that it’s not immediately visible is unnerving.

The glaringly obvious thing that is off, though, is the silence. Even after a regular day of working, Donghyuck’s cat Felix comes running up to the door to greet him, belled collar jingling. Donghyuck expected a little more after being gone for a whole night.

Donghyuck shuts the door, trying to summon him. “Felix!” he calls, and the way his voice echoes in the empty apartment is like something out of a horror movie. Donghyuck walks farther into his apartment, and his eyes catch on a small brown box on his dining room table. With shaking hands,
he removes the lid from the box. His heart drops down to his feet.

On one side of the box, the one that catches Donghyuck’s eye immediately, is an organ. It’s dark red, and small, and Donghyuck doesn’t have to be a physician to know that it’s a heart. The pieces begin to fall into place then; Felix’s absence, the heart which is definitely too small to be human, it’s all some kind of sick game. His eyes begin to burn with tears.

Felix is extremely special to Donghyuck. He’d gotten him on his seventeenth birthday, and that cat had been his dearest companion through his college years. It was the last piece of his mother that Donghyuck had left. And now he’s gone.

On the other side of the box is a folded up piece of paper. Donghyuck doesn’t want to read it, doesn’t want to know who could be that cruel, unfeeling. Still, he picks up the paper, stained red, and unfolds it. For Felix, he tells himself.

Donghyuck,

You took something special away from me, so I have taken something special away from you. Don’t bother looking for him. By the time you read this, Felix will be dead ten times over.

I miss you.

From, Youngjae

Guilt be damned. Donghyuck needs support. He barely finishes typing Mark’s memorized number into the dial pad of his phone before he bursts into tears.

The first thing Mark hears when he answers the phone is sobbing, and he doesn’t think he’s ever jumped out of a vehicle so fast. Renjun’s face screws up, confused, but he still gets out and follows.

Mark takes the five flights of stairs three steps at a time. He didn’t really think too much about what the cause of Donghyuck’s pain would be, registering nothing but the fact that he was in pain. The adrenaline takes over, flooding Mark’s veins and propelling him up to Donghyuck’s apartment.

The door is unlocked when he gets there, and he finds Donghyuck crumpled in a heap in the middle of the kitchen floor. He sinks down next to him and wraps an arm over his shaking shoulders. An explanation can come later. Donghyuck’s far too worked up to speak.

Renjun, who had taken the elevator like a sensible person, arrives less than a minute later. He takes in the scene with a strange expression on his face. He seems to notice the box right away, tilting his head in the direction of it. Mark shrugs, and Donghyuck raises his head at the motion.

Walking over to Donghyuck, Renjun settles down next to him too. The three of them sit in silence while Donghyuck empties his tear ducts. They don’t really need to know what happened in order to be there for him, just knowing something is wrong is enough. That’s what friends do.

After fifteen minutes, Renjun speaks up. “Donghyuck, you gotta tell us what’s wrong,” he prompts quietly.

Donghyuck sniffs pitifully. “Um. It’s about my cat.”

Mark remembers how important Donghyuck’s cat is to him. “What about him?”

“He’s not here,” Donghyuck says, wiping his nose. “And there’s a heart in that box over there on the table, and it’s not human.”
Renjun flinched, then stands up to go over to the box. The organ really is quite small, but Renjun is no expert on animal anatomy. He knows someone who is though.

“I’m going to call Jisung. He can confirm it for you,” Renjun asks, putting the lid back on. Without waiting for a response, he dials the number and puts the phone on speaker.

Jisung takes a while to answer the phone, but he does answer, and that’s what matters. “Renjun hyung, you’re late. Are you okay? Where’s Mark and Donghyuck?”

Renjun ignores all of his questions. “You have your bachelor’s in animal science right?”

“Yes,” Jisung says, albeit skeptically. “Why?”

“Do we have any cases in the mailbox?” Renjun asks.

“No,” the answer comes surprisingly fast from a voice that’s not Jisung’s. “I checked this morning.”

“Chenle, hi,” Renjun greets. He hadn’t thought that he’d be on speaker.

“What’s going on?” Chenle asks in rapid fire Chinese, and Renjun sighs. No use in hiding it from them.

“Something happened to Donghyuck this morning,” Renjun says, vaguely. It’s not the best choice of words, because there’s a gasp from over the phone.

“Is he hurt? Is he okay?” Jeno asks, worry bleeding into his tone.

“To the first question, no. To the second question,” Renjun sends a glance back to where Mark is still wrapped around Donghyuck on the floor. “I’m not sure. Can you guys get to his apartment?

“No!” Donghyuck shouts all of a sudden, breaking free from Mark’s arms. “No. I don’t want all of you to become targets. I just...I need Jaemin.”

“Oh, so you’re fine with be becoming a target?” Jaemin jokes. It works, because Donghyuck laughs quietly.

Renjun gives the address, and is extremely unsurprised when all four of them arrive against Donghyuck’s wishes.

Jaemin runs for Donghyuck, and Mark is scarcely about to get out of the way before he gets knocked over. Jaemin rocks his best friend back and forth, whispering, “It’s okay baby, you’ll be okay,” in his ear.

When Jisung enters, he frowns at Donghyuck’s puffy face, but walks over to the box first. He pulls on the gloves Renjun had given him and gently lifts the organ from the box. It’s obvious to him right away.

“Yeah,” Jisung says sadly, “that belongs to a cat.”

Jaemin had been watching from his spot on the floor with Donghyuck. “Let me get a look at that,” he says, coming to look at it closer. Jeno sits next to Donghyuck on the floor when Jaemin leaves.

Jisung furrows his eyebrows. “You?” he questions when Jaemin approaches.

“Hey, what do you mean me?” Jaemin asks, playfully insulted.
Jisung lifts the heart again when Jaemin orders him to. The elder studies it for about twenty seconds, then says confidently, “That’s not Felix’s heart.”

“What?” Renjun asks, confused.

“What?” Donghyuck echoes.

“Remember, Donghyuck? Felix had that heart valve replacement surgery,” Jaemin explains. “This heart has no scars on it.”

Chenle coughs. “So that’s not his cat’s heart?”

Jaemin shakes his head. “It’s a shitty thing to do, but it’s not Felix.”

“He still has him,” Donghyuck reminds everyone. Jeno pets his hair sympathetically.

“Is this a case we’re going to take? We haven’t really done stalking before,” Jisung asks.

Mark looks at him strangely. “Yes we have. And I’m fine with taking it.”

“But where is he going to stay?” Chenle interjects, making an excellent point.

“He’s right,” Jisung says. “This Youngjae character obviously has a key or knows how to pick a lock. It isn’t safe.”

“Donghyuck can stay with us,” Renjun announces.

“Us?” Jaemin questions the wording, eyes taking in Donghyuck’s unchanged clothing from the night before.

“Yes. Us,” Renjun responds, not bothering to elaborate. He knows that any other member of the team will interpret ‘us’ as the team as a whole, but Jaemin looks suspicious. Renjun glares at him until he stops thinking about it.

No one ever really argues with Renjun, so they all just nod. Mark claps his hands together, and everyone gathers around him, even Donghyuck. This is usually where the round table begins, but there’s very little information, so Mark begins to hand out tasks.

“Jisung, is there any use in trying to find the cat this heart belongs to?”

“No sir,” Jisung replies, stripping his gloves off. “There are six hundred million cats in the world. It’s futile.”

“Chenle, Jaemin and I will go see about changing the locks. Jeno and Jisung, I need you to interview Donghyuck and find out everything you can about Youngjae. Renjun, log all of it,” Mark says.

The team is a little shocked to say the least. Interviewing the affected is typically Mark’s job. Jeno squints at him, but nods anyway.

“What about me?” Donghyuck asks. “What am I supposed to do?”

“You will do nothing but provide us information when we ask,” Mark responds. “I—We cannot let you put yourself in more danger.”

“But I’m the technical analyst,” Donghyuck argues. “That’s my job.”
“It was Renjun’s job before, I’m sure he still remembers how it works,” Mark says, shutting him down. At Donghyuck’s crestfallen face, his voice turns uncharacteristically soft.

“I know you aren’t used to depending on people, but I need you to trust us to help you with this one. Do you trust us?” Mark asks.

Donghyuck looks around the circle, and he cannot find a face that is unfriendly, that he wouldn’t trust with his life. He shrugs. “Fine. No work.”

They disperse then, preparing to leave. Jaemin tugs on Mark’s sleeve to get his attention.

“Mark, I think it would be best if I stayed with Donghyuck,” Jaemin says, fidgeting. “He needs support that only I can give him.”

“Okay,” Mark says without thought. There are plenty of agents and not that many tasks to accomplish. Besides, Jaemin’s right, he is Donghyuck’s best friend and can comfort him.

“Okay?” Jaemin sounds unsure. “Just like that?”

“Just like that,” Mark confirms, clapping Jaemin on the shoulder.

“Mark’s getting soft,” Jaemin singsongs in a high pitched voice, then takes it back when Mark hits him on the chest particularly hard. He rubs at the spot while pouting, but Mark pays him no mind and sends him over to Donghyuck.

“Something wrong, boss?” Chenle asks Mark as soon as they’re alone. Mark gives him a tight lipped smile.

He’s never really been one to lie or keep secrets from his teammates, so he lays himself bare for Chenle. “Even though I’ve known Donghyuck for a few years, I don’t know much about his life.”

Chenle is perplexed. “Isn’t this a good way to find out?”

Mark shakes his head as they get into the car. “He’s never opened up to me about it for a reason. I don’t want to force him to tell me when there are others on hand to talk to him. Someone he might be more comfortable with.

“He’s be insane not to trust you, Mark,” Chenle says with finality. Mark looks at him for a hard few seconds before ruffling his hair.

“Let’s go see about these locks.”

Donghyuck’s landlord is a sweet man named Johnny who cares about Donghyuck very much. Even so, he cannot authorize the changing of the locks without the tenant present. Mark had more or less expected that, so he doesn’t leave too disappointed. Chenle, however, tries to put up a fight. Johnny doesn’t do anything but smile and say he’s cute before sending them on their way.

When they return, Donghyuck and Jaemin are disappearing into Donghyuck’s bedroom. Jeno is finishing writing down on his notepad, and gives Mark a warm smile when he hears the door shut.

He nods over to the door. “Donghyuck went to take a nap.”

“Jaemin too, that bitch,” Jisung comments, but the frown on his face is offset by the warmthness of his tone. Mark wants to ruffle his hair too.

“Mark,” Renjun calls after Jisung finishes speaking. Mark walks over with raised eyebrows.
“What is it?”

“I found him. Son Youngjae,” Renjun says, angling his laptop screen up so Mark can see it better. He looks young, almost innocent. The photo that comes up is the one from his driver’s license, renewed a few months ago, marking it as recent. Oddly, there is no criminal history.

“Is there an address?” Mark asks, foolishly. It’s a driver’s license, of course there’s an address on it.

Renjun voices Mark’s thoughts for him, just a little harsher. It’s not anymore harsh than he usually is though, Mark is just sensitive. The thought of Donghyuck being in any kind of danger is frying Mark’s nerve cells, destroying his ability to be objective. He’s a little in awe of Renjun, who can remain and is remaining professional and impersonal. Mark knows for a fact that Renjun is just as in love with Donghyuck as himself, and his impassiveness is commendable.

“Renjun and I are going to Youngjae’s home,” Mark announces to the team. “Jeno’s in charge while we’re gone.”

They all just nod, expecting this to be the path of action. Jisung eyes them warily.

Jisung is worried every time he and Renjun part ways. It’s stupid, because Renjun has been an agent for much longer than Jisung has and can surely take care of himself, but that doesn’t calm Jisung’s heart at all.

Jisung had been a victim once. It was a stalking case, and lasted a significant amount of time; it began as an enigma for the then two membered BAU to dismantle, and was finally put to rest a year and a half later, after Donghyuck joined the team.

Jisung, fifteen, after just completing his second bachelor’s degree, joins the dance group at the university to branch out. A much older student begins to court him, completely ignoring Jisung’s constant rejections. Jisung thinks he can ignore it, but his stalker begins to leave roses for Jisung wherever he goes; his seats in lecture, his most frequented table in the library, even on his bed in his dorm, and Jisung knows he has to get help.

He meets Mark first, and the elder is completely blown away by Jisung’s intellect the first time they speak. Mark takes all the information he can from Jisung, and he gets his own file in the tiny little office.

Jisung meets Renjun when he goes back to report another incident, and he’s a little smitten by the time he leaves. Sure, Jisung is annoyed by the stalker, but every incident sends him right back to the BAU’s steadily growing headquarters, and in turn, back to Renjun.

His little crush fades eventually, because it would be impossible for Jisung to ignore the looks that pass between Renjun and Mark when they think no one is looking. Jisung and Renjun become friends, and it’s strange to the team, then consisting of Mark, Jeno and Herin. Jisung begins to visit every day, incident or not. Renjun becomes very fond of Jisung, young and charming and intelligent; so much so that Renjun runs out without back up when he receives a call from a panicked Jisung saying that he’s been abducted.

That night is a bit of a blur to Jisung—he’d been drugged heavily—but he distinctly remembers Renjun showing up with way too much fanfare for a person who stands alone. Jisung didn’t even think twice to jump in front of Renjun when Hyunwoo raises his gun to the elder.

The bullet went through his shoulder, and he dropped down to the ground in pain. Hyunwoo began to sob when he realizes that he hurt Jisung, and takes his own life shortly after.
Jisung lives, and Renjun is fiercely protective of him from that day on. Jisung goes back to college to get his doctorate in criminology, and Renjun takes to cooking Jisung meals and driving them out to him on campus. Even after Jisung joins the BAU, Renjun always, always pushes Jisung behind him in the field, even though Jisung is taller and broader.

Jisung supposes it makes sense for Renjun to want to shield him, but he wants to protect Renjun too. That night showed that if Renjun is scared enough, he will act recklessly, without thinking. And with Donghyuck in danger, Jisung doesn’t doubt that it could happen again.

Of course, Jisung doesn’t say any of this out loud.

“Be careful,” he mumbles quietly instead.

Renjun grins at him brightly, fondly. “After all this time you still get worried about me, Jisung,” Renjun says, ruffling his hair. “Mark and I will be fine.”

Jisung pushes him away, smoothing his hair back into place. “Go on, do your job.”

And they do. They show up on the porch and Renjun knocks on the door with a little more force than necessary. Mark nudges him with his elbow.

The face they see when they open the door matches the face seen in the government’s archives. The young man looks confused, even more so when Mark whips out his FBI badge.

“Son Youngjae, I’m Mark Lee and this is Huang Renjun. We’re with the FBI. Does the name Lee Donghyuck sound familiar to you?”

Youngjae nods. “Yeah, but I haven’t seen him in years.”

Renjun extends his hand for Youngjae to shake, and he takes the offered hand with caution. Mark and Renjun exchange a glance.

“Do you mind if we come in and ask you some questions?” Renjun asks, and Youngjae physically starts.

“Oh, fuck, I probably look so rude,” he complains. “Of course, come on in.”

Youngjae opens the door wider, allowing the two of them to step past the threshold. He sweeps the various shoes on the floor to the side, and leads them into the living room. After politely declining Youngjae’s offer of a drink and making sure it was okay to record his voice, Mark gets down to business.

“What can you tell us about Lee Donghyuck?”

Youngjae takes a drink of his water and sets the cup down on a coaster. “We used to date a few years ago, but he kind of just...disappeared.”

“Did anything prompt it?” Renjun questions. His eyes narrow when Youngjae clears his throat uncomfortably.

“I said,” Renjun says, voice sharp, “Did anything prompt it?”

“It was in 2019 I think?” Youngjae says, voice raising up at the end as if he was asking a question. “Donghyuck and I got into a big fight after he found out I cheated on him.”

Mark knows that he hired Donghyuck in 2019, and that the argument the two of them got into didn’t
really have anything to do with his mysterious disappearance, but that doesn’t stop his blood from turning hot and sour in his veins.

Youngjae can probably see the irritation on Mark’s face, because he holds his hands up in front of himself in a placating way. “He forgave me. Even if I never forgave myself, he forgave me.”

He says the last part quietly, emotionally, and Renjun latches onto it. “Were you in love?”

Is it borderline inappropriate? Yes. Is it helping him accurately gauge Youngjae’s emotions? Also yes. And for that reason, Renjun pointedly ignores the incredulous look that Mark sends him, a look that Youngjae cannot see because he’s looking at his hands in despair.

“I think so,” Youngjae chokes out finally. “I was definitely in love with him. I haven’t stopped loving him even in all of these years he’s been gone.”

There is an agitated If you loved him, you wouldn’t have cheated on him hot on the tip of Mark’s tongue, but he gets interrupted by the jingling of keys in the door.

“Eric, there’s a big black ass SUV outside what did you do—oh,” the newcomer cuts himself off when he arrives. He bows at Renjun and Mark. Renjun arches an eyebrow at the English name.

“Hey baby,” Youngjae greets. “Agents, this is my boyfriend, Sunwoo.”


“We’re just asking Youngjae some questions,” Mark says cautiously.

“Youngjae?” Sunwoo repeats, scrunching his nose. He turns to the owner of the name. “You didn’t ask them to call you Eric?”

“They showed up here and asked for Youngjae, and that is technically me. I didn’t think it mattered,” Eric explains. He turns back to Mark and Renjun. “Does it?”

“If you were to sign something right now, would you sign it as Eric or Youngjae?” Mark asks, already feeling this lead going cold.

“Eric definitely,” Eric nods. “Can you tell me what’s going on now? Is Donghyuck okay?”

“Lee Donghyuck?” Sunwoo asks. “Kinda short, tan, radiant like the sun? From junior year?”

“I guess you could say that,” Renjun says with a small smile.

“Do you know anything about him?” Mark asks, question directed towards Sunwoo this time.

“Nothing much,” he shrugs. “Just that he and Eric dated before I was ever in the picture.”

“And neither of you have seen him since he disappeared in college?” Mark asks, and he swears when they both shake their heads.

“Is he dead?” Eric asks, bottom lip between his teeth.

“No, no,” Renjun rushes to assure him. “Someone broke into his apartment this morning and left a cat’s heart in a box on his coffee table.”

“Felix?” Eric gasps.
“That’s what we thought, but one of Donghyuck’s close friends confirmed that Felix had some kind of heart surgery, and the heart in the box had no scars,” Mark tells them, opting to omit the fact that Donghyuck’s friend is another FBI agent. No need to make Jaemin a target if this Eric guy is just a good liar.

Renjun pulls out a pair of gloves from his pocket, then hands one to Eric, motioning for him to put it on. He pulls out the letter with his own gloved hand. “This was on top of the box. It was our first lead.”

He passed the paper to Eric, who looks at it more carefully, if only for three seconds. “Yeah, that’s not my handwriting.”

Sunwoo, who had been hovering over Eric’s shoulder, gets a good look at the letter too. “Eric hasn’t called himself Youngjae in years.”

“That’s true,” Eric says, handing the paper back to Renjun, who pockets it. “I only used my Korean name when I first got here. After the first eight or so months, I started going by Eric.”

Mark doesn’t look convinced. “You know we know you could just fake your signature, right?”

Eric leans back against the couch. “I’m not into wasting people’s time.”

Renjun pinches Mark none too gently for the question. Eric clearly is not the criminal, but Mark is uncharacteristically unwilling to let this lead go cold. Renjun knows it’s Donghyuck provoking the change, but it’s extremely annoying for Renjun to have to be the sole responsible person.

“And I’d never hurt Donghyuck. I’ve hurt him enough,” Eric adds quietly. That little statement and delivery completely sells Renjun on the fact that Eric is not their unsub.

It seems to sell Mark too, because he sighs heavily. “Is there anyone that knows your Korean name?” he asks, refusing to leave this questioning empty handed.

If Eric is bothered by the fact that Mark was kind of hoping for him to be a criminal, he doesn’t show it. “There was a group of us juniors on our floor that were really tight,” he recalls after a moment of thought.

Eric begins to rattle off names so quickly that Mark is glad they are recording. “Heo Hyunjoon, Hwang Hyunjin, Yoon Sanha, Kang Chanhee and Lee Yong—Yong…”


“Yes!” Eric exclaims. “I’d say Yongbok especially. I think he and Donghyuck dated before I transferred to Seoul National.”

Renjun stands up and shakes both of their hands. “Thank you both so much for your time.”

“Of course,” Eric returns the shake with just as much fervor.

Mark shakes up and shakes their hands as well. He hands Sunwoo his card. “If anything happens, or if you get some more information, please don’t hesitate to give me a call.”

Sunwoo promises, and they leave. Mark is the one who drove them over, but Renjun snatches the keys from Mark’s pocket and gets into the driver’s seat. Mark gapes at him, unmoving. Renjun opens the passenger side door, and says with a voice as cold as ice, “Get in the fucking car, Mark Lee.”
In all the years Mark and Renjun have known each other, Renjun has scolded him exactly two times—the first time when Mark had gotten them lost in Osaka, and the second time when Mark made a sexual joke when meeting his parents.

This makes it a third.

Renjun is looking straight ahead when Mark gets in the car. He doesn’t even spare him a glance. Renjun hasn’t started speaking yet and Mark already feels wounded.

“What the fuck is wrong with you?” Renjun begins, voice measured, even. It’s terrifying.

“What do you mean?” Mark asks, knowing the answer to his own question.

“You can’t come for people like that. You have to control yourself better, even if you are doubtful,” Renjun says. Mark opens his mouth to speak, to say that he does have self control, but Renjun shuts him down. “Getting cut off by Sunwoo does not count as you exercising self control. I saw your mouth open.”

“I—” Mark tries.

“And you absolutely cannot be that transparent. Eric may not have noticed it, but I know you, and I saw all of your little microexpressions,” Renjun tells him. “Had Eric been our unsub, he could have taken that and run with it. He could have gotten into your head, Mark.”

“Renjun,” Mark protests weakly. “Donghyuck—”

“Is in danger, yes. I know. But you can’t just throw your own safety to the wind because of a personal connection to the victim.”

“Is that all Donghyuck is to you?” Mark asks. “A victim?”

“In this case? Absolutely,” Renjun affirms. “I have to remain objective. You cannot be personal in this job.”

“Oh, like you’re any fucking better!” Mark bursts out, sick of being chastised. Renjun’s mouth forms a little ‘o’ shape. This is the first time Mark has ever shouted at him.

“Asking Eric if they were in love is not objective, it was personal, and you know it,” Mark accuses, pointing a finger at Renjun’s chest.

“That was strategic,” Renjun explains calmly. “I was trying to get emotion out of him. I am the expert in psychology and emotional expression. You are the factual, analytical person. That’s how we are. That’s how we work.”

Mark supposes there is a teaspoon of truth to that, but what Renjun says next makes his temper flare up.

“Today I had to play both roles because you got too impassioned and forgot your place.”

“Forget my place? Fucking come on, Renjun!” Mark laughs, though not in a happy or amused way. It’s bitter and ugly and as soon as it comes out of his mouth, Mark wants to take it back. He can’t stop himself though, and more words come tumbling out right after it.

“Look at who you’re talking to! I started this fucking branch. I gave you your fucking job and you’re talking to me like this. If anyone has forgotten their place here, it’s you!” Mark yells. His chest is
heaving, eyes dark and dangerous.

“Don’t—” Renjun begins, cutting himself off with his own chuckling. “Don’t make me take you off this case, Mark.”

“Excuse me?”

“I said don’t make me take you off the case,” Renjun repeats, like Mark hadn’t heard him the first time.

Mark points to his own chest. “I’m in charge, Renjun. I’m the one making the decisions.”

Renjun juts his chin out, a sign a defiance that Mark has grown accustomed to seeing. “And I’m your second in command, who is to take control if you are unfit to lead.”

Renjun turns to look at Mark for the first time since he got into the car. “Fucking look at yourself, Mark. You’re raising your voice at me, wide eyed, breathing heavy. You’re a fucking disaster.”

Mark says nothing. Renjun softens his voice.

“Look, Mark. I know you are in love with Donghyuck, and I know you don’t want this to become Herin 2.0,” Renjun says. He winces underneath the heat of Mark’s glare after mentioning her name.

“I know, and I am with you on both points. But you cannot go around putting yourself or Donghyuck or me or anyone else on our team in danger.”

Renjun lays his hand on top of Mark’s. “You have to reel it in. Please, try and reel it in for me,” he pleads softly.

It’s like Renjun’s quiet begging awakens something in Mark. He seems to finally understand the gravity of his actions, and his eyes water, tear ducts beginning to burn painfully. “Fuck, Renjun, I’m so sorry. I shouldn’t have—”

“Hey, come here,” Renjun says, opening his arms. Mark is his life partner, and seeing him cry is irrationally painful, even if he deserved to hear everything that lead up to it. They hug as tightly as possible over the center console, Mark burying his face in Renjun’s neck, and Renjun stroking the back of his neck gently. Mark is never this vulnerable with anyone but Renjun, so the younger allows Mark hold onto him until he feels stable enough to let go.

And when Mark does pull back with puffy eyes and a tiny, embarrassed smile, Renjun’s heart swells dangerously. He doesn’t let go of Mark’s hand the entire drive back to Donghyuck’s apartment.

When they arrive back to Donghyuck’s apartment, it’s not that late, but everyone is in pajamas. Jaemin has got Donghyuck’s grill out, frying up meat in the kitchen, and Chenle is next to him, begging to taste a piece. Some superhero movie is playing on the television, and Jisung has cuddled up to Donghyuck on the couch. Jeno is laid out on the floor on his phone, and the two returnees aren’t really quite sure what’s going on.

“Sleepover!” Chenle announces when he sees the two of them standing in the doorway.

Jaemin makes them change into fuzzy pants that he brought from his house, hands Renjun two beers, and makes them sit on the couch.

“Cheers?” Renjun proposes, and Mark smiles, clinking the necks together.
Mark knows what they’re doing; forcing Donghyuck to focus on something else isn’t really such a terrible idea. Besides, they’re adults—young ones, but adults nonetheless—and they never get to spend time together like this. Mark, for maybe the first time in his entire life, allows work to slip away from his mind for a few hours.

Mark decides to make the most out of the time spent with his little found family. He takes every beer (and glass of water) that Jaemin serves him, takes from the simultaneously quickly disappearing and replenishing pile of meat, stays awake through the four Marvel movies Jeno plays and watches to make sure everyone else falls asleep before he does.

And Renjun—Renjun just likes seeing Mark happy.

They go into the office the next morning. Renjun goes into Donghyuck’s workspace, sits down at the desk and looks at the three huge screens he has set up. Even though it used to be Renjun’s room, his desk, it feels wrong to sit there when Donghyuck’s set up so many little trinkets and snapshots of his past.

In the end, Renjun leaves, electing to use his own laptop. The software on it is much less advanced to anything Donghyuck’s installed on his computers in his office, but it will suffice. This is how Renjun used to get shit done, and how he will get shit done this time around.

He plays yesterday’s recording back, making note of the names Eric had given. It takes mere seconds for him to find contact information for all of them. Sanha and Hyunjoon make it in during the morning hours, Hyunjin comes in the afternoon during his lunch break, and Chanhee stops by after work. The story is the same from all of them; yes, they were friends with both Donghyuck and Eric in college, no, they have not seen Donghyuck since he vanished in 2019, is he okay? All of them ask if Felix is okay when told about the heart in the box in the apartment. It seems that Donghyuck’s friends knew of his importance.

The outlier, Chenle notices, is Yongbok. He doesn’t respond to any of Renjun’s calls, despite Renjun seeing him be active on social media. This is mildly alarming to Mark, because Yongbok is the one Eric warned them about.

The team gather and sit in a circle once Renjun and Chanhee emerge from the questioning room. Chanhee wishes them luck in their investigation and bows, taking Renjun’s card with him on the way out. Renjun slouches at the table.

Jeno is confused about all the despondence. “You have his address. You can just go to his home, like you did with Eric.”

“We could,” Renjun says, running his fingers through his hair. “But he knows I’ve called. It means he’s avoiding us.”

As soon as Renjun finishes speaking, Mark’s phone rings. The ringer is the one delegated to case related calls. Renjun perks up a little.

Mark answers the phone and puts it on speaker, “Mark Lee, BA—”

“Agent Lee?” The voice cuts him off. “Agent Lee, it’s Sunwoo.”

Renjun physically startles. Sunwoo sounds panicked, terrified.

“Eric’s gone,” Sunwoo says, and Renjun doesn’t imagine the tremor in his voice. The rest of the team hear it too, and they begin to stand up and prepare to leave.
“What do you mean gone?” Mark asks.

“He went to his 7pm class yesterday and he hasn’t come back. He hadn’t answered and of my texts or calls—he hadn’t even read them when I checked half an hour ago,” Sunwoo answers. “I got a call from Eric’s phone just now, and it wasn’t his voice. It was Yongbok’s.”

Mark swears quietly, barely heard over Sunwoo’s frantically raising voice. “I always knew he was a fucking freak. I should go look for him myself.”

Mark and Renjun exchange a glance, and Renjun extends his arm for the phone. Mark gives it to him.

“Sunwoo. Sunwoo, it’s Renjun,” he says, and Sunwoo stops his rambling. “As worried as I know you are, you have to stay put. We don’t yet know what Yongbok is capable of, and you would be making yourself a target.”

When Sunwoo says nothing, Renjun continues on. “I need you to trust us to do our jobs. Can you trust me?”

There is a long moment of silence before Sunwoo sighs. “Yes,” he responds, voice small. “Please just hurry. Yongbok said he doesn’t have much time left.”

“We will get him,” Renjun affirms, sounding much more confident than he visibly appears.

“Okay. Okay, thank you,” Sunwoo chokes out, then hangs up. Renjun hands the phone back to Mark, and turns to see everyone armed and with their vests on.

Mark is in leader mode. “Chenle, Jisung, go to Yongbok’s home and check to see if he’s there.”

He’s not there, Mark knows, because a criminal would not take his victim somewhere so obvious. He’d rather send the two youngest, the two newest agents there and away from immediate danger. Jisung seems to pick up on this too, but he says nothing. He and Chenle leave, bickering over who gets to drive.

He turns to Donghyuck, who had been sitting quietly. “Is there somewhere you and Yongbok used to go? Somewhere special?”

“We used to go to the roof of that Pocky building, the one that shut down in the 70s,” Donghyuck answers after some thought. He looks far away, likely remembering all the time they spent up there.

“One of you has to stay with him,” Mark says. He’s right, of course; leaving Donghyuck alone in the middle of a rather benign stalking case turned violent is not ideal. Mark is always in the field, unwavering and without question. Jaemin casts a sidelong glance at Donghyuck, head down and arms wrapped around his middle.

Renjun strips his own vest off. “I’ll stay with him.”

Mark looks at him sideways. “Huh?”

Donghyuck, head still down says, at the same time, “You will?”

Renjun supposes it is strange. In all the years he’s worked for the BAU, he’s never not gone out in the field. At first, it was out of mere necessity, but he had come to enjoy the adrenaline rush that came with tracking down and capturing an unsub. But Donghyuck looks so small, so helpless—he’s taken on the same stance as he had in the bar parking lot two nights ago, when he confessed about
not wanting to be alone. Renjun feels a surge of pity fill his chest.

Renjun takes a seat next to Donghyuck. “I will. Now go,” he says to Mark, Jeno, and Jaemin. Jeno just leaves, but both Mark and Jaemin look back with uncertainty. Renjun shoos them away, and they leave, Mark beginning to bark out orders.

Donghyuck looks up, and to Renjun’s absolute horror, there are tears in Donghyuck’s eyes. He wraps around Donghyuck’s shoulder, pulling him closer. He feels the tears soak into his shirt before he hears the sob.

“Renjun, I feel so bad,” Donghyuck says through tears. “I didn’t want to put any of you guys in danger. I didn’t want to put Youngjae—Eric in danger. I should have just kept quiet about everything I saw in my apartment.”

“No, you did the right thing,” Renjun redirects, rubbing his hand up and down Donghyuck’s arm. “If you didn’t, you could have been in significantly more danger.”

“But now Chenle and Jisung are in danger too. Jeno and Jaemin are in danger because of me. And Mark—”

Donghyuck’s getting frantic, and Renjun cuts him off with a firm voice before he becomes hysterical. “Donghyuck. This is our job. We would do this or anyone else.”

“But—”

Renjun will tell you that he wasn’t thinking straight, that it was difficult for him to function when an angel was crying in front of him. But he is completely aware of what he’s doing when he says, “I would lay down my life for you, Donghyuck. This is nothing.”

“Renjun,” Donghyuck breathes, eyes blown wide, and Renjun can’t resist anymore. He hooks his index finger under Donghyuck’s chin, raising it up. Wordlessly, he guides their lips together.

Considering how fiesty Donghyuck normally is, it surprises Renjun how easily he melts into the kiss. The sound Donghyuck makes is precious, and Renjun wants to make him sound like that forever. He turns his body toward Donghyuck for a better angle, left hand finding its way to Donghyuck’s waist, and his right hand threading through the hair at the younger’s nape.

Everything is so slow; their mouths are wholly unhurried, swipes of tongue gentle. There’s push and pull, and Donghyuck, Jeju man at heart, faintly draws a comparison to the ocean. This kiss is oscillating, fluid, ever changing between giver and receiver; a kiss between lovers, Donghyuck realizes.

He whines into Renjun’s mouth at the thought, and Renjun pulls him closer, presses harder. Donghyuck is almost on top of him now, Renjun’s hand guiding Donghyuck’s leg over his own. The elder exhales quietly, and Donghyuck smiles into the kiss, more relaxed than he’s felt in days.

Renjun’s phone rings loudly, and the two of them spring apart. They’re both disoriented; Renjun’s eyes are still glazed over and Donghyuck is sporting a blush high on his cheeks and ears. Neither of them can recall how long they spent wrapped up in each other like that.

Renjun fumbles around for his phone, only answering the call when he’s sure he sounds normal. He doesn’t put it on speaker like he usually would; any call he would receive this late is bound to be an emergency, either on a personal or work level. Donghyuck’s glowing, and Renjun would die before being the one to make that fade away.
“Hello?” he greets, and swears immediately. His voice sounds too low, too throaty to be normal. He clears his throat and tries again. “Hello?”

“Renjun hyung,” Jisung says. “This is terrible.”

Renjun’s mind goes blank. “Jisung? What’s wrong? Are you hurt?”

Jisung smacks his teeth. “Jesus, Renjun, I’m fine. Stop worrying so much. You’ll get wrinkled and ugly.”

The elder breathes a sigh of relief. “Then what’s terrible?”

“This Yongbok dude’s apartment. He’s got pictures of all of us hanging up on the walls, not just Donghyuck,” Jisung explains, then barks a quick “be careful” to Chenle, who knocks something over, judging by the noise in the background.

“Did the rest of them hear me? Am I on speaker?” Jisung asks.

“Jisung, I’m with Donghyuck. Mark, Jeno and Jaemin went to the Pocky building where they think the unsub is,” Renjun answers, bracing himself for Jisung’s reaction. Jisung knows better than anyone, even Mark, how much Renjun enjoys being in the field.

“You’re with Donghyuck?” Jisung repeats.

Renjun nods before realizing Jisung cannot see him. “Yes, I stayed back.”

“Okay,” is Jisung’s reply, but it’s not just any regular ass ‘okay.’ It’s weighted in a way only Jisung knows how to create, and Renjun swallows.

“Jisung, I need you and Chenle to get out of there,” Renjun directs, voice firm. “Leave everything untouched. We will go back for evidence once he is arrested.”

“Fine,” Jisung says. “What do we do now?”

“Call Jaemin and tell him what you just told me.”

Jisung fake gags, and the sound surprises a laugh out of Renjun. “You want me to call my boyfriend and tell him that some random ass person has pictures of us hanging on the wall in his house? Ick. Hard pass.”

“Call Mark then,” Renjun suggests, and Jisung gags again.

“You want me to call your boyfriend and tell him some random ass person has pictures of us hanging up on the wall in his house?”

Renjun’s face burns. Jisung is much more perceptive than Renjun remembers, but that’s partially his own fault for teaching Jisung everything he knows. “He’s not my boyfriend.”

“Oh, I forgot,” Jisung says flippantly, “You two are still doing that cat and mouse shit.”

Renjun’s a little stunned by Jisung’s choice of words. That being said, he’s not entirely wrong.

In Renjun’s silence, Jisung continues on, “He’s probably the one driving anyway. I’ll call Jeno. See you tomorrow, Renjun.”

There is a tiny, minuscule part of Jisung that enjoys leaving Renjun speechless even after all these
years. After he hangs up, he turns to Chenle, who has been listening quietly. They make sure to leave everything exactly as it was before leaving the rather large house and locking the door with the key that their unsub so foolishly leaves under a flower pot on his porch.

“So,” Chenle says while they walk down the stairs, “Jaemin hyung’s your boyfriend, huh?”

There’s something...off about Chenle’s voice, but Jisung can’t put his finger on it. So instead of thinking too hard about it, he nods and answers, “Yeah, a lot happened last night.”

Chenle’s face screws up in distaste. “That is not something I think I need to hear about.”

Jisung feels like his face fills with color and drains of color at the same time. “Chenle! You know I wouldn’t tell you about that.”

Chenle grins his devil-may-care grin and pokes Jisung in the side. “So it happened, and you just won’t tell me about it.”

Jisung groans. “I’m going to call Jeno now,” he announces much louder than he needs to.

Jeno picks up on the second ring, and Jisung can hear his eye smile through the phone. “Hey, Jisung, what’s up?”

“I have some news,” Jisung begins.

“Is it bad news or good news?” Mark interjects. He sounds farther away, so Jisung was correct in assuming Mark would be driving.

“It’s...less than satisfactory news,” Jisung bites his lip, “That Yongbok character has pictures of all of us in his house.”

“How the hell did you get in?” Mark asks, and Jisung can imagine that he’s squinting in confusion.

“You sent me with Zhong Chenle. How do you think we got in?” Jisung asks. After hearing that sentence, Chenle proudly brandishes the bobby pin he used to pick the lock, grinning hugely.

“Jisung, I need you to get to the Pocky building, the one downtown that shut down in the 70s,” Mark says, leader voice enabled. “Do you know where it is?”

“Hyung, every young adult in Seoul knows where that building is. It’s a Pocky building. Most of them have probably been there at some point,” Jisung says matter of factly.

There’s silence. Then Jaemin’s voice, “Have you ever been there, Jisung-ah?”

Jisung’s face goes to fire at the absurdity of it; Jaemin, his brand new boyfriend, asking him if he’s ever been to the building where youths go to make out under the stars.

Jisung decides to give Jaemin the answer he gives to everyone who inquires about Jisung’s adolescent love life: “My teenage years were primarily focused on obtaining my several bachelor’s, master’s and doctorate degrees.

He’s stiff, formal in a way he doesn’t need to be. Chenle cackles loudly at the expression on Jisung’s face as he chokes out the sentence.

Jaemin sucks his teeth. “Damn genius,” he murmurs, then says louder, “You’re literally still a teenager, Jisung. I'll take you there sometime.”
Jisung, nineteen, ignores the statement and its implication in favor of addressing Mark. “We will go to the Pocky building right now.”

Mark, Jeno and Jaemin get there first. They’re done this kind of thing before, and the procedure is the same no matter who carries it out. Split up, take different angles, be authoritative, and never, ever put your gun down.

It’s a peculiar feeling for Mark to not have Renjun right behind him. He trusts Jaemin and Jeno though, and they follow the plan.

When Mark arrives on the roof, Eric is bound and gagged, being beaten up by a masked figure. He takes the first steps forward, Jaemin in the shadows behind him.

“Lee Yongbok, put your hands where I can see them,” Mark shouts, and the masked figure freezes.

“Oh, look,” he says, voice muffled, “the police have finally caught me.”

“We’re not police, we are the FBI. Put your hands where I can see them,” Mark repeats, hands gripping his gun tighter.

Yongbok laughs, and pulls his face mask down.

He’s handsome.

Mark is instantly annoyed.

Jeno comes up and puts Yongbok in handcuffs, beginning to read him his rights. Jaemin, to his left, holsters his gun.

“Take Yongbok back to the station, and give Chenle and Jisung a ride back as well,” Mark orders. “I will take care of Eric.”

Jaemin merely nods, and goes back the way they came. Mark walks over to Eric, cautious. He carefully unties his binds and takes the gag out of his mouth. Eric begins to cough immediately, and Mark rubs his back carefully.

“I’m going to take you to the hospital, okay?” Mark tells him. Eric tries to speak, but all that comes out is a strangled croak, so he settles for a nod.

The hospital visit is short; nothing is wrong with Eric, just some bruising and maybe some lingering sickness from whatever substance Yongbok used to subdue him. He’s in and out within the hour.

When Mark delivers Eric back to Sunwoo, he’s met with tears. It’s not that unusual, but what is unusual is the hug that Sunwoo attacks Mark with, whispering a quiet ‘thank you’.

When Mark gets back to the station, he’s not really expecting anyone to be there. It’s late, and way past office hours. His heart warms a little bit when he walks inside to return the car keys and Renjun’s there, Donghyuck curled up with his head on Renjun’s lap.

Mark hangs the keys up in the office. “Did you question him yet?”

“Without you? Never,” Renjun replies. “We can do that tomorrow.”

Mark drives them back to their house, alone in the front seat. Renjun took to the backseat to continue being Donghyuck’s pillow. It’s silent, but comfortable, and it gives Mark time to think about just how important the people in the backseat are to him.
Renjun is intelligent, loyal, so effortlessly handsome, and Donghyuck is witty, beautiful, radiant, and Mark realizes he was doomed from the beginning. It was far too easy to fall in love with either of them, with both of them.

Mark’s heart is too fragile for the image of a sleepy Donghyuck clinging onto Renjun. He lets Renjun put Donghyuck to bed while he lingers in the kitchen and lets the gravity of his own hopelessness weigh him down.

He’s not expecting Renjun to join him, smiling hugely. Mark puts his glass of water down on the counter.

“What are you smiling so much?” he questions while Renjun gets his own glass of water.

“Donghyuck and I kissed today,” Renjun singsongs, and Mark doesn’t quite know what to feel.

He knows Renjun has feelings for Donghyuck, and Donghyuck has feelings for Renjun, but it isn’t that simple. Nothing is ever that simple. So that bit of information both makes Mark want to die and makes him feel like he’s in heaven.

Out loud, he only says, “Yeah? How was it?”

Renjun takes a long drink, shuddering from the cold. “It was great.”

When Mark hums noncommittally, Renjun forges on. “Are you jealous?”

“Yes,” Mark answers almost immediately, the late hours and his own exhaustion acting as a truth serum. Renjun raises an eyebrow.

“What?”

“Renjun,” Mark scolds, feeling like he’s been found out.

“I’m joking, calm down,” Renjun says, putting his glass into the sink. “I know you only have feelings for Hyuck.”

Huh?

“Renjun—” Mark starts, but he gets cut off by the arrival of the topic of conversation, clad in one of Mark’s university shirts this time.

“How dare the two of you leave me in bed alone?

The next morning, Mark and Renjun walk into the interrogation room, faces hard. Yongbok gives them a sunny smile despite it being 10 AM.
“I’m only going to talk to Donghyuck, so the rest of you can forget it,” he announces, loud enough for all of the team to hear. They turn and walk right back out.

“What do we do?” Renjun asks Mark. “I really don’t want to send him in there.”

“You don’t really have a choice,” Jisung cuts in. “Even with the mental torture the two of you carry out, it doesn’t mean anything if he doesn’t open his mouth.”

“You want answers, and he’s only going to give them to me. Send me in,” Donghyuck says quietly. Jaemin begins to protest, but Donghyuck holds up a hand. “Let me do this. I need to put this case down.”

There’s a lump in Mark’s throat as he fastens an earpiece to Donghyuck’s clothes and gives him instruction. “Don’t tell him much about yourself or your new life. Don’t get too personal. Once I give you the cue that we’ve gotten enough information to incriminate him, come on out.”

It’s a different kind of terror, Mark thinks, as he watches Donghyuck walk into the questioning room. One that numbs him to his toes and paralyzes him in fear. Donghyuck has never done this before, has never had to do this before, and seeing the man the loves walk into the lion’s den makes Mark’s heart ache something terrible.

Yongbok’s face visibly brightens when Donghyuck walks into the room. Donghyuck sits in the chair across from him, stiff, and picks up the file on the table. Donghyuck pretends to read it, to be professional, but he knows everything about the man sitting before him.

Mark’s heartache worsens when Yongbok says, “Take that earpiece out. I want to know what’s on your mind, not what they tell you.”

Donghyuck doesn’t have a choice but to take it out and off of his person. He doesn’t dare turn around. It doesn’t matter, because the inside of the room is all mirrors and all he would be able to see would be himself and Yongbok, but he knows that his teammates are watching. He has to be strong. The team can hear them, but they cannot communicate. Donghyuck is on his own for this one. He takes a deep breath and begins.

“What is it that you want from me?”

The unsub is still smiling at him, and Donghyuck cannot believe that this same smile used to make him feel butterflies. “Your birthday is soon, baby. I just wanted to see you.”

Renjun bristles, and Jisung makes him sit down at the table instead of standing and looking into the glass. “You’re going to shatter it glaring at it like that, come on,” Jisung says, pushing his shoulders down.

Donghyuck wonders how Yongbok even remembers his birthday.

“Don’t call me that. I’m not your baby,” he responds, voice steely. Yongbok laughs.

“You used to be,” he says, and after the words come out, he looks rather...sad. His bottom lip juts out, and Donghyuck can barely prevent the anger from showing on his face.

His lip curls in disgust. “Yeah, seven fucking years ago.”

Yongbok tips his head to the side, looking forlorn. Donghyuck isn’t buying it. “Why do you hate me so much, Donghyuck?”
Donghyuck laughs bitterly, trying to recall a reason he had ever loved him. “Do you not remember what you did to me?”

Mark’s shoulders rise. Donghyuck is becoming too personal. Renjun leaves the table to place a placating hand on his bicep.

“All of the lies, the cheating with Changbin...and even after I broke up with you and got with Youngjae, you had to ruin that too,” Donghyuck spits.

At the name, Yongbok’s face goes sour. “Youngjae. That piece of shit just had to go and tip them off. I should have killed him.”

“What?”

“I saw the two of them walking up to his apartment,” Yongbok says, appearing to be talking to himself. “I should have killed him as soon as they left.”

“Yongbok,” Donghyuck says sternly. “What are you talking about?”

Yongbok grimaces. “Call me Felix, would you baby? That’s my new name.”

Jaemin’s muscles tighten up, and Jisung wonders how is it that this one person is able to get under four different people’s skin.

“Felix?” Donghyuck echoes, sounding pissed. “My cat’s name?”

“Yeah, isn’t it nice?” Yongbok asks, checking his fingernails. Suddenly, his voice takes on a venom that wasn’t there before. “You always paid more attention to that fucking cat than you ever did to me, figured I’d say something to really get your attention.”

Donghyuck slams his fist on the table, startling everyone outside. “Where is he?”

Yongbok smiles sympathetically. “I don’t think you want to see him in his condition.”

“Yongbok.”

“I will take you to him after this investigation,” he criminal says. Donghyuck stands up, hands shaking in anger, and leaves the room.

“What the fuck do I do?”

To everyone’s surprise, it’s Jeno who speaks up, voice hard. “Milk him. Get everything you can out of him.”

Mark is perplexed by the change in Jeno’s, easily his most cool headed agent, demeanor, but then he thinks about the circumstances. Felix is a cat, the one true love of Jeno’s life. Jisung takes a head count, and it’s now five agents that Yongbok has bothered.

Donghyuck nods slowly at Jeno’s words, then goes back into the room. He makes his face carefully blank, and folds his hands on the table.

“Which ones did you see at Youngjae’s house?”

“That hot brunette,” Felix says, which Donghyuck assumes to be Mark, “and the short, black haired on. His bitch.”
“Don’t fucking talk about him like that,” Donghyuck hisses.

Felix rests his chin on his palm. “Is that all it takes to get you riled up? To talk about the two of them?”

Donghyuck’s hands automatically curl themselves into fists. “Stop it.”

“I see the way they look at you, you know,” Felix continues, wicked grin returning. “Like you’re some kind of precious jewel. The way I look at you,” he says, laying a hand on top of Donghyuck’s fist.

Mark feels...exposed. He’s suddenly extremely conscious of all the other agents in the room.

Donghyuck pulls his fist back like he’d be scalded. “You never looked at me like that. You looked at me like a toy, like I was a fucking piece of meat.”

“Donghyuck—”

“No. Shut the fuck up,” Donghyuck says, shooting up out of his chair, eyes blazing. It’s one thing for Felix to pretend like he loved Donghyuck, but it’s another thing entirely for him to pretend like he could even hold a candle to Renjun or Mark. “I’ll ask you again. What the fuck do you want with me, with this team?”

For the first time, Felix looks small. “I just wanted to see you. Maybe repair what we had and—”

“You can let go of that right now,” Donghyuck cuts him off with a cold laugh. “You’re one of the most intelligent people I’ve ever known, Yongbok. You couldn’t possibly think that stalking me and my friends and abducting my cat would make me want to fuck you again.”

Mark flinches at the f-word and the context it was said in. Donghyuck, oblivious to anything besides his own anger, plows on.

“We’re over, Felix,” Donghyuck says, addressing him by the new name in a tone so acidic that Renjun shudders. “Get that through your thick fucking skull,” a hard slap punctuates the last three words of his sentence, and the unsub physically jumps at the sound of each one.

Felix says nothing, stunned. Donghyuck understands that it’s because he’s never spoken to him like that before. Even when he’d cheated on him, ruined his new relationship, Donghyuck had never offered an unkind word to Yongbok. He’s done with that now.

He sits back in his chair, lowering his voice back to normal volume. It’s brittle, icy, and Felix draws into himself. “I’m going to tell you how the rest of this day is going to go.

“You are going to tell me exactly where my cat is. You are going to go sit in your fucking cell while we go collect evidence from your house. You are going to take your misdemeanor stalking charge without complaint, and pay your fine. You are going to take your assault and battery charge and do your time. You’re going to stay away from the team outside of those doors, and their families and loved ones. And you’re going to stay the fuck away from me. Period.”

“Donghyuck—”

“It is not up for discussion. Do you understand?” Donghyuck finishes. Felix nods quietly, eyes cast down.

Donghyuck stands up and gets the fuck out of there. Jaemin and Jisung are waiting outside the room.
with open arms, and Donghyuck runs straight into them, in need of something familiar.

Renjun enters the room next. He pulls a pen and notepad from the pocket of his shirt and throws them on the table.

“Write down the instructions to find Felix. I don’t want to hear your voice.”

Yongbok nods numbly, writing down the the words. Renjun collects the finished product. He cuffs Yongbok, and if he pushes on his pressure point a little bit for the bitch comment, no one has to know.

Felix the Cat turns out to be fine, sitting in a cage with food and water in a cage in some underground, hidden room in Yongbok’s house that Mark scolds Chenle and Jisung for missing. No one but Chenle really feels like drinking after the case is closed, because his liver is made out of steel. Donghyuck gives everyone on the team a tight hug and thanks everyone for supporting him and helping him feel strong. Hugs are returned, and so are hair ruffles and kisses, in Jaemin’s case. Donghyuck feels loved.

There’s still an elephant in the room, though. So when Jaemin and Jisung leave together, hand in hand, Donghyuck corners Mark and Renjun.

“Would you two prefer to have this conversation here or at your house?”

They decide on their house, and when they get there, Donghyuck makes them stand against the dining room table. He almost loses his nerve, looking at the two of them, beautiful even when exhausted, but he won’t let himself. This has to be said.

“I—” he starts, then scrubs a hand over his face. “God, this is fucking weird.”

They have to know what he’s going to say. There’s no way they can’t not know, but they are kind, and patient, and Donghyuck is so in love.

“The two of you are extremely important to me, you guys know that right?” Donghyuck says, and they nod at him. That’s all the confirmation he needs to keep going. Donghyuck takes one of each of their hands in his own.

“I have...feelings for the both of you. Extremely strong feelings,” he chokes out, suddenly overwhelmed. Behind his mild panic, Donghyuck is amused by the fact that neither of them look particularly surprised.

“And I know the both of you have feelings for me,” he continues on. He points at Renjun, “because if you hadn’t, you wouldn’t have kissed me. And you,” he points at Mark, “wouldn’t look at me like I hung the fucking moon every time I open my mouth.”
Mark flushes. He hadn’t known he’d been transparent to Donghyuck. That's embarrassing.

Renjun’s eyebrows are furrowed. “Donghyuck…”

The youngest of them mirrors his expression at the tone. “What is it?”

“I don’t know what you think is going to come of this, but the three of us aren’t going to work,” Renjun says, biting his bottom lip.

“Why?” Donghyuck asks, truly confused.

“Mark doesn’t have any romantic feelings for me,” Renjun says, eyes down.

There’s a beat of silence, then Donghyuck speaks again. “You’re kidding me, right? This is a joke.”

Renjun shakes his head, and Donghyuck lets go of Mark’s hand to take both of Renjun’s hands in his own. “Renjun, baby, I need you to listen to me. You guys have known each other for seven years. You live together. You have a home together. He met your parents, Renjun.”

“As a friend,” Renjun insists.

“Renjun,” Mark says, voice thick. “I’ve been in love with you since I was eighteen.”

“What?” Renjun squeaks.

“How could you not have known?” Mark asks, voice so soft it’s barely there. “You’re…” he trails off, looking for the right word, “you’re everything to me.”

Renjun feels like he’s been set on fire. His mouth opens and closes, useless, no sound coming out. He’s starting to blush, and he knows the both of them can see it.

Mark decides to take the leap. “Can I kiss you?”

Renjun’s traitorous heart stutters, and his hands come up to cup Mark’s face. His traitorous mouth opens, and says, “I’ve waited five years for this.”

Mark’s lips quirk upwards into a smile. “Five years, huh? Me too.”

“Just kiss me,” Renjun demands, and Mark obeys.

The only word that Renjun can think of is romantic. Mark’s a very romantic kisser, he thinks. Maybe it’s romantic because of circumstance and their story, but being pressed flush against Mark’s surprisingly defined chest is making Renjun’s head spin.

It’s not just one kiss. It’s an initial press of lips, then a smile, then Mark is coming back for more. They’re sweet, innocent kisses, stolen over and over, and Renjun’s heart feels like it’s beating out of his chest.

The last kiss takes all the breath out of Renjun’s lungs. It’s slow and hot, Mark’s tongue finally making an appearance. Mark crowds Renjun back against the table, and the tiny little whimper that escapes Renjun’s lips is because the edge of the table was digging into his back, not because kissing Mark feels better than anything he’s ever imagined.

Donghyuck clears his throat, and they break apart to look at him. “As…lovely as this is, I haven’t gotten the chance to kiss Mark either.”
The smile Mark gives him is stupidly charming. “Come here then.”

Mark kisses Donghyuck where he left off with Renjun, and Donghyuck feels the heat from Mark’s touch burn straight through him. Mark holds his jaw gently, like Donghyuck would break if he dare hold him any tighter. Craving that touch, Donghyuck blindly reaches out for Mark’s waist and pulls him near. He is very pleasantly surprised when Mark lets out a surprised gasp, cheeks tinting pink.

Mark breaks the kiss, leaning his forehead against Donghyuck’s. They just stand there, eyes closed, breathing each other’s air for a few seconds. A slow smile spreads across Donghyuck’s face.

“This,” Renjun says, gesturing between the two of them, “is something I could get used to.”

Two beautiful boyfriends, two puppies, frequent travel, unconditional love and support—Donghyuck thinks he could get used to it too.

Jeno and Chenle go out drinking, because they’re the only two with the rest of their night unoccupied.

Chenle really does have a liver of steel, and Jeno simply cannot keep up with the number of shots the younger is tossing back. It takes him hours to really get drunk, but of course, that’s when he decides to remember important information.

“I have a flight at 4 AM,” Chenle announces out of the blue.

Jeno looks at him incredulously. “Could you not have told me this like two hours ago?”

Chenle ignores him, already dialing numbers into the phone. He converses in rapid Chinese, even doing aegyo when he senses resistance. Jeno suspects he’s called Renjun, and chuckles to himself at the thought of a sleepy, bedridden Renjun being summoned to get a very drunk Chenle at 3 AM.

He stops chuckling when, instead of Renjun, Yukhei walks into the bar. Jeno chokes on his beer. Yukhei seems to have a similar reaction, halting his footsteps a good few meters away. He only makes himself move again when Chenle motions him to come over.

“Jeno, you’ve met my cousin Xuxi right?” Chenle asks.

*If by met you mean pined over for months, went on a date with and kissed a few nights ago, then yes. I’ve met him.*

“Uh huh,” is what Jeno chokes out instead.
The answer seems to amuse Yukhei, because he laughs his ridiculous laugh and extends his hand for Jeno to shake.

“It’s nice to make your acquaintance again, Agent Lee,” Yukhei says, grinning warmly. Jeno feels his insides liquefy.

Yukhei pats Chenle’s head softly. “Gotta get this big, irresponsible baby to the airport,” he says, before lifting Chenle up into his arms like he weighs nothing.

“Do you have a way to get home?” Yukhei asks. Jeno nods mutely.

“See you around. Take care,” Yukhei says before turning and leaving the bar, Chenle waving at Jeno over Yukhei’s broad shoulders.

Jeno slams his head on the bar. Chenle’s cousin?

He’s screwed. He’s so screwed.

End Notes

if you’re reading this, congratulations on making it to the end to the longest one shot I’ve ever written for a fic. I’ve written in this document every day for two weeks straight, and posting this is like taking a piece of my heart and putting it up on the internet so please be gentle with me

idk if I will ever write a yukno fic to complete this trilogy but it becomes more appealing to me every day....at the same time I don't want to waste my time so if u could leave a comment telling me if u would read it or not I would greatly appreciate it

thank you for reading!!

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