Carry Me Home

by Blue (memequeens)

Summary

Jimin was everything an omega ought to be: He had a respectable job, would be the future head omega and was being courted by no other than the pack alpha’s son. But two lone wolves with an unknown backstory cause not only tension within the pack...

Notes

Hello! Before we start, I have to tell you guys that this story takes place in a traditional ABO setting! If you aren't familiar with the Alpha/Beta/Omega Universe, I would highly advice to ask me first or do research beforehand!

Please, read the tags and keep in mind that this story will deal a lot with character development and background stories. Cheating is not a tag because it will not be an issue here, although I do give a trigger warning for somewhat emotional cheating (Since Jimin is in
an unhealthy relationship at first) but I will take care that it will be dealt with in a healthy way.

I have chapters prepared and try to update weekly for now, although I don't know if I can keep that up throughout the whole story! Special thanks to RAYNE for beta-reading <3

I HOPE YOU ENJOY

See the end of the work for more notes.
“You’re already so sure of your future, Jimin”, his grandmother chuckled, wrinkles deepening in her porcelain skin, “You are much like your mother at that age.”

Jimin knew he didn't have much time left with her, he spent every minute he could spare next to the wide bed that smelled like soap and spices. His thumbs traced soft patterns into her bony hand as they talked about everything and nothing, getting lost in whatever conversation they fell into. She had always been a talker, something Jimin probably adapted from her. Jimin found himself studying her features in hope to imprint them into his mind to always remember them. How could she look so young still?

“I want to be exactly like her! Meet an alpha that goes hunting for the family, be a good omega for him, birth his chil-” Jimin didn't get to finish that sentence as he was interrupted by his grandmother shushing him quickly.

“Now, now, I don't want to hear anything about children. You, my little pup, are just a child yourself. You just presented, don’t fall too much into the role of an omega already.” She freed her hand from his grip to cup his cheek, a warm smile on her lips.

“What's wrong with planning my future? I just want to be prepared, I may get courting gifts soon”, Jimin huffed. He watched as his grandmother sighed deeply, gaze almost wistful.

“Always remember that you're Jimin first and omega second. Listen to your heart and not your pack. One day you will go a path no one expects you to go, I can feel it. You are so strong, Jimin. Never forget that.”

***

Jimin felt sweat dripping down his neck, tickling his skin uncomfortably. Jinsol, a young omega girl that usually shared the shifts with him, couldn't come to work due to her heat kicking in early which left Jimin alone with more pups than he could handle.

“Younghyun, don’t take that into our mouth!”
Jimin could only just prevent one child from eating a stone when two others were already crying, the sound echoing through the narrow halls. Jimin knew pups weren't the main priority in the pack but letting him work alone today was simply cruel. Frustration built up inside his stomach as he ran a hand through his hair, swallowing down the lump in his throat. He could do this. He was strong.

His grandmother's words never left him, even after all the years. Jimin was not a pup any more, not a freshly presented omega, waiting for his life to finally begin. He was strong, a beautiful young man and hard-working omega. He was being courted by the pack alpha's son, his future set as the head omega for his pack. Jimin was prideful but still modest. He was everything he ever wished for. And yet, there was something stirring in his chest. A part that was still waiting. He didn't know for what but he sometimes thought his heart was longing. Naturally, Jimin pushed the thought away. He had everything he needed.

“Jimin! What's going on here? Are you all alone?”

The deep voice of his best friend made Jimin's head whip around, spotting the blonde omega in the door frame. Taehyung was wearing a thick coat of dark brown fur over his shoulders, probably one of the many courting gifts he received on the daily. Jimin released a sigh, suppressing the urge to fall into Taehyung's arms and forget about his duties.

“I'm losing my mind here! They left me alone with all the pups!”, he complained, cradling one of the younger boys against his chest.

“Do you want me to help you? I wanted to visit Namjoon in the library but I can do that later.” His best friend shrugged and immediately stepped in to pull his fur off.

“Thank you, Tae. Why do you want to visit Namjoon?” Jimin cocked his head to the side, pinning his friend with a curious gaze. Taehyung picked up another crying pup when he heaved a dramatic sigh.

“He's kind of in a love triangle… he fell for an omega that's already mated. And lately this omega's alpha has been kind of sending him, let's say, mixed signals. The poor guy is completely confused.”

“He fell for a mated omega?” Jimin scrunched his nose, trying to imagine his friend's
struggle, “That's tough. The elders won't like it.”

“If he was an omega I would advice him to just ask if the alpha would want to take another omega into their mating. But an omega having two alphas…”, Taehyung stopped the thought there, knowing what a scandal it would be in the pack. Everything was pretty traditional and even though alphas were allowed to mate several omegas, it was frowned upon omegas to take interest in several alphas.

“Talking about mating”, Taehyung chimed and walked over to another pup that needed attention, “How are things with you and Sungwoon? You are 20 now, don't you two talk about it?”

Something turned in Jimin's stomach at the mention of his own mating. Jimin has been courted for years now and he knew that the pack alpha's son would be his mate one day. However, his stomach clenched whenever he did so much as thinking about mating Sungwoon. It was as if his body rejected the idea, causing him to feel nauseous every time someone mentioned it.

“I don't- I'm not sure when we'll do it. He asked a few times, his father is apparently already waiting… but-” Jimin bit on his lower lip, emotions swirling inside him he didn't quite understand.

“But?”, Taehyung prompted, gaze gentle. Jimin returned the look for a moment, seeking comfort in his best friend's presence. He missed him. Ever since things got serious with Sungwoon he was barely able to spend time with Taehyung, every evening after work spent with his future mate glued to his side.

“I… I miss you, Tae, you know that?”, Jimin answered quietly, pushing his friend's original question to the far back of his mind. Taehyung's face fell, something sad flickering behind his brown eyes.

“I miss you, too, Jiminie. More than you know.”

***

Jimin was in the middle of adding salt to his dish when the front door swung open, the whole hat rattling from the force the alpha used. Sungwoon entered his hut, grey fur draped over his shoulders. He always walked with his head held high, keeping the image of a true pack alpha. Everyone knew he would be an honourable leader for their pack, his father already a well respected alpha. A few silver coloured hair strands fell into his pale forehead, the only imperfection visible on his sharp face.
Sungwoon went straight to his room, not acknowledging Jimin like he did every time he came back from the hunt. He had once explained it by saying he needed a moment of peace and quiet before being able to entertain his omega. Jimin accepted it.

“Good evening, my love”, Sungwoon greeted stiffly once he entered the kitchen, kissing Jimin's head out of routine. Jimin forced a smile as he continued to cook.

“How was the hunt?”

“We found something rather odd. Two abandoned wolves, both injured.” Jimin's head snapped up at that, eyes going wide.

“What has happened to them?”, he asked and could already feel worry flood his stomach.

“You omegas are always so compassionate”, Sungwoon snorted, poking Jimin's nose with a lazy smirk, “They weren't in good state but I guess we'll know more tomorrow. Both are alphas so we can't really use them in the pack, we would have to abandon them as soon as they're healthy.” Jimin stared at Sungwoon as he shrugged, picking a grape and stuffing it in his mouth. It was at times like this that Jimin felt his blood boil in his body. The way Sungwoon spoke about omegas, the way he lacked compassion in any situation that didn't affect himself. It was so frustrating and yet, Jimin kept quiet. If he wanted to keep this relationship, keep this routine, he had to keep quiet.

“I- is there any way we can maybe help the lone wolves? They must be traumatised, leaving your pack is painful emotionally and physically. And who knows how long they've been travelling already.” Jimin focused back on cooking, taking deep breaths to not seem too distressed. Sungwoon could smell it and it would probably just lead to just another argument.

“If you want to, you can go to the medics tomorrow morning and ask them. But let's not talk about them any more, okay? I can see that you're already getting too involved.”

“What's that supposed to mean?” Jimin's voice wasn't hostile, his question filled with honest curiosity.

“It means that you tend to get too… emotional. Whenever someone is hurt or whatnot you start to act like a worried mother. I mean, you can't always live with other people's baggage, it pulls you down, Jimin.” Sungwoon moved behind Jimin, wrapping his arms around his waist. Jimin felt
his whole body tense, turning his words around his head.

“Please don't start overthinking this now”, Sungwoon sighed before he bore his face into Jimin's neck, scenting him.

“Dinner's ready. Let's eat.”

Dinner was as usual, Sungwoon talking about his hunt and Jimin about his work. Eventually, they went out of stories, eating in silence until they were done.

“You're going to the omega den soon?”, Sungwoon asked, his hand reaching for Jimin's.

“Yeah, it's getting late. You know I can't stay here unless you're in rut.”

“I know the rules of my own pack, Jimin.” Of course he did. Jimin knew that.

“I'll do the dishes and will go then.”

“Can't you… stay a little longer?”, Sungwoon leaned forward in his seat, something hungry flickering in his eyes.

“I'm really not in the mood right now. My day has been… it's been really stressful.” Jimin watched as Sungwoon's eyes changed, turning disappointed. Jimin's omega instinct was to give in and give his alpha what he wanted. But just thinking about sex made him feel exhausted, his body shutting off. Jimin didn't hate sleeping with Sungwoon, used to enjoy it even, but over the years it has become more of a duty than an enjoyment and Jimin felt too tired for it.

“Jimin…”, Sungwoon murmured, pinning him with an intense gaze, “It feels like you're always tired lately. I'm an alpha. I have needs. I won't force you to do anything but we want to be mates, don't we? How can we do that if we aren't even intimate with each other?”
“Don't you think we're intimate with each other? We spend time together every single day.” Jimin tried to be calm but he couldn't hide the way his voice shot up high, his chest tightening. His mother was always calm, even in an argument she never lost her temper and Jimin wished for nothing more than to be like her. But he was so angry, so frustrated. It was like every thing Sungwoon said ticked him off and rubbed him in the wrong way. And the more Jimin tried to suppress it, the worse it got.

“You know what kind of intimacy I meant, Jimin. To me, this is an important part of a courtship. If you can't please your alpha, how will you spend the rest of your life with him? It's not like I'm not willing to do the same. If you're upset and wish for some intimacy, I would always be ready to give it to you”, Sungwoon argued, jaw tense.

“I just”, Jimin sighed, trying to calm down his racing heart, “My day has been really stressful. I feel so exhausted, I just want to rest. I need to rest.” Sungwoon released a breath. He nodded although his shoulders were still tense.

“You should head to bed, then. I'll see you tomorrow”, he said shortly, standing up to walk Jimin to the door. Jimin warily followed him until he picked up his furs and slipped inside.

“I shall give you some new furs soon, as the pack alpha's son, I should gift you more than any other alpha would. It's important to make a statement to the rest of the pack.” Sungwoon nuzzled against Jimin's scent gland, nipping and nosing against the sensitive skin. Jimin breathed in his scent, wondering why the knot in his stomach didn't ease down.

“I'll look forward to it. Sleep well.” Jimin leaned in to give him a quick kiss on the lips, averting his gaze quickly after. Something inside of him still felt tense.

“Jimin”, Sungwoon called out as Jimin had almost stepped outside, “Think about what I said.” Jimin swallowed thickly before he nodded, biting on the inside of his cheek. Without another word, he walked away, his chest heavy.

Jmin had almost reached the omega den when he felt a pull inside his chest. Something was calling him, pulling him into the other direction. Jimin saw the lights in the infirmary still on, knowing that the two injured alphas must still lay there in immense pain. Jimin was sure it was his omega instinct to wonder if they were alright, if they needed to be cared for. He nibbled on his lower lip, unsure of what to do. He was exhausted, stressed and really needed a long sleep. But his instinct told him to go.
After a moment of shifting his weight from one foot to another in the cold winter breeze, Jimin cursed under his breath and decided to head to the infirmary. He would just check if the medics needed any help, it was not like he would spend the whole night. As he hurried towards the wide hut, he kept glancing over his shoulder, keeping an eye out for any other person walking around. Sungwoon would be furious if he were to find out that Jimin headed out to check on the abandoned alphas alone at night. It would definitely spread around the pack like wildfire, giving the impression that Jimin would rather spent the night with another alpha than Sungwoon. Jimin did not want to find out how Sungwoon would react to that, let alone his parents and the rest of the pack.

He hovered in front of the wooden door, unsure if this was a good idea. A shiver ran through his body, he couldn't stay in the cold for much longer. Jimin took a deep breath before he opened the door timidly. It was quiet inside, the lights dimly lit. At the sound of the door opening, Hoseok stepped forward, looking if someone needed help. The young omega had been working at the infirmary for years now and Jimin always felt comfortable whenever he had been treated by him.

“Jimin! How can I help you?”, Hoseok chimed, heart-shaped smile plastered wide on his delicate face.

“Sungwoon told me about… you know.” Hoseok's face changed instantly, smile replaced with a look of pity. Jimin was relieved he wasn't the only one feeling for the lone wolves.

“It's horrible. We don't know what happened to them yet but they had some terrible bruises. The younger of the alphas is just about 18 years old, it's- it's unimaginable what they have been through.” Jimin's chest tightened, feeling for the young alpha. He had never parted from his pack but he heard stories of the unbearable pain it can give to wolves.

“Can I help somehow?” Hoseok's face lit up at that, eyes sparkling with gratitude.

“Would you? That would be amazing! Seokjin and I have so much to do on the daily and we need someone to take care of the alphas. One of them has a wound on his arm and won't be able to eat on his own, the other needs help to stand up. It takes a lot of time and patience and I know you would be ideal for this!” Before Jimin could say anything further, Hoseok had already hooked his arm under Jimin's and led him to the room where the injured visitors probably lay.

“I- wait- Hoseok, I meant if I can help today. I'll have to work tomorrow!”, Jimin squealed, trying to stop the other one.
“I'll talk to the head omega tomorrow, they simply have to deal without you!”, Hoseok huffed before coming to a halt, “Listen, Jimin, no one else will want to do this job. The hunters that brought the two in were already not fond of them and I doubt our pack will be very welcoming. I will ask Taehyung if he can help as well but beside him and you, I really don't know a lot of others who would be willing to help. The alphas already have a bad reputation for leaving their pack, please, they need help.” Hoseok looked at Jimin pleadingly, not averting his gaze. Jimin felt his resolve crumble as the seconds passed, his instincts to help and care overwhelming his senses.

“Fine”, Jimin sighed, “I'll take care of them. But you'll tell the head omega!” Hoseok nodded frantically, reassuring Jimin that he would take care of everything as he pushed him to the other room.

Jimin saw two beds positioned on the left side of the pale yellow room, Seokjin standing at the foot of the one further behind. The scent of both alphas was very faint which was quite common for pack-less wolves. They instantly subdued their scents to not give themselves away to danger. Seokjin's arms were crossed and face stern until he noticed Jimin's and Hoseok's appearance.

“Jimin! What are you doing here?”, the young medic asked in a quiet voice.

Seokjin was Hoseok's mate, the handsome alpha known for his charms and skill to wrap anyone around his finger. He was tall and broad and his plump lips let omegas swoon over him as they seeked the alpha at every possible opportunity. Hoseok never seemed to mind too much though, he trusted his mate completely.

“Jimin wants to help! He could care for the alphas while we look after our other patients”, Hoseok explained, a grateful look in his eyes that caused Jimin to feel a little better about his late visit.

“Oh, Jimin”, Seokjin gasped, “Would you really? That would help us so much!”

“Of course. Are these the two?”

Jimin turned around to face the young man who was sleeping in the first bed. He looked muscular but still slender, the body of a typical young alpha. His body was covered in scratches and wounds, a bandage around his arm slung over his neck. His face looked beaten up, causing Jimin's stomach to turn. Fine, thin lips bearing a cut, square chin covered in dry blood and one eye swollen. Jimin felt his instincts kick in again, worrying for the young alpha. He must have auburn fur for his tousled hair shimmered in the warm orange, reddish tone. It was a rare colour and Jimin found himself in awe, his own light brown colour rather common.
“This is Jungkook, the younger alpha”, Seokjin said quietly as he stepped beside Jimin, “His wounds looks terrible but believe me, he's the one better off. His brother tried to keep him safe as best as he could.”

“They're brothers?”, Jimin questioned as he slowly neared the other bed, gaze finding the other sleeping alpha.

“Yes, Yoongi is the older one of them. They escaped from another pack and tried to find a pack that takes them in. We don't know much else.”

“Are they going to be fine?”

Jimin's gaze travelled over Yoongi's face, truly looking more wounded than his brother. He had softer facial features, a round face with a strong jaw, upturned lips and a button nose. Black, thick hair fell into his forehead, looking freshly cut. Alphas often cut their hair before they took off on a journey and Jimin wondered what the backstory to their escape might have been. Yoongi's chest rose and fell calmly and Jimin felt a smile tugging at the corner of his lips. He was glad the two seemed quite alright.

“I'm confident they will heal but it will take some time. Yoongi has a lot of internal wounds and his leg was in a shocking state when we found them. Even though he seems like a strong alpha and should heal faster than an omega, for example, he will still need to be assisted for a few weeks and-”

Seokjin didn't get to finish the sentence as the said alpha's eyes suddenly snapped open. The young man jolted into a sitting position, a loud snarl escaping his lips. Jimin staggered back his gaze fixed on the black eyes that stared right back at him. The alpha snarled again, attempting to jump at Jimin but Seokjin threw himself in front of him, pushing the uncontrolled alpha back onto the bed.

“You'll open up your wounds! Sit back!”, Seokjin shouted but the man kept trying to escape his grip, venom in his gaze that bore into Jimin.

Jimin didn't know what to do, body frozen and heart hammering loudly in his chest. He felt his hands tremble as he tried to duck, the alpha's bitter pheromones making him want to curl into himself. Suddenly, he felt two arms leading him out of the room, almost carrying his numb body outside. Jimin heard the door click shut, the alpha pheromones gone and was enveloped in a warm hug. Seokjin's yells and the other snarls were muffled as Jimin slowly got to his senses again, shivering
“Wh- What was that?”, he breathed as he pulled away from Hoseok's embrace. But before the omega could answer, the door opened again and Seokjin stepped outside, turning to Jimin exhaustedly.

“Oh God, I am so sorry. You just- you reek of Sungwoon and Yoongi must have thought he was in danger.” Seokjin leaned against the door, opening the first button of his linen shirt with an exhale.

“Wait, why danger? I thought Sungwoon and the others helped him?” Jimin felt his emotions swirl inside his stomach as he pinned the medic with a confused look. He didn't understand what just happened.

“Well, when the hunters found the wolves”, Seokjin started, speaking slowly as to choose his words wisely, “Sungwoon was one of the few against helping them. He thought once they settled into the pack it would be harder to make them leave again but he got overruled in the end. He and Yoongi almost started a fight which the others luckily prevented, Yoongi was in a weak state as it was.” Jimin felt his chest tighten again, remembering Sungwoon's reaction to Jimin's worry earlier. He clenched his jaw and could feel his blood boiling again.

“Why didn't he want to help them?”

“We already have more alphas than omegas in the pack. It can cause a lot of tension, especially when it comes to courting. They all fight for the few omegas we have in the pack and it can get worse when two new alphas come into the picture. The others will feel threatened and it would disturb the pack's peace. I do understand his point there, it's just...”

“It's just two young men who were in desperate need for medical help?”, Jimin hissed, fury in his voice.

“Jimin, I know you're upset but he is trained to think about the pack first. He will be the pack alpha one day so he had to prioritise the people in his pack. I'm not trying to defend him, I just want to make you understand where he was coming from”, Seokjin explained calmly, brows deeply furrowed. Jimin knew he was releasing calming pheromones as he could feel his body instantly relax.
“I could never turn a blind eye to people that are suffering. I mean, instead of not helping hurt people just because some alphas could feel threatened, shouldn't he teach his pack that they are the victims in need of a home? They didn't come for the omegas, they came because something horrible has obviously happened in their old pack!” Jimin didn't raise his voice but still laced it with desperation. He wanted to understand Sungwoon, he really did, but no matter how he he looked at it, it felt cruel not to help the hurt alphas.

“It's good that you think like that. You will make a great head omega one day”, Hoseok spoke softly, squeezing Jimin's shoulder.

“But shouldn't I agree with Sungwoon? Shouldn't an omega always agree with his mate?” At that, Seokjin and Hoseok exchanged a look and Jimin couldn't quite tell what it meant. It could have been pity but he wasn't sure.

“Jimin, I think it's more complex than that”, Seokjin responded then with a sigh, “Disagreeing with your mate sometimes is fine. But you have to decide whether you want to accept your mate's opinions or if you're not able to live with them.” Jimin grimaced at that, not quite understanding his words. He was brought up to believe that an omega should always stand behind their alpha's back, no matter what. It had made him angry at himself sometimes, when he had disagreed with Sungwoon despite being taught differently.

“I never thought of it like that”, Jimin admitted, nibbling on his lower lip.

“Well, you're still quite young and have enough time to think about it”, Seokjin chuckled warmly.

“It's already late, Jimin, you should head to the omega den. Will you come in tomorrow then? I'm sure Yoongi will behave if you don't smell like Sungwoon”, Hoseok then spoke up and Jimin agreed, even if he wasn't completely sure.

He bid the two good bye, hurrying back to the omega den. It had gotten even colder and Jimin had to pull the furs tighter around him. He quietly sneaked into the den, walking to his rooms in tip-toes. Thankfully, no one else was around and Jimin could reach his room quickly. As he lay down in bed a while later, he thought about Seokjin's words. He thought about the pack and the new alphas. Jimin remembered how those dark eyes pierced right through him, how something inside of him ripped apart that very second. Things would change. He was sure of it.
To trust or not to trust

Chapter Summary

...where Jimin gets to know the two new alphas and things aren't as easy as he'd hoped.

Chapter Notes

Special thanks to Rayne for beta-reading. I hope you enjoy.

Jimin woke up with a jolt, eyes snapping open and burning at the sudden brightness. He blinked towards the wooden ceiling for a moment before he slowly relaxed. *It was just a dream,* Jimin thought as the tension in his body eased down, blurry images of him locked up in a cell still haunting his mind. He had had this dream a few times now, always leaving him gasping for air when he woke up with a jerk. Jimin could feel his hands and neck feeling clammy as he turned to his side to find a new position to sleep again. Judging by the lack of noises from the hall and a look outside the window, Jimin suspected it to be still quite early. He had some time before they all would have breakfast in the canteens. Jimin always looked forward towards breakfast. He enjoyed being around the others from his pack, sitting with his friends and catching up on their lives. He used to have dinner with them, too, but Sungwoon had asked him to cook for him in private a few years ago, told him that he would enjoy having his omega wait for him in his hut. Jimin knew that a lot of alphas saw it as something prideful, coming home to their family after the hunt. So he had agreed and cooked for Sungwoon ever since.

A thought crossed Jimin's mind as he remembered his deal with Hoseok from the night before. He would have to help the two alphas if they needed anything which could take longer than his usual shift. What if he couldn't make it in time to be there before Sungwoon? Jimin's stomach tightened at the thought, a frown finding his face. He would have to talk to Hoseok and tell him that he couldn't stay for too long.

Jimin sighed, knowing that he wouldn't be able to sleep anyway and scrambled out of his bed. He padded over the wooden floor and shivered at the lack of his warm blanket around him. It was getting colder every day now which meant less success for the hunters. Jimin dreaded that time of the year, hated how the hunters' moods changed and the tension in the pack increased. Sungwoon would always return to the hut with his jaw set and a frown on his face, on edge until Jimin managed to calm him down. Another thought that made Jimin's chest feel incredibly tight as he stepped into the washing rooms.

He washed up quickly, not wanting to meet any of the other omegas. He made sure to wash his neck thoroughly, cleaning his scent glands to get Sungwoon's scent off of his skin. Jimin hoped it would
prevent another incident like the day before. He could still remember it clearly, seeing the look in the alpha’s eyes as if he was possessed. Jimin had never seen such a reaction to a smell before and wondered what exactly had happened between Sungwoon and the alpha that made him lose control like that.

Jimin decided to wear a comfortable sweater, not quite sure how much he would have to move throughout the day. He chose furs that he hadn’t worn in a while so they wouldn’t carry too much of Sungwoon’s scent and hoped it would all turn out well. There was not much he knew about his job in the infirmary, what tasks he would have to handle. Jimin felt both fear and excitement bubbling in his stomach as he made his way to the canteens.

“Ah, Jimin! Hey, sit with us!”, Hoseok called, waving to him from one of the wooden tables.

The hall was still relatively empty, only a few of the pack already awake. Medics, cooks and a few teachers were usually the first to come in, the others scrambling in within the following hours. Only the hunters would come in late, often sleeping until noon to get enough energy and rest for their hunt.

“Hoseok! I’m glad to see you, I wanted to talk to you anyway.” Jimin walked over towards him without getting food first, not really hungry yet anyway. His stomach was still filled with a mixture of anxiety and anticipation.

As he got closer, he noticed that Hoseok was not alone. Jimin recognised the tall, lanky man with the round glasses and cute dimples immediately: The librarian of their pack and all-known mastermind Kim Namjoon was sitting next to the medic, picking in his bowl of fruits.

“Namjoon, hey! I didn't know you two were friends!”, Jimin chimed as he sat down on the opposite side of them, chin propped up in his hand.

“Ah, a book fell onto my head a few weeks ago and Hoseok was thankfully there to check up on me immediately. I guess we’ve been friends since then”, Namjoon shrugged, a hint of pink covering his cheeks.

“We had school classes together back then but for some reason never really talked”, Hoseok recalled, smiling towards Namjoon shyly, “I’m glad we do now, though. How do you two know each other?”

“Namjoon and Taehyung were courting a few years back. It was just after Tae presented so they were pretty young and decided to stay friends after a while. I guess we never stopped talking since
“Speaking of Taehyung”, Hoseok piped in, “I'm going to ask him later if he’d be willing to help you out with the alphas. Seokjin and I will try to stay there overnight, although it would be best to keep them away from other alphas for now.” Hoseok grimaced and Namjoon deflated next to him, probably upset he wasn’t able to help as an alpha.

“That’s what I wanted to talk to you about. I can only stay until the hunters come back, I have to be at Sungwoon's hut and cook for him.” This caused both Namjoon and Hoseok to startle, their eyes widening and eyebrows shooting up.

“You have to...cook for him? When you aren't even mates yet?”, Namjoon repeated slowly as if it was the most shocking thing he’d heard in the past year.

“He's traditional”, Jimin shrugged as he felt his cheeks heat up in embarrassment of the others' reactions, “He likes to come home to his omega cooking for him, I remember it being the same with my parents.” Hoseok swallowed visibly before coughed shaking his head slightly.

“Um, okay then. Well, I guess Taehyung could come in after you. I'll ask him later. I talked to the head omega, by the way. It is all cleared up, you’re allowed to help in the infirmary for now.”

“How did you manage to persuade her, Hoseok?”, Namjoon gaped. The head omega was known to be a stern woman, even though she babied her son Sungwoon a lot and spoiled him to no end.

“I told her that the sooner the alphas will be patched up, the sooner the elders can decide what will happen to them. They cannot send them away when they are still injured so the decision will be made when both alphas are capable of living on their own again.”

“Nobody is capable of living on their own”, Jimin spoke up then, “We cannot live without our pack, there is no way of surviving. Even the best hunters won't make it without a pack! If we don't keep the alphas we might as well have left them to die in the first place.” Jimin didn’t know why he was so passionate about the alphas staying. There was something burning inside of him, causing him to get defensive over this topic. It was like emotions he didn't even know he had were suddenly reaching his surface, erupting out of him like a volcano.

“Jimin, I completely understand you and I agree. But right now, this is all we can do”, Hoseok told him calmly, reaching out to squeeze his hand, “How about you eat something and then we'll go,
hm?” Jimin still wasn't hungry but he knew there was a chance he wouldn't be able to fill his stomach later on.

“Allright.”

Jimin felt his nerves acting up as they stepped into the infirmary, shrugging off their coats. Hoseok had told Jimin that Seokjin had already talked to Yoongi and Jungkook to inform them about his arrival. Apparently, Yoongi had been under strong medication the day before and another incident would not happen again.

“You can call me whenever there is a medical problem. What we need you to do is help Jungkook eat, take his medicine or watch him in case he is in any pain. It's a little more difficult with Yoongi, he needs help when standing up and any kind of unusual pain needs to be reported immediately because his injuries are more dangerous. He is a little, well, harder to speak to but I doubt he means any harm. Just remember, they have been through a lot so they may need a little longer to be able to trust someone.” Jimin listens attentively, hoping to remember everything. It didn't seem like too hard and Jimin was glad he could always ask Hoseok or Seokjin for help. The two of them seemed to have taken care of helping the alphas wash already, so Jimin didn't have to do much.

“Overall, you will probably just sit around and wait most of the time, I would advise you to take a book with you or you could crochet”, Hoseok continued as they stepped into the room again, just like the day before.

“I haven't had time to read in...”, Jimin muttered, noticing that he truly couldn't remember the last time he was able to get lost in a book. His heart ached, knowing that his former favourite activity had been taken away from him by adulthood, leaving him little to no time to pick a book up again.

“Well, you will definitely have time to now”, Hoseok promised and Jimin beamed at him, excitement overweighting his nervousness.

Seokjin seemed to just finishing up with cleaning Yoongi's wound on his leg when his attention caught the sight of Jimin and Hoseok. As he smiled towards them, Jimin noticed the two alphas following his gaze, their own landing on Jimin. His breath caught in his throat as he returned the gaze, eyes flickering from one alpha to the other. Jungkook's eyes were round and curious whereas his brother's seemed rather grim. Jimin was just glad he didn't snarl at him again.
“Hello, you two. This is Park Jimin. He was kind enough to offer his help so he will be the one staying with you for today. If you feel any pain, talk to him, okay?”, Hoseok introduced them as he led Jimin to the middle of the room.

“Thank you for helping us”, the younger alpha spoke up, his voice croaked and lips barely able to move. Jimin's heart felt heavy at the sight.

“Of course”, Jimin smiled at him before his eyes slowly travelled towards Yoongi. The man's jaw was clenched, sharp eyes still on Jimin.

“He's the one from yesterday?” Jimin swallowed at the deep, raspy voice that echoed through the walls. Yoongi must have spoken to Seokjin although his eyes never left Jimin, something dark behind them.

“Yes. We hope you can keep yourself under control this time, Min Yoongi”, Seokjin responded in a cold tone, something Jimin rarely heard from the man. Yoongi finally seemed to tear his gaze away from Jimin then, eyes snapping to Seokjin. Jimin immediately released a breath he wasn't aware he was holding in.

“Why is he helping us if his alpha clearly wants us dead. How do I know that he won’t attack me or my brother?”, the alpha hissed, glaring at Seokjin whose expression hardened. Jimin's eyes widened, lips parting slightly at the insinuation. He remembered Hoseok's words from earlier, that the alphas had a hard time trusting people from this pack and tried to swallow down his pride. Getting Min Yoongi's trust would not be that easy but Jimin had to at least try.

“Sungwoon and I don't share our opinions concerning you two”, Jimin spoke up before Seokjin got the chance to, “He believes that the pack doesn't need more alphas but I see it from a different point of view. I think that you need a pack. So, let me help you before you push me away for being courted by someone you dislike.” Jimin felt something ease within him for speaking out his mind. It felt good. Powerful. He knew he could never speak like that to Sungwoon but having said it out loud just in this room made him feel proud of himself. He watched Yoongi’s expression change from shock to doubt to something he couldn't read. Yoongi kept his gaze on Jimin for a moment longer, lips pressed together and brows deeply furrowed before he turned to look at his brother.

“If you dare to hurt my brother you're dead.”

Jimin tried to hold back a shiver that threatened to run down his body. He knew the man was serious
“Yoongi, you're always so scary when you meet new people”, Jungkook suddenly snorted, shaking his head fondly, “I'm sure the omega – I mean, Jimin – won't try to harm us.” Hoseok snickered in response, Jimin almost having forgotten his presence. He walked up to Jungkook to ruffle his auburn hair, a fond look on his face.

“Believe me, Jiminie won't hurt a fly. Now, Seokjin really needs a few hours of sleep after watching you two the whole night and I need to look at our other patients! Just tell Jimin when you're hungry or anything.” With that, he nodded encouragingly towards Jimin and left the room, Seokjin following after him. The medic squeezed Jimin's shoulder before leaving and Jimin suddenly noticed that he would be alone with the two alphas now.

He looked towards them to see Jungkook leaning back against his pillow and Yoongi scowling with his gaze turned to the window, away from Jimin. Something inside of Jimin tucked at his chest, wanting to prove the alpha wrong. He would do a good job in helping them and prove that he stood behind his words. It was odd, Jimin hadn't felt so strongly about anything in awhile. It was like a fire suddenly lit inside of him, pushing him to do something.

“Did you eat breakfast already? Do you want something?”, Jimin timidly asked, relief washing over him when at least one of the two men reacted. Jungkook's head snapped to him, round eyes sparkling.

“I'm really hungry!”, he gasped, attempting to sit up but wincing. Jimin immediately rushed to him and helped him sit up properly. Jungkook didn't seem to have a problem with Jimin touching him, the younger letting Jimin help him without any restrain.

“I'll get you something, okay?”, Jimin chuckled, endeared by the younger's antics.

“Do you want something, too, Yooyoo?”, Jungkook asked and turned to his brother while Jimin held back a snort at the nickname.

“Don't call me that!” Yoongi send a glare towards his brother but didn't even glance in Jimin's direction before he turned his head into the other direction again, “I'm not hungry.”

Jungkook rolled his eyes and gave Jimin an apologizing smile, shrugged slightly. Jimin waved him off and simply went to get Jungkook's breakfast. He was glad that at least one of the brothers seemed
to trust Jimin and didn't want to let Yoongi's behaviour get to him. It was his first day, after all, there was still time to get used to each other.

Jimin prepared a plate for Jungkook in the small kitchen of the infirmary. Seokjin and Hoseok never had a lot of people stay overnight so there was not much to choose from but Jimin made sure to make a big portion for the still growing alpha. Soup and fresh bread with a bowl of fruits and a full glass of fresh orange juice seemed like a good breakfast and Jimin felt proud as he made his way back to the room.

“- don't have to be so mean, Yoongi! He wants to help us, at least!”

Jimin heard the brothers argue a he walked down the corridor. The door was still open so he could hear their voices clearly. Jimin didn't mean to pry but he didn't want to walk in on their fighting either. He hovered beside the door as he heard Yoongi's furious voice.

“You know what his alpha thinks about us! Have you seen the way he looked at us? The way he spoke about us when we were right there? For God's sake, Jungkook, he even wanted to fight me!”

“It's not like you were really friendly, either! Maybe they would have helped us if you hadn't growled at them the minute you saw them!”

“I did what I had to do to keep us safe! To keep you safe! Do you know what can happen to lone wolves in the forest? To week alphas, torn apart from their pack? I thought they would kill us then and there and if it weren't for the other hunters, this Sungwoon bastard would have done exactly that, maybe even rip off our furs to gift to his pretty omega!”

Jimin felt his heart beat strongly and fast behind his ribcage, blood rushing in his ears. Something stirred in his stomach, making his thoughts turn into a mess. He didn't want to listen anymore, couldn't hear what they said about Sungwoon. This was Jimin's alpha. This was his future mate. Jimin felt himself getting nauseous, the thought of Sungwoon gifting him Yoongi's or Jungkook's furs disgusting him. Sungwoon wouldn't have done that, right?, Jimin told himself, pushing that thought far away. It could have been a misunderstanding, an exaggeration of Yoongi. Sungwoon wouldn't have done that.

Jimin stepped forward then, walking inside the room and directly towards Jungkook who flinched slightly as Jimin suddenly appeared. Jimin could see him looking towards Yoongi but decided to ignore it.
“Th-that looks amazing, thank you”, Jungkook warily said, probably unsure whether Jimin had heard their conversation.

“You can't eat with your arm, right? I'll get a chair so I can feed you.” Jimin left the tray on the table beside Jungkook's bed to get one of the chairs in the back when he heard Yoongi growl quietly. Jimin stopped for a moment, closing his eyes to keep his temper.

“What?”, he snapped at the alpha.

“Nothing. Just know I'll keep an eye on you.” Yoongi crossed his arms in front of his chest, gaze boring into Jimin.

“Well, if you like the view”, Jimin shrugged, his own gaze as hostile as the alpha's. Yoongi seemed taken aback by that, blinking at him with his lips slightly parted. Jimin noticed how he looked far less intimidating like this, just like the day before when Jimin saw him sleeping. A rather handsome alpha if not for the constant scowl on his face and the venom in his cat-like eyes.

Jimin pushed the thought away, walking back to Jungkook. He sat down on the chair beside him, lifting the tray to his lap. He saw the joy in Jungkook's eyes upon seeing the food and held back a coo. Jungkook reminded him of his younger brother. Jimin felt his heart tug as he wondered how Jihyun was doing, if he was happy or sad, if an omega boy or girl has caught his interest or if he enjoyed being a hunter. Jimin hadn't talked to him in many years, could only catch a glimpse of him at bonfires or events with the whole pack.

“I'll start with the soup, okay?”

Jimin lifted the spoon to his mouth, let Jungkook blow softly before he carefully fed him the soup with his other hand under the spoon in case he spilled a little. Jimin remembered when his brother had hurt his arm once after a fight with a stronger alpha and Jimin had to feed him for two whole weeks. Back then, he hadn't appreciated the time he had to spend with him.

“You remind me a lot of my brother”, Jimin admitted out loud then as he kept on feeding Jungkook whose eyes widened at that.

“Why? Is he an alpha, too?”
“Yes”, Jimin chuckled, “I think you’re around his age. He is one of the hunters.”

“I used to be a hunter, too”, Jungkook chimed, bright smile showing all of his teeth.

“You would be great friends, I’m sure. I wish I could introduce you.”

“Why can't you?” Jimin nibbled on his lower lip at that, unsure whether he should talk about it. He glanced towards Yoongi, the alpha’s gaze on him as well before they quickly broke their eye-contact.

“Um, he isn't very fond of Sungwoon and when he started to court me, well, we kind of drifted apart”, Jimin explained shortly, staying on the surface of that story. Everything was so much more complicated.

“I see”, Jungkook nodded when a scoff from Yoongi brought the attention to the older alpha.

“So you chose your lover over your own brother?” Yoongi pierced Jimin with an almost disgusted gaze and Jimin felt his stomach clench. He swallowed through the fury in his chest, jaw clenched.

“It was not as easy as that. You wouldn't understand.”

“Don't you think I know alphas like yours? Future leaders of packs, raised thinking they can get anything they want in their life. And anyone. It's common knowledge that any omega that wants to keep their status and reputation should let the alpha court them. And apparently that was more important to you than your own brother”, Yoongi spat, dark eyes on Jimin. There was a beat of silence. A silence in which Jimin felt his heart shatter, his mind race and his resolve crumble. He took deep, steadying breaths, fighting against the tears collecting in his eyes. He wanted to scream. But he couldn't.

Jimin turned to Jungkook and continued to feed him, focusing on his steady breathing.

“Why aren't you yelling at me? Telling me to fuck off?”, Yoongi asked with a breathless chuckle as if he knew the answer already, “This is why I can't stand that alpha of yours. Doesn't even let you disagree with an alpha.”
Jimin speared him no glance, staying focused on Jungkook's food. He counted in his mind, something that always kept him from crying. He knew he would but not in front of him. He didn't want to give Min Yoongi what he wanted. The alpha provoked him, it was clear to Jimin now. But what he hated more was that he got his answer in the end. That Yoongi proved what he wanted to prove.

After Jungkook had breakfast, Jimin spent the rest of his time waiting. Hoseok had been right, there was not much to do and Jimin made a mental note to bring a book with him the next time. The silence was heavy as Jungkook slept most of the time and Yoongi refused to even look into Jimin's direction. Jimin still felt a heavy stone inside his stomach, the argument with the alpha not leaving his mind. It left a bitter taste on his tongue as the hours passed and the deafening silence stretched.

It was only when the door suddenly swung open and Taehyung came into view that Jimin felt his mood change. His best friend showing his dazzling boxy smile, breaking the thick tension in the room.

"Hello, new friends!", Taehyung chimed and Jimin could see Jungkook awakening fast.

"Hey Tae! Did Hoseok tell you everything?"

"Yes, yes, yes; cute young alpha is Jungkook with the wounded arm and grumpy older brother with scowl on his face is Yoongi with inner wounds!", Taehyung recalled, earning a glare from Yoongi. Jimin couldn't help but to chuckle and thinking that the alpha deserved it a little bit.

In that moment, Taehyung turned to Jungkook, breath audibly hitching. Jimin could see his eyes widening for a moment, lashes fluttering perplexed.

"Hi."

"Hey, I'm Jungkook!"

"I- I'm Taehyung", the blonde muttered, shy smile on his face that Jimin didn't know from him. He looked at his friend questioningly and huffed when Taehyung didn't even pay him any attention.
“Well, I guess you’ll be fine here?”, Jimin prompted, already making his way to the door.

“Yeah, yeah. You should hurry though if you want to cook for Sungwoon, the hunters will be back soon”, Taehyung warned. Jimin could hear Yoongi scoff in the back but couldn't care at the moment as panic flooded his chest.

“What? Already?”, Jimin squealed, heat thrumming in his body as he practically bolted out of the infirmary.

Jimin ran as fast as he could, knowing Sungwoon's hut was not close by. He really didn't want to explain to Sungwoon why he would be late, wanted to keep his new job a secret for just a little while more. His feet ran on their own as Jimin racked his brain for what he could cook, it had to be something quick. He panted as he reached the hut, sweat dripping down his temples. Jimin fumbled with the keys until he hurried inside, preparing the food in record time.

It was in that moment that Jimin wondered what would have happened if he had chosen his family.
Chapter Summary

...where Jimin doesn't want to be patient anymore.

Chapter Notes

sooo I wanted to update a little earlier than usual this week :) I hope you enjoy it!

As always, special thanks to Rayne for beta-reading <3

“Good morning, sunshine!”

Jimin let his eyes stay closed, breathing steadily in and out. If he pretended to be asleep, maybe Taehyung would leave again. Jimin had had a hard time falling asleep the day before and every hour of rest would be more than welcome. But Taehyung had never been one to give up easily and just seconds later, Jimin could feel his mattress dip before a warm weight was thrown onto his body.

“Too early, Tae”, Jimin whined as he attempted to push his friend off of him, with no luck.

“I didn't hear from you after you bolted out of the infirmary! I was worried, okay!”

Jimin blinked his eyes open at that, turning his head so he could squint at his best friend. Taehyung had his lips jutted forward, looking back at Jimin with furrowed brows. Jimin sighed before he let his head fall back into his pillow, gaze stuck on the wooden ceiling.

“Sorry, I panicked when you told me the hunters would come back soon. Sungwoon is...the situation is tense at the moment and I don't want to make it worse”, Jimin murmured, remembering his fear the day before.

“Why is it tense? Are you two fine?”

Jimin swallowed thickly, mortification stirring in his stomach and leaving his neck flushed. How was
he supposed to tell Taehyung he couldn't sleep with his alpha? That it caused Sungwoon to be more frustrated with each day and made Jimin feel so...useless.

“Tae...do you think I'm a good omega?” Taehyung sat up at that, a deep frown on his face.

“I don't even know how anyone can be a good omega. It's not exactly a skill. Where does this come from, Jimin?” Taehyung’s gaze was heavy on his best friend. Jimin looked anywhere but him, chest feeling tight.

“If I can't please my alpha then I'm not a good omega, right?”, Jimin muttered, finally glancing towards Taehyung who just looked confused.

“What do you mean you can't please-”, Taehyung started before he seemed to understand, eyes widening slightly, “Oh.” Jimin groaned and hid his face under his hands, feeling like a fool.

Sungwoon had been courting him for three years, he couldn't understand how it could have come to this.

“Since when? Jimin, if he forces you to anything-”

“No, no, he doesn't force me, just...he kind of pushes me? Everything was fine at first, we barely saw each other when he started to court me and I was so young, Tae, I was so excited to be courted. I don't know when or how or why it happened but I feel like my body just doesn't want to anymore. I thought I was just tired or exhausted from work but I just- I don't know why-” Jimin's emotions started to built up inside of him as he tried to speak through the lump in his throat. He could feel his eyes turn glassy and his cheeks burning up, feeling both relieved and ashamed. It was the first time he had spoken about it and he forgot how good it felt to let things out.

“Calm down, calm down”, Taehyung shushed him, cupping his cheeks gently until Jimin seemed to have his breathing under control again, “It's fine, do you hear me? It's perfectly fine.”

“Are you sure?”, Jimin sniffed, looking at Taehyung with round eyes.

“Yes, absolutely sure. If you don't want to, you don't want to! Did he make you feel bad? Because I swear to God, Jimin, I will rip his head off”, Taehyung threatened, frustration lacing his words.
“He's traditional...I can't blame him for being disappointed”, Jimin shrugged which caused Taehyung to scoff.

“You know you don't have to stay with him, right? I was never fond of him, you know that, but I accepted him because I thought he treated you right.”

“Tae, you know it's not as easy as that. I couldn't leave him without the pack alpha and head omega hating me forever and that is practically a death sentence”, Jimin sighed before he realised what he had said and quickly shook his head, “Not that I want to, of course. He is my future mate and I...I love him.” Taehyung stared at Jimin for a moment, eyes squinting slightly.

“Are you sure? Do you really love him?”

Jimin took a deep breath, his words stuck in his throat. He had never felt like the people in books and fairytales, had never felt his heart beating fast with adoration or his stomach tickle with butterflies. Jimin had never stared at Sungwoon when he wasn't looking, nor did he felt like floating in the air out of happiness. But those were just exaggerations, right? Jimin respected Sungwoon, thought he was a handsome, young alpha. Sungwoon wore his scent and kissed him every day, gifted him furs and made sure to be a good alpha. Sungwoon’s parents liked Jimin as well, trusted him with being the future head omega. Jimin knew he had it better than most and didn't want to throw that away. His relationship was important to him.

“Yes, I'm sure.” He didn't look into Taehyung's eyes, instead focusing on a random spot on the ceiling.

“Then I trust you. But, please, don't let him pressure you to do anything you don't want to, okay?” Taehyung leaned forward until Jimin met his gaze, giving him an encouraging smile.

“Thank you, Tae.”

Breakfast went by quickly while Jimin listened to Namjoon and Taehyung talking about the mating ceremony of an alpha girl to an omega girl that had just recently broken off the courtship with another alpha. It was a scandal amongst the pack, older people frowning upon anyone that broke off a courtship in the first place. Jimin didn't want to judge the girl and simply hoped enough people
would come to the ceremony.

He made his way to the infirmary, unsure of what to expect. He knew Yoongi despised him, would find a fault in all of his actions only to start an argument again. But Jimin also knew he needed help. His pride told him to turn around, to leave the alpha to find out the consequences of his behaviour towards Jimin. However, Jimin's gut told him not to give up on this. Even if Yoongi disliked him, Jimin wanted help the wolves to come back to health. If it was for himself, for Seokjin and Hoseok, for Jungkook, the pack or for himself, he wasn't sure. He just felt like he had to do this.

As Jimin entered the room, Hoseok was rubbing some yellow ointment onto Jungkook's wounds, the medic greeting Jimin with a bright smile. Jungkook looked happy to see him as well and Jimin felt his heart swell at the wide toothy grin.

“Hey, Jiminie, we were just wondering where you were!” Hoseok said while continuing treating Jungkook’s wounds, “I talked to Taehyung and he will come in earlier, I'm sorry if you got into… trouble yesterday.” Jimin felt his cheeks heat up, he didn't want to seem like he had a curfew.

“Oh, no, it was fine! But thank you. Did everything work out so far?”

“Ah, you did a great job, yesterday! Yoongi didn't visit the toilet until Taehyung came in though, so please take care that he releases himself if he has to. You know he needs help reaching the bathroom”, Hoseok told Jimin off-handedly, causing a growl from Yoongi to echo through the room. Jimin finally let his gaze wander to the second bed, seeing Yoongi scowling with his arms crossed in front of his chest as if he hadn't moved since the day before.

“It's none of his business when I go to the fucking toilet!”, Yoongi spat, fixing Hoseok with a glare who sighed with an exasperated eye-roll.

“Frankly, it is. He is here to take care of you so I can handle my other patients. So please stop making this more difficult than it has to be, I don't want to worry about your bladder the whole day”, Hoseok responded and closed the lid of the ointment, either not seeing Yoongi's appalled gasp or simply ignoring it.

Jimin bit on his lip to hold back an amused snort as he saw the flush on Yoongi's neck. As a long-term patient of Hoseok, Jimin was used to the other's openness and lack of vague descriptions when talking about medical issues. Clearly, Yoongi and Jungkook were new to this, both of their eyes wide.
“So, I guess everything’s settled then. Be nice to Jimin”, Hoseok said with a pointed look towards Yoongi, “And Taehyung will come in the evening, like yesterday. Try not to be too flustered, Jungkook, Taehyung was a blushing mess when he left the infirmary this night.”

This time it was Jungkook who gasped loudly, the tips of his ears beet red. Hoseok merely chuckled and left the room, not before giving Jimin an encouraging smile. Jimin felt already more at ease, Jungkook’s state making him chuckle.

“You can close your mouth now, Jungkook”, Jimin teased, sitting down on the chair between the beds.

“I wasn’t- I mean- nobody was blushing!” Jungkook’s voice shot up high which only made Jimin snicker into his hand.

“Oh please”, Yoongi suddenly scoffed, “It was unbearable with you two here. With all those pheromones in the air I felt like back when we were still living in the alpha den and all the teenage alphas went crazy as soon as they even saw an omega.”

“All except you, of course. Min Yoongi never cared about an omega”, Jimin answered sarcastically, raising a brow at the alpha.

“No, I did not. I had other things in mind, there was no time for all the courting bullsh-

“Yoongi, please”, Jungkook interrupted his brother. Yoongi’s gaze was cold as it met Jimin’s but for a short second, Jimin saw something flicker behind his dark orbs. Something vulnerable and far from the venom they usually bared. By the next flutter of his lashes, though, it was gone and Yoongi’s gaze moved towards the window.

“Are you hungry?”, Jimin asked to change the subject, sensing the shift in mood from the alphas.

“Hoseok brought fresh bread rolls from the kitchens this morning!”, Jungkook waved him off with a bright smile before he turned to Yoongi, “But Yoongi, you didn’t eat anything yet. Do you want something?” Silence. Jimin watched as Yoongi merely shook his head, his jaw set. He tried to ignore the way it frustrated him to no ends.
“Yoongi, you ate like a starved man when Taehyung brought us food yesterday. Just let him get some breakfast, your health is more important than your pride”, Jungkook tried again, not noticing how Jimin's breath hitched.

“Fine. I'll eat something.”

Without sparing one second, Jimin jumped from his seat and hurried out of the room. He walked towards the kitchen in a fast speed, heart beating loudly in his ears. The moment he closed the door behind him, Jimin choked on a sob, all air leaving his lungs. Jimin felt his face scrunch up, vision turning blurry as he slid down the door. He didn't cry, didn't let one tear roll down his cheeks. The lump in his throat ached as he curled his hands into fists. He forced himself to breath, trying to bring order into his mess of thoughts. He didn't understand what he did to Yoongi for him to treat him like that. It wasn't fair. Jimin had already explained that he didn't agree with Sungwoon, was this truly the only reason Yoongi hated him? There was no other word for it than pure hate. Jimin had been nothing but kind to the alpha, he didn't deserve this. And for Yoongi to have no problems with Taehyung – with his own best friend – when he has been nothing but unkind to Jimin? So, it was not just a matter of trust for new acquaintances. It was only a distaste against Jimin and Jimin only.

Jimin took a deep breath, trying to swallow past the lump in his throat. He was stronger than this. Whatever Min Yoongi's problem was, it would not become Jimin's. Pressing his lips together in hope to stop his lower lip from trembling, Jimin opened his hands, seeing the painful marks his nails left in his palm.

“Get yourself together”, Jimin murmured and took another deep breath before he finally stood up.

He pulled out a tray and prepared another bowl of fruits. There were still some bun rolls left and Jimin placed them neatly onto a plate with a bit of butter and jam on the side. He made another plate with slices of cheese and meat and finished it off with a cup of hot tea. He wanted to show Yoongi that he was the bigger person.

Both Jungkook's and Yoongi's eyes widened as they saw the tray in Jimin's hands. Jimin didn't react to it, although he felt a little triumphant on the inside. He handed the tray to Yoongi who wordlessly took it and placed it on his lap.

“Don't you want to thank Jimin?” Jungkook huffed from the side and Jimin watched Yoongi from the foot of his bed. Would he actually not even thank Jimin?
“Thank you”, Yoongi grumbled, his eyes on his plate and a scoff following after.

“You can do this a litter nicer”, Jungkook pressed and Jimin was never so thankful for the boy. His own jaw clenched as he waited for Yoongi’s reaction.

“Well, I don't want to be nice to the Mister-Perfect-Future-Head-Omega”, Yoongi shrugged and something inside of Jimin snapped. He leaned forward with a jolt and grasped the frame of the bed with a force that caused the alpha to flinch.

“What the hell did I do to you?”, he hissed, gaze boring into Yoongi just like his did to Jimin on the first day he met him. Yoongi seemed to recover quick from his initial shock before his expression turned hard again.

“I know people like you, they are the reason why I have to lie in this damn bed in the first place!”, Yoongi spat, rage in every word. He opened his mouth to speak again but Jungkook interrupted him, his voice loud and harsh.

“Yoongi, stop! He's not Donghyun! Just stop letting your anger out on him, he's got nothing to do with what happened!” Jimin gaped at Jungkook, not having expected his outburst. Jungkook sacked back into his pillow, an exhausted sigh escaping his lips.

“Jimin just wants to help us and you… God, he doesn't even know who Donghyung is”, Jungkook muttered, voice broken. Jimin dared to glance towards Yoongi whose face was ducked, lips pressed into a thin line. Jimin halted for a moment, considering that maybe Yoongi’s hate was rooted deeper. He wanted to know, wanted to find out the backstory to why the brothers got into the state they did. But he guessed this was not the place nor the time.

As silence stretched over them, Jimin sat back onto his chair and pulled out the book he had packed earlier. He tried to concentrate but couldn't help looking towards Yoongi every few seconds, studying his still lasting reaction to Jungkook's words. Yoongi ate the food Jimin brought him but kept his head low, as if trying to hide from something. His eyes seemed deep in thought, brows furrowed throughout the whole time. Jimin noticed the way he jutted his lips forward, the way they slowly gained a pink colour after he finished his tea. Jimin felt his heartbeat strong in his chest. He continued to read.

Seokjin came in shortly after Jimin helped Jungkook take his medicine, smiling when he saw how steady Jimin held the glass to Jungkook's lips.
“Hi! I have some free time and thought I should check on you guys”, Seokjin said as he walked towards Jungkook examining his body vaguely, “The wounds look good, you seem to heal quickly. I can also tell that your scent will be coming back soon, it's a sign that you feel comfortable here.” Jimin was surprised to hear that because he could still not smell much but he trusted Seokjin to know what he was talking about.

“I do feel comfortable here, I hope the pack elders let us stay!”, Jungkook answered Seokjin who simply agreed with him. Jimin knew the chances were looking slim, especially with Sungwoon against them but he hoped so, too. Jungkook deserved a home again.

“And how are you, Yoongi? Let's take a walk to the bathroom, hm?”, Seokjin then called as he turned to Yoongi, his wording more vague than his mate's but still clear enough for everyone to understand. Yoongi just nodded, not raising his eyes to meet anyone. Seokjin helped him stand, holding Yoongi's waist as he slowly accompanied him towards the bathroom.

Jimin saw that Yoongi wasn't as tall as he imagined, just about the same height as Jimin was. He had a broad chest, the rest of his body slender. Jimin waited until they were inside of the bathroom, gaze following them involuntarily, until he turned back to Jungkook. He took a deep breath, hoping not to overstep any boundaries.

“So”, Jimin muttered timidly, sitting down in the chair, “Who was this Donghyun? A- a lover?”

“Far from it”, Jungkook chuckled bitterly, “It's a long story and not mine to tell. But Donghyun was an omega, courted by the pack alpha's son. Just like you. I think- I think he hasn't processed what happened at our old pack and now just lashes out on you. You don't deserve this but Yoongi -” Jungkook was interrupted by the door opening again, Seokjin stepping out.

“Just to inform you two, you can hear every word that is being said through the bathroom door”, Seokjin whispered and Jimin felt his entire face flush instantly.

“Ah, okay, thank you, Seokjin”, Jungkook said warily, grimacing when the medic left again. Jimin nibbled on his lower lip. So much for getting to know their story.

Things stayed tense after Yoongi returned and Seokjin left them again. Jimin tried to read, his lack of concentration causing him to repeat every sentence over and over again before he could understand what it meant. His thoughts kept getting in the way, raising questions that he desperately wanted an
answer to. But he knew it was best not to pry too much.

Taehyung came in earlier than the day before, just like Hoseok had promised. Jimin saw how his friend wore dangling earrings and how his lips were more red than usual, but he chose to leave it uncommented. Jungkook's eyes seemed to practically light up at the sight of Taehyung, lips parting in amazement. Jimin busied himself with packing in his stuff and putting on his furs to not stare at his friend helplessly blushing. Although Jimin could not stop himself from grinning slightly, a warm feeling tugging in his chest.

“I'll see you tomorrow”, Jimin called then, letting his gaze wander towards Yoongi one last time before he shut the door behind him. He hadn't been able to read the alphas expression, the man still a mystery. However, there was no time to spare and Jimin had to shift his attention to the next obstacle: Sungwoon.
The First Crack

Chapter Summary

...where Jimin sees and Yoongi knows.

Chapter Notes

I hope you enjoy everything so far! Feedback is always welcome, I've never wrote ABO before and hope I don't disappoint OuO

Special thanks to Rayne who beta read this chapter <3

Jimin felt tense. His lips moved against his alpha's, hot breaths mingling with each other, and yet, he wanted nothing more than for it to be over so he could go back to the omega den. They were both pressed against the door of Sungwoon's hut since the alpha had asked for a more intimate good night kiss. It was not like Jimin pushed away, not like he hadn't consented to this. Jimin knew he couldn't give Sungwoon what he asked for and thought this would be a good alternative. A compromise.

“Are you finally getting in the mood, omega?”, Sungwoon growled against his neck and Jimin grimaced. There was a dull pull in his lower area, he was not completely unaffected by the situation. However, he was not entirely into it, either.

“You said we don't have to go further”, Jimin mumbled, not looking into Sungwoon's eyes when he looked up from where he was sucking on Jimin's skin.

“But you're doing so good for me, baby”, Sungwoon rasped quietly but Jimin could hear the edge to his tone. He swallowed thickly and forced himself to look into Sungwoon's eyes.

“You said you wouldn't force me.”
“I’m not forcing you, you can leave whenever you want”, Sungwoon hissed before he took a step back, jaw set.

“But now you’re angry, Sungwoon! Isn’t that forcing me emotionally?” Jimin felt his blood rushing to his ears, the fear of upsetting Sungwoon causing his chest to tighten. But it also felt good. Saying this felt… deliberating.

“Forcing you emotionally?”, Sungwoon scoffed bitterly. “We’ve slept together so many times, Jimin, and you suddenly decide to deprive me of natural pleasure my omega should be providing and then accuse me of forcing you to do so? Am I not allowed to ask for something you never had a problem giving me before?” Jimin felt the fire in his gut, his blood boiling inside of him. How did Sungwoon manage to turn this around and make him the bad guy? Jimin pressed his lips together to not scream as he felt his stomach clench painfully. He didn’t want to cry, he wanted to yell at Sungwoon. Yell at him and run away, preferably to a place far away from alphas.

“Your silence speaks volumes, omega. You can’t say anything more because you know I am right.”

You are not right, shut up, shut up, shut up!

“I don’t know where this comes from but you are sabotaging what we have. I am a good alpha. The future pack alpha, even.”

I am not sabotaging us, I try and try again to be a good omega for you. I try and work and always keep my mouth shut. I try so hard.

“I know you want to keep the life you have. You want to be a trusted omega, want to be the future head omega of the Ha pack. You want to be free of scandal.”

I know there is no going back. I know that I have no choice.

“Think about your actions, omega. I cannot promise you a happy life when you push me away.”

I don’t have the choice to a happy life either way. I just want to survive.
“Reflect on your wrong-doings. I will let you go now but remember my words. I won't force you to stay with me. But I won't promise you to stay, either. If you don't want me, I can leave. Then you won’t be my responsibility any more.”

And Jimin knew what that meant. Breaking off the courtship would be a death sentence. No other alpha would want him, the pack alpha would despise him and the pack would no longer accept him. He would be forced to leave the pack which he would not be able to survive due to his physical and emotional state. At Jimin's age, every courtship was serious. There was no going back.

Jimin felt numb as he stared at Sungwoon, his lips still moving. His jaw wasn't set any longer, the alpha had probably sensed that he had won the argument. He held Jimin in his hands and he knew it. Jimin couldn't hear what he said, white noise loud in his ears. But he could guess what Sungwoon uttered. It was what he was told since he was young. Sungwoon didn't even realise what he was doing, Jimin was sure of it. In the end, he did what every future pack alpha did: use his power to keep his face in the society.

Suddenly, Min Yoongi came to Jimin's mind. His words about Jimin, about people like Jimin. Yoongi had said he knew what they were like. He spoke about Sungwoon as if he had known him since birth, his words bearing truth behind the venom in his voice. Jimin felt nauseous. Humiliated. Wiser, in a way. But he would love to be a fool again. There was a reason people turned a blind eye towards injustice. The more you saw, the more you suffered.

Jimin felt restless throughout the whole night. He tossed and turned in his bed, sat up and lied down again and tried drinking some water to cool his burning skin. He felt nauseous and exhausted, Sungwoon's words were swimming in his mind over and over again. Jimin had cried, had hit his pillow, tucked at his hair. He had let out everything that had built up inside of him. Now, all that was left was numbness. Numbness and Exhaustion.

Jimin decided there would be no point in trying to sleep any longer as he went to take a bath, the moonlight the only source of light in the washing room. No one was awake at this time, silence filling the air. Jimin needed that silence. He let his body sink into the warm water and exhaled deeply. He had to stay strong. He had to pull himself together and fight through this. He could ask the medics for some kind of help for his body. Some kind of stimulator... Jimin felt a shiver run through his body, chest tightening painfully. He had to stop thinking about this. About his future with Sungwoon.
Jimin didn't know if it was a good idea but it was as if his feet had been moving on their own. He stood in front of the infirmary, heart hammering in his chest and mouth dry. He hoped Hoseok or Seokjin were inside, knowing that sometimes other alphas or omegas from the pack took the night-shifts. Quickly, Jimin swung open the door, teeth nibbling on his lower lip.

“Hel- Jimin?”

Jimin was glad to see Seokjin in the dimly lit room and he gave him a small smile as he stepped closer.

“Can we talk somewhere private? I need... some help”, Jimin murmured, even though they seemed to be alone. Seokjin didn't seem to mind though as he immediately ushered Jimin to one of the consultation rooms.

“What do you need help with, Jimin?” They both sat down opposite from each other and Jimin suddenly felt even more nervous than before. He ducked his head with his gaze in his lap, his hands fidgeting with the hem of his sweater. He took a deep breath before he finally spoke.

“I – I need some kind of medicine. It's embarrassing, really, because I'm not actually sick but I – well, I need some medicine.” He glanced towards Seokjin who watched him intently, eyebrows furrowed. Jimin swallowed before he continued, voice hushed.

“I cannot sleep with Sungwoon. And I just- I have to. I need something to make my body... want again.” Jimin shook his head, wondering when he lost control over his life like that. How did he let it come this far? The gasp escaping Seokjin's lips was more than enough to let Jimin hide his face in his hands.

“Jimin, what do you mean you have to?” Seokjin whispered, voice broken and eyes torn.

“Well, you alphas have needs. And I can't... I don't know why but I can't...” A lump formed in his throat again but Jimin didn't want to cry any more. He forced himself to calm down, for his own sake.

“Did Sungwoon tell you that? Jimin, alphas have the same needs as omegas. Of course, we seek pleasure but not in a way that we have to force our omegas to have intercourse. Sungwoon will survive if you don't want to at the moment”, Seokjin scoffed, “And needs aside, Jimin, please don't ever let anyone pressure you into sleeping with someone. Even if it's not your first time, if your body
doesn't want to right now, there is probably a good reason for it. Don't push it with medicine.” Jimin sighed, shame waving through him. He didn't know what to believe any more.

“Seokjin, please. I- I can’t”, Jimin breathed but stopped before his voice could crack. His gaze was averted but he could feel Seokjin's eyes on him.

“Jimin, I'm not going to pretend that leaving him is an option. I know Sungwoon's position and I know leaving the pack is...”, Seokjin sighed, continuing with a soft and quiet tone, “There are alternatives. You could make a compromise with him, allow him to be with other omegas for his physical needs.”

“What? Doesn't this take away my worth if my mate sleeps with other omegas?”

“Well, it shouldn't be made public. If honour and worth are your only problems with this scenario than I'm sure someone could be found who could help you two out. We could say you have some medical problem if he needs a reason to agree to this.” Jimin would have guessed the thought of Sungwoon with some other omega would make him jealous. But for some reason, the only problem Jimin had with this idea was how it would look like if anybody was to find out.

“It does sound like a solution. Thank you.”

“Jimin, I hope you are aware that this is just a momentary solution. This is not just about intercourse, this is about emotional pressure and manipulation. As your doctor, I won't make you talk about this with me. But please, please, come to me or Hoseok if you ever want to talk. Or talk to Taehyung about this. You don't have to go through this alone.”

Seokjin's gaze was warm and reassuring, as if he knew exactly what Jimin was going through. Jimin was glad Seokjin understood that Jimin could not just escape this situation easily. He was about to thank the medic again when the door to the room opened, a tired looking Taehyung peeking in.

“Hey, Hoseok is looking over the boys now so I'm off t- Chim? What are you doing here?”, the blonde asked, worry marking his sleepy face.

“Ah, I'll explain it tomorrow! Go to bed and get some sleep, Tae”, Jimin muttered, not wanting to keep his friend from his well deserved rest. Taehyung seemed to accept it though as he nodded and left, mouth stretched into a yawn. As soon as the door closed again, Jimin turned back to Seokjin.
“You know, I cannot sleep anyway and Hoseok could need a good round of rest. How about I watch the alphas? It would keep my mind from all this mess, to be honest”, Jimin suggested, hoping to give Hoseok and Seokjin something back for all their help so far. Seokjin smiled in return, plump lips stretching wide.

“Oh, I'm sure he would be so thankful! He has been doing all the night shifts for the past weeks and he deserves some sleep. Plus, I will be going to bed now soon and I really missed cuddling my mate.” Seokjin sounded so fond that Jimin couldn't help but feel a wave a jealousy stir in his gut. But he was glad for Hoseok, glad he found an alpha that truly appreciated him and vice versa. Jimin eyed the mating mark on Seokjin's neck, teeth ripping at the skin of his lips.

“Did you always know Hoseok was the one for you?”

“I did.”

“I see.”

Jimin gently knocked on the door before he entered the room with careful steps. Hoseok sat on the chair opposite of the beds, head leaned back against the wall. Upon noticing Jimin, he sat up more straightly and Jimin could see his weak smile in the dark room.

“Hey, what are you doing here?”, Hoseok whispered.

“I couldn't sleep and wanted something to do. I talked to Seokjin, so you can go to bed.”

“What? Really?”, Hoseok smiled, eyes sparkling in the dim light of the moonshine, “Are you sure you don't mind?”

“I really don't! They are asleep anyway, so no arguments with Yoongi.” They both chuckled and glanced towards the sleeping alpha, tucked under his blanket.
“So no progress with him?” Hoseok sighed as he stood up and Jimin took his place on the chair.

“I feel like it's just getting worse. I don't understand why he hates me but Jungkook hinted that it has something to do with their old pack.”

“We will try to find a solution. If he continues with this behaviour, we will have a good, long talk with him. Let's hope he will calm down on his own, for now.” Jimin was not sure that would happen but he nodded and Hoseok squeezed his shoulder before leaving the room.

The sound of the door shutting was loud in the silent room, causing Jimin to flinch slightly. Jungkook stopped snoring but continued to breath steadily in and out, still sleeping soundly. Jimin exhaled and leaned back against the chair when he heard a low murmur from the other bed.

Yoongi shifted, a low noise that sounded close to a whine escaping his lips. His hands fist ed the sheets and opened up again a few times, feet stretching where they peeked out from underneath the covers. Jimin held his breath and watched the alpha as he slipped in and out of consciousness, soft whines filling the room. Jimin didn't notice the smile tugging at his lips at first, Yoongi's wiggling reminding him of the sleepy toddlers he usually took care of. It was when a fond chuckle fell from his lips that Jimin realised he had been staring and quickly averted his gaze. However, Yoongi suddenly spoke up, eyes fluttering open.

“Taehyung?”, he whispered sleepily, voice rough, “Can you help me? I need to pee.”

Jimin felt his heart sink, body frozen on the chair. His words were stuck in his dry throat as he opened and closed his lips in attempt to speak up. He was not scared of the alpha but it was an uncomfortable situation, especially with Yoongi usually rejecting Jimin's help. The alpha still didn't seem to recognise Jimin as he leaned on one of his arms to look up.

“Taehyung?”

Jimin warily stood up, bringing his face under the soft moonshine. Finally, Yoongi seemed to recognise him, tired eyes instantly wide as he sucked in a breath. Jimin took one careful step forward, raising his hands in surrender when Yoongi seemed move back as much as he could.

“Yoongi, let me help you. Seokjin and Hoseok are gone and Taehyung is at the omega den. There is no one else to help”, he said quietly but with confidence. The alpha just blinked up at him as
if he didn't believe he was real.

“You don't want to wake up Jungkook, right?”, Jimin continued and took another step forward, “Just let me help you before you open your wounds.”

“What- what are you doing here?”, Yoongi hissed when Jimin stepped forward again, now standing right beside the bed.

“I took Hoseok's shift. Now, try to get out of bed, I will help you.” Jimin could see the inner conflict behind Yoongi's eyes and tried his hardest not to lose his patience. It was frustrating and insulting but Jimin knew that it was a big step. An alpha being helpless could be hurtful to their pride and with Yoongi's and Jimin's relationship, it was probably even worse. Jimin just wanted Yoongi to realise that his health was more important than that. So he waited.

Yoongi glanced towards Jungkook for a moment before he finally nodded, lips pressed into a thin line. Jimin held back any noise of relief as he watched Yoongi slowly get out of bed. His hands were ready to hold him once he stood, just like he saw Seokjin do it before. Yoongi avoided eye-contact with Jimin but let him wrap his arm around his waist. Jimin felt his blood rushing to his ears as he gripped Yoongi's shirt tightly, the alpha wrapping an arm around Jimin's shoulders.

“Okay, just tell me if anything hurts.”

Yoongi nodded again, still not meeting Jimin's eyes. They both took a step forwards but Yoongi lost his balance and fell right into Jimin's side. Jimin quickly supported his waist on both sides, managing to keep his hold.

“Fuck”, Yoongi mumbled under his breath, “Sorry.”

“Hey, hey, it's fine. You just woke up and you're balance is off, it was bound to happen”, Jimin reassured, trying to take the next step. He kept both of his hands firm on Yoongi, making sure not to touch any wounds.

Both of them took their time walking step by step towards the small bathroom. Yoongi obviously struggled but he didn't fall again. Jimin noticed how Yoongi grunted sometimes or clenched his jaw in pain and walked even slower, tightening the hold on the alpha. It was as if he was completely taken in by his instinct to take care of him, their history not relevant now. Jimin wanted to bring Yoongi to the bathroom and back to his bed safely and that was all that mattered to him.
As they reached the bathroom door, Jimin opened it quickly before his hands found Yoongi again. He turned the light on with his elbow and kicked the door shut with his foot, hoping Jungkook wouldn't wake up from the sound. With the light suddenly on, Jimin saw Yoongi's messy hair and swollen, glassy eyes. His lips were a soft pink colour, his nose red around the tip. Jimin knew he was the reason why his expression was so tense and he couldn't help but to hurt at the fact. Not even now, when he helped Yoongi, did the man look into his eyes.

“Um, should I turn around?”, Jimin muttered with a low voice but Yoongi shook his head, shame in his eyes.

“You have to- I can't bend down and- shit”, he spat, lower lip trembling. Jimin stared with wide eyes for a moment before it suddenly clicked.

“Oh, your… your shorts.”

He swallowed dryly before he crouched down, neck and face flushing furiously. He understood why Yoongi felt humiliated and he wished he could tell him that it was okay. That Yoongi was injured and that it was fine to need help. Jimin grabbed the hem of his boxershorts and pulled them down, careful of his wounds. Yoongi's shirt was long enough to cover his private parts so that it wasn't even more uncomfortable for the both of them. As soon as the fabric lay on the floor, Jimin stood up and turned around, biting hard onto his lower lip.

The next seconds were the most uncomfortable Jimin had ever spent and he tried his best to keep his eyes on the wall in front of him. His skin was burning, blush reaching up to the tip of his ears. He heard the soft rip of toilet paper before the toilet flushed and Jimin turned around again. He hurried to bend down and slip the shorts onto Yoongi again, fingers careful not to touch. He led Yoongi to the sink where he could wash his hands, keeping his hands still around him in case he lost his balance again.

Jimin saw the pink colour on Yoongi's pale skin, saw how it covered both of his cheeks. Yoongi's brows were deeply furrowed, eyes focused on his hands. Reassuring, consulting words were on his tongue but Jimin kept silent. He didn't know how Yoongi would react, if starting another fight would be helpful in this situation. Jimin caught Yoongi's gaze trailing to the mirror over the sink, taking in his own reflection. Yoongi swallowed thickly, mouth twisting into a grimace.

“It's my own fault I'm in this position”, Yoongi muttered suddenly, voice barely above a whisper, “I like to blame you but deep inside I know it. It's all on me.” Jimin felt his heartbeat roar in his ears as he stared at the alpha, not knowing how to respond. He couldn't believe Yoongi was actually talking to him, wanting to know more about their story, about what happened.
But before he could even open his mouth, Yoongi shook his head with a bitter chuckle. He looked weak, exhaustion deep in his eyes. He turned around with a low grunt of pain which snapped Jimin out of his state of shock. He wrapped his arms around the alpha again and helped him walk back.

The silence this time was heavy, Jimin's thoughts racing through his mind. He wasn't sure how to react to Yoongi's words or if he should react at all. He didn't know if it was a peace offering and whether he would even be able to accept it. Jimin wanted to ask but also didn't want to push it so he continued to walk wordlessly next to him. When they reached his bed, Jimin helped Yoongi get inside before he grabbed the blanket and pulled it up.

“You don't actually have to tuck me in”, Yoongi grumbled but there was no venom in his voice so Jimin continued to straighten out the blanket. Yoongi was not the only stubborn one out of the two.

As Jimin was done, he stayed, just for a moment. Yoongi looked up at him and even if he didn't word it, Jimin understood his silent thanks. The slightest hint of a pine scent caught his nose, bringing memories back of when Jimin used to play in the forest as a kid. He used to love the smell of trees.

“You're welcome”, Jimin breathed and with a ghost of a smile around his lips, Jimin turned around and left the bed.

Yoongi fell asleep quickly, Jungkook's soft snoring the only sound filling the room again. Jimin took a deep breath. The scent of pines lingered for a little while before it left again, leaving Jimin with nothing but old memories and a soft smile on his lips.
Jimin hadn’t noticed that he had fallen asleep until he felt a gentle touch on his shoulder. Being slowly shaken awake, Jimin's eyes fluttered open to see Jungkook standing next to him. Jungkook smiled down at him tiredly, red hair sticking out into every direction.

“Good morning”, he murmured, voice still hoarse and Jimin suddenly realised that it was truly morning already. The omega looked around the room to see broad daylight shining through the window. The only sound echoing through the walls was the steady breathing of Yoongi who was still sleeping. Jimin looked up to Jungkook again.

“I can't believe I fell asleep when I was supposed to watch you”, he grumbled and clumsily stood up. His legs and neck hurt due to the uncomfortable position he was resting in and he could already feel the headache building up between his temples.

“Why are you here anyway? Isn't your shift usually during the day?” Jungkook walked over to his bed where he cautiously sat down, resting his head back against the wall.

“Ah, I couldn't sleep and thought Hoseok needed a night off. Why were you up?” Jimin stretched his arms to both sides when he suddenly noticed the scent of mint and lime in the air and...
froze.

“I just needed to pee and- why are you looking like that?”, Jungkook snorted as he took in Jimin's surprised expression.

“Jungkook, is that your scent? The mint and lime? Did your scent really come back?” Jimin hurried towards the foot of the bed, excited for the younger. He knew it meant that Jungkook felt comfortable in the pack now and even if the scent was faint, it felt more natural to talk to him, being used to everyone in the pack baring an own scent.

“Yup! Some old friends of mine even called me minty because of that!”, Jungkook chuckled, seemingly happy that his scent was back. Jimin could understand, it must have felt like something of him was missing.

A low knock on the door caught both their attention before Hoseok peeked in. His hair was a little messy but otherwise he looked as if he was glowing, his sun-kissed skin looking healthy.

“Hello, hello, hello”, he singsonged as he entered the room, “How was the night? Any complications? Nightmares?”

“You had nightmares?”, Jimin immediately asked Jungkook, worry in his voice. He couldn't help but feel protective over the boy that was already like a little brother to him.

“Not me, my brother. But I think it has been fine, at least I didn't hear anything.”

Both pairs of eyes were suddenly on Jimin, silently questioning for any information on Yoongi's night. Jimin was taken aback for a moment, he had not realised that Yoongi was the one who could have had nightmares. But of course, whatever had happened to them was obviously a traumatizing experience.

“He, um- actually now that you said it, he did seem to toss and turn a lot. He woke up once to go to the toilet and was a little run-down but afterwards he didn't wake up again.” Hoseok hummed and nodded, pursing his lips.

“I see. Jungkook was there anything Yoongi loved to do? Anything that brought him joy in your old pack? Maybe this could help him calm down in such cases.”
“Hmm, there were a few things”, Jungkook muttered, pinching his eyebrows together as he thought for an answer, “He liked to cook and always tried to make new kinds of soups with different herbs and spices. Well, he worked in the kitchens as main chef, you know? He also loves poetry and writes amazing texts that he never shows anyone! He only ever showed me and- ah, nevermind. Oh, and music, of course! Yoongi used to play the piano better than anybody else I knew!”

There was a moment of silence where Jimin and Hoseok exchanged a look. Was Jungkook really talking about the same Yoongi they did? The Yoongi Jimin met was prejudiced, unfriendly and always scowling. Whoever Jungkook had described seemed to be a whole different person and Jimin had a hard time imagining Min Yoongi writing poetry or playing the piano.

“Oh, come on, don't look at me like that! I know he can have his bad moments but he's really a softy! At least, towards the people he likes!”

“I really cannot imagining him liking a lot of people, then”, Jimin responded, making Hoseok chuckle. The medic raised his hands in innocence when Jungkook shot him a glare.

“Don't be mean to him!”’, the alpha pouted and crossed his arms in front of his chest. Jimin cooed at the sweet boy.

“Don't worry, Jungkookie, we believe you. It's just… your brother is-”

“Is what?”

Jimin flinched at the sound of the deep, rough voice coming from the other bed. He felt his face flushing as his heart dropped into his stomach. His gaze slowly travelled to Yoongi who looked at him with a raised brow. He seemed to have just woken up, eyes half lidded and head deep buried in his pillow.

“What am I, Park Jimin?”, Yoongi asked again, words slurred and eyes fixed on Jimin. He didn't sound aggressive or angry but Jimin still squirmed under the alpha's intense gaze.

“You're rude, have no sense for politeness and know no boundaries of honesty”, Jimin answered, deciding to go for the truth. He felt like he could do that, speak his mind. It was no secret how Jimin felt about the alpha, they didn't pretend to be on good terms.
What Jimin did not expect was for Yoongi’s lips to curl up. A slight smirk formed with his pink lips, easing the tension within the walls of the room almost instantly. Yoongi sat up and leaned his head back against the wall, gaze straight ahead with his lips still stretched into a small grin.

“He feels good to be honest, does it not?”, he muttered eventually and something inside of Jimin’s chest lifted, causing his breath to hitch.

It did feel good to be honest.

Hoseok let Jimin get home to get some rest, assuring they would be fine until he came back the next day. This gave Jimin plenty of time to think about his conversation with Seokjin and he wasn't sure if that was a good or a bad thing. On one hand, Jimin wanted to work on this issue, consider the alternative solution that Seokjin suggested. But on the other hand, Jimin really wanted to distract himself from everything concerning Sungwoon. It was like only hearing his name caused his stomach to stir uncomfortably and it concerned Jimin. It had not always been like that and Jimin couldn't tell since when he started to feel that uncomfortable around Sungwoon. The more Jimin pushed him back, the closer Sungwoon got and it was terrifying. With every “no”, Sungwoon seemed to lose a little more patience, the suffocating tension increasing between the two. Jimin was not afraid of him, he knew that Sungwoon would never physically harm him but he did fear the emotional pressure he would have to face for the rest of his life. Once they were mates, and they would have to be eventually, Jimin would move into Sungwoon’s hut and spend day and night with him. He couldn't escape to the omega den, couldn't use the “I'm not allowed to stay over night” excuse any longer. It made him anxious.

Jimin found himself knocking on the door to Taehyung’s room, waiting for his best friend's sleepy grunt on the other side before he quietly slept inside. Taehyung was sprawled across his bed, blonde hair-strands falling messily into his face.

“Did I wake you?”, Jimin whispered, feeling a little guilty as he saw how Taehyung struggled to keep his eyes open.

“It's fine. Had to wake up anyway.” Jimin crawled into the bed between Taehyung and the wall, snuggling into the omega's side.

“Jungkook has his scent back.” Taehyung’s eyes were wide open instantly, head snapping to
“He has his scent back?”, Taehyung gasped and Jimin couldn't help but to grin smugly.

“Uh-huh. Smells minty and a little like lime.” Jimin could see how Taehyung sucked in a sharp breath, eye going even wider.

“Mint and lime”, the blonde repeated under his breath, “I like mint and lime.” Jimin took his friend's hands in his, smile impossibly wide.

“Well, that's not the only thing you like, I suppose”, he teased, snickering when Taehyung jutted his lips forward.

“What's that supposed to mean now?”

“Kim Taehyung, do you really think you can hide a crush from your best friend?”, Jimin responded sternly to which Taehyung pulled his pillow from under the bed to press it onto his face.

“Am I that obvious?”, Taehyung groaned into the fabric. Jimin sat up to tear the pillow from his face, smiling down at Taehyung a little softer now.

“You two obviously have some chemistry. And Jungkook is a really sweet guy so I don't blame you.” Taehyung chewed on his bottom lip, brows slightly furrowed.

“But is it not too early? I've only known him for a few days”, Taehyung muttered and Jimin hummed, thinking about it. He always wanted to be honest to his best friend and not just calm him down with cheesy phrases.

“I mean, it's just a crush. You can get to know him better and then see how it goes with the two of you before you start actually courting”, he suggested with a shrug. “Besides, it's not like you can change how you are feeling.”

“Do you… do you think I have a chance with him?” This time Jimin did not have to think about his answer, a snort bubbling out of him as soon as Taehyung asked.
“Tae, he looks at you like you are the sun after a dreadful winter.”

“I like winter.”

“Well, he hates winter.”

“You don't know that!”

“Don't ruin my metaphors, I'm having a point here.”

“Buuut”, Taehyung whined, “What if he doesn't? Yoongi doesn't like my smell and he is his brother! Siblings often have the same taste in scents.” Jimin's smile fell from his face at the mention of the alpha.

“First of all, that's not true. Second of all- did he really tell you he doesn't like your scent?” This was truly crossing a line, even for Yoongi. A scent was a part of one's self, one's identity. Nobody usually dared to be so open about disliking one.

“No, he didn't say it like that! We just talked about our preferences in scents.” Jimin hummed, rage easing down a little. Of course, everyone had preferences in scents. Whereas Taehyung liked stronger scents, Jimin preferred the more subtle smells, especially earthy ones.

“And Yoongi said he wasn't into your berries mixture scent?”, Jimin asked again, not wanting to misunderstand what exactly had happened.

“Well… not really. Just that he preferred flowery ones to the fruity ones.”

“F-Flowery?” Jimin felt his cheeks flush, eyes round and surprised. There were not a lot of omega's with flowery scents, Jimin's jasmine a rarity in their pack. Most omegas smelled like fruits, herbs or a mixture of multiple scents. He knew Yoongi had probably not meant him. But knowing there was a chance he liked his scent was...
Well, what was it, exactly? Surprising? Interesting? A complete useless information?

“-imin!”

Jimin snapped out of his thoughts, shaking his head slightly. He hadn’t noticed Taehyung had sat up as well, chin now propped in his palm and head cocked to the side.

“You zoned out”, Taehyung stated matter-of-factly.

“Sorry, I just-” Jimin suddenly noticed that he had no idea how to finish that sentence. Taehyung seemed to sense it, raising a brow at his best friend.

“You just realised that there is a high chance Yoongi secretly revels in your delicate jasmine scent while you two bicker like life-long enemies?” Jimin huffs and hits Taehyung's shoulder, the blonde chuckling mischievously.

“We're not bickering, it's just him that keeps saying rude things. I am merely defending myself”, Jimin argued, crossing his arms over his chest and pulling his lips into a pout. Taehyung squinted his eyes at him.

“Are you sure about that?”

“I may or may not have called him rude and some other things today… but he asked!” Jimin’s voice shot up high as Taehyung clicked his teeth and shook his head.

“Oh, and just for your information”, Jimin added, waving his pointy finger in front of Taehyung’s face, “Min Yoongi is not revelling in my scent.”

“If you say so.” Taehyung shrugged but his voice still had a teasing tone. Jimin just scoffed, changing the subject before he would even consider Taehyung’s implication to be true.

By the time, Jimin was on his way to Sungwoon's hut, he felt relaxed and light-headed. Spending
most of the day with his best friend, eating breakfast when most of the others had already left and having an honest heart-to-heart was exactly what Jimin had needed. He had told Taehyung about his talk with Seokjin and thought about possible consequences of each action he could take now. They had made pro- and con-lists, spoke about worries and encouraging aspects and wrote down exactly what Jimin should tell Sungwoon.

Of course, Jimin was still nervous; even though he knew Sungwoon well, he could not be entirely sure how he would react. But after all the motivational speeches from Taehyung, Jimin was set to go through with his plan. He had the piece of paper with his text on it clasped tightly in his hand, going over what Taehyung had told him in his head. *It's going to be fine.*

Waiting for Sungwoon to come back from the hunt felt like it took ages and Jimin got more nervous with each passing minute. He cooked on his own from muscle-memory, stirring the pot while thinking his words over and over. He was prepared for every question Sungwoon could possibly ask and hoped to be just as prepared for every potential reaction. Once Sungwoon came home, time went by in a blur. Jimin asked him about his day, let him scent him, gave him his food and washed the dishes. He knew he would have to speak up now, if he wanted to have this issue settled.

“Can we talk?”

Jimin's heart raced in his chest as Sungwoon looked up at him, taking a large sip of wine. Jimin warily sat down opposite from him, wringing his hands but not shying away from Sungwoon's dark gaze.

“What do you want to talk about?”

“I went to the infirmary to let my body get checked”, Jimin reiterated the text he had memorized, “I told you I was feeling tired and exhausted lately and wanted to see if everything was okay. It turns out that I indeed have some physical issues. It seems like my body can't absorb certain pheromones, so when you want to get intimate with me, I don't receive the pheromones you release which prevents me from... well, from wanting it as well. You can ask Seokjin, he can confirm it all.” Jimin exhaled shakily, proud that he had managed to get so far. Sungwoon seemed to believe him, his brows deeply furrowed and mouth downturned. Jimin prayed it would stay that way.

“And what does that mean? For us? Can you let that get fixed?” Jimin had expected that to be the first question, glad he had prepared himself.

“Yes, I can take in some medication but it will take some time to get back to normal. I will not be able to sleep with you for the next 2-3 months.”
“What?”, Sungwoon snapped, eyes wide and jaw clenched which caused Jimin to flinch back, “My rut will be in about two weeks, what am I supposed to do?” Jimin tried to ignore how Sungwoon’s knuckles turned white from how tightly he was gripping his glass and responded as calmly as he could manage.

“I thought about how we could solve this issue and I came to the conclusion that you should spend your rut with another omega.”

Silence. Jimin watched how Sungwoon's expression changed, turning from furious to disbelieving. When Sungwoon didn't seem to answer, Jimin continued.

“We can still spend every evening together and after I leave, you are free to visit another omega. I am fine with this as long as the omega will promise to never talk openly about it and it stays solemnly for the purpose to ease your sexual needs.”

“You… wait, you want me to sleep with another omega?”, Sungwoon asked and Jimin nodded, rubbing his sweaty palms over his thighs.

“It is the only solution I could think of. This way, I don't have to do anything I am simply not capable of doing at the moment and you can handle your needs. We can still keep courting and meet each other, as if nothing is changing.” For a moment, Jimin thought he had convinced him. Sungwoon nodded slightly, brows still furrowed but seemingly considering Jimin's proposal. But then something flickered across his face, causing Jimin's stomach to turn.

“Wait”, Sungwoon hissed, “Does the same thing apply to you then? Does that mean that you can also be with another alpha?”

“No, no, I mean, I still have the pheromones problem so I don't want to be with anyone right now! I won’t be with anyone else, I promise!”

That was something Jimin did not prepare to say and it left a bitter taste on his tongue. The moment he heard his own words, he realised how pathetic they were. He was making excuses, practised the whole day and lied about his health and for what? Because he was too afraid to tell Sungwoon the truth, because maybe Sungwoon was not as perfect for a mate as he had always thought and because Jimin finally realised that no matter how hard he tried, he could never love Sungwoon the way he wanted to. And it was frustrating, it was what made him furious and on edge, what made him feel restless.
However, Jimin had to be realistic. He had to stay with Sungwoon. He knew he could make it work somehow, he had to. There was no way out, either way. But at least he saw now. At least he realised.

Jimin and Sungwoon continued to talk for a while, going over the details of their agreement. Sungwoon seemed to have calmed down even if he still had a frown on his face. Jimin was fine with not knowing when Sungwoon visited another omega and didn't want to know who he was with. Sungwoon as well as Jimin did not want word to get around that they had troubles in their courtship so Jimin trusted him not to choose anyone who would tell it to anybody else in the pack. They seemed to have everything settled when Sungwoon walked Jimin back to the door, both looking awkward but still somewhat relieved.

“Jimin, can I ask you one more thing?”, Sungwoon muttered as he held the door open, gaze intense, “The thought of me with someone else… it hurts you, right?”

Did it make him uncomfortable? Yes. Did it hurt his pride? Yes. But did it hurt his feelings?

“You are my future mate so of course I don't like to see you with someone else.”

“Answer my question, Jimin. Does it hurt?”

No. It did not.

“Yes. Of course it does.”
The next two weeks went by rather quickly. Even though things were still tense between Jimin and Sungwoon, Jimin felt like a heavy weight had been lifted off of his shoulders. He never asked if Sungwoon had plans to meet anybody after he left and the alpha ignored the topic as well. They tried their best to pretend that nothing was wrong.

But Jimin knew it was. Sometimes, he cried himself to sleep. On other nights, he stared at the wall, thoughts dull and chest numb, until his eyelids turned heavy. It was exhausting, knowing that he was living in the calm before the storm, that he only had a few months before he had to face this issue again. And that was not all: the pack elders got impatient with the healing process of Jungkook and Yoongi. They knew the alphas would be in a good state soon and wanted to decide whether the pack should take them in or not. It made Jimin anxious, his fondness for Jungkook growing, especially because his best friend seemed to be falling for the alpha more with each day.

Not that he would ever admit it, but his stomach turned at the thought of never seeing Yoongi again. The alpha still made rude remarks and Jimin always had a sarcastic response on his lips but the air around them had started to feel lighter. It was as if the hate had been taken away from their words, their distaste for each other more routine than actual rage for the other. Jimin wouldn't go as far as to say he liked Min Yoongi; however, he didn't detest him.

“Shouldn't your heat be coming up soon?” Taehyung asked quietly, looking up at Jimin from where he was leaning against the legs of the chair Jimin was sitting in. Taehyung had come in earlier to the
infirmary over the past days, keeping Jimin some company during his shifts. Jimin chose not to tease his friend over the fact that he knew that Taehyung did not only come for Jimin and decided to simply enjoy his presence. Jungkook was currently fast asleep while Yoongi read a book Namjoon had dropped off earlier. If Taehyung had noticed the flustered state of the librarian upon seeing Hoseok when he visited, he didn't comment on it and so Jimin chose to ignore it as well.

“I took heat suppressants”, Jimin admitted with a sigh. He stood up from the chair to sit next to Taehyung. The floor was cold and not very comfortable, which made Jimin grimace as he curled his legs in.

“What? Suppressants? Chim, those are really bad for your health!” Jimin hushed Taehyung who had whisper-screamed with wide eyes. He didn't need the alphas to hear this.

“I know that, alright?”, Jimin huffed, “But things with Sungwoon are still tense and I don't want to be in a vulnerable state around him. What if he smells the heat on me and tries something and I'm not in the right state of mind to say no?” This made Taehyung slump his shoulders, a low hum escaping his lips.

“You are right. I'm sorry, I didn't even think about that.” Taehyung exhaled heavily, giving Jimin a lopsided smile before he wrapped his arm around Jimin's shoulders.

“Hey, it's fine, Tae. It's a tricky situation. Let's not talk about it, hm?”

The truth was, Jimin didn't want to talk about it. He didn't even want to think about it. He was glad for every second he could distract himself, seeking things that could fill his mind. He moved to stand up, wanting to get something to drink for himself and Taehyung when he froze.

Yoongi's eyes were trained on his, book still in his hand but abandoned on his lap as Yoongi's attention seemed focused on no one but Jimin. The alpha's eyes were wide, pitch black pupils holding Jimin's gaze. And Jimin saw that he knew. Yoongi had heard their conversation, had heard that Jimin and Sungwoon were not on good terms. Yoongi had always told him how little he thought of Jimin's mate and everyone knew how much he despised Sungwoon. Jimin expected Yoongi to feel triumphant, after all he had been right, somehow. But all he saw in his onyx orbs was understanding. Yoongi understood.

Or did he? Jimin shook his head, tearing his gaze away from the alpha's. He knew he was sleep deprived and probably just confused because Yoongi held back a rude remark for once. It would not
be the first time Jimin imagined things. During the past days, Jimin had thought to smell the faint scent of pines every now and then, lingering in the room before it disappeared again. When he had asked Taehyung about it, the omega had told him that he never noticed anything which made the whole thing even more confusing to Jimin. He decided it was best to ignore it. Or try to ignore it – the pleasant scent was so appealing to him that it caused his breath to hitch and heart to beat fast. It was as if something warm and pleasant shot through Jimin's body and left a prickle in his stomach.

Confusing.

One morning, Jimin had just entered the infirmary when he caught the sight of Hoseok leaning against the counter in the front hall, arms crossed in front of his chest and a deep frown on his face. As Jimin approached, he looked up, a strained smile on his lips.

“Good morning, Jimin. I'm actually glad I caught you.”

“Did something happen?” Jimin responded quickly, not hiding the worry in his voice. He felt as if his instincts had increased over the past weeks, causing him to feel overprotective and worried, a pull in his stomach telling him to take care of someone that is suffering. But since no one around him seemed to suffer, Jungkook's wounds were almost completely healed and Taehyung was also happier since he met the alpha, Jimin guessed that his instincts were over the top because of his heat suppressants and overall emotional state.

“Well, nothing we haven't expected”, Hoseok sighed, running a hand over his face, “The elders set the date. Jungkook and Yoongi will have to present themselves to the elders and pack alpha after the next full moon. Then they can either stay or have to leave.”

“What? So soon?” Dread filled Jimin's stomach, knowing it would not be long before the next full moon. He knew that they would have to present one day but he did not want it to happen so early.

“What if... what if they have to leave?”, Jimin whispered and Hoseok's broken expression did nothing to make him feel better.

“Let's just hope that won't happen.”
“Does Tae know? And the boys, do they know?” Jimin knew how much this would hurt his best friend and wanted nothing more than to take him into his arms and comfort him. His heart also ached for Jungkook and Yoongi whose future depended on this.

“I just found out this morning. I let the boys know as soon as I heard and I will also tell Taehyung when comes in… unless you want to do it?”, Hoseok suggested which Jimin had to consider for a moment. He knew Taehyung better than anyone and could probably consult him afterwards better than Hoseok would be able to.

“Yeah, that's actually a good idea. Even though I truly don't want to be the person to tell him.”

“Oh, I completely understand. Believe me, telling the alphas was not easy. Jungkook looked as if he was about to cry and Yoongi… well, you know him. He seems tough but we all know he feels more than he likes to show.” Hoseok swallowed thickly, also having gotten used to the two patients over the past weeks. Jimin nibbled on his lower lips, forcing himself not to worry too much. He needed to believe in them if he wanted them to stay.

“They are strong and hard-working. We could use better hunters and the kitchens could also use more staff. They will stay, okay?” Jimin squeezed Hoseok's arm and gave him an encouraging smile, the medic smiling back at him weakly.

“Please, tell them. They need to hear this right now.”

“I will.”

Jimin was just about to turn around when Hoseok stopped him again, grabbing his arm slightly.

“Wait, there is something else.” The nervous look on Hoseok’s face made Jimin furrow his brows, chest tightening.

“They have a visitor. It's best if you see for yourself. Just… just try to stay calm, okay?”

“What's that supposed to mean?” Jimin hated riddles and he truly was not in the mood for any unpleasant surprises. When Hoseok just nibbled on his lower lip, gaze stuck on the floor, Jimin huffed impatiently.
“Hoseok, just tell me. Please.”

“I really think it's best if you look for yourself”, Hoseok admitted and Jimin took a deep breath to calm himself down. There was no point in lashing out at his friend, he would just have to go and look. But only the thought of going to the room and seeing someone unexpected with the alphas made him feel uneasy.

“Fine”, he murmured, walking towards the room with a heavy feeling in his stomach.

Jimin didn't know what he had expected but it certainly was not the sight that greeted him as he opened the door. He blinked at him, unable to move or comprehend what he was seeing. They didn't notice him, engaged in what seemed to be a serious conversation. He wasn't sure what he felt, didn't know what to think about the situation. Half-aware of what he was doing, Jimin closed the door behind him, causing all eyes to find him. After a moment of heavy silence, Jimin tried to form words with his tongue numb.

“Jihyun, what are you doing here?”

Jimin hadn't seen his brother since the last mating ceremony they both had attended which had been two summers ago. Jihyun had changed since then, his shoulders broader than before and his jaw strong. They used to look much alike when they were younger, having the same full, round lips and puffy eyes. Jihyun used to be insecure about that when he had been a pup but Jimin had always made sure to teach him to be proud of his unique facial features. Those times felt like an eternity ago to Jimin now.

“I came to teach Yoongi and Jungkook a few things they should consider when presenting themselves to the pack elders. As an alpha and a hunter, I can help them”, Jihyun responded neutrally, sitting in his chair with a straight posture. He didn't look surprised to see Jimin here which meant that Hoseok had probably informed him beforehand. Jimin swallowed and nodded, not trusting himself to speak. Jihyun looked so mature, Jimin had a hard time to believe that his younger brother was barely 18 years old. He was proud of him.
“Wait, is that your brother, Jimin?”, Jungkook suddenly piped in, eyes round as they flickered between Jimin and Jihyun, “He was one of the hunters that convinced Sun- that convinced some other alphas to keep us! He fought for us and defended us the night we were found!” Yoongi rolled his eyes as if he had known who Jimin’s brother was all along but Jimin couldn't pay him any attention. A wave of love and pride for his brother flushed through his chest, knowing it must have been hard to fight for the two alphas. Jihyun had helped the ones in need of it and Jimin didn’t want to hide the smile that stretched over his slightly trembling lips.

“It seems to run in your family to help us! Brothers helping brothers! Parks and Mins-”

“Jungkook”, Yoongi stopped his rambling brother, sensing the tense atmosphere in the room.

“You know, Jungkook”, Jihyun muttered quietly, standing up from his chair, “Family is a big word that weighs nothing. Like an empty shell, it appears to be something that it’s not. Both you and Yoongi will fight for your own, there is no guarantee they will choose both of you because you share the same blood. Keep that in mind.”

Jihyun had not spoken sternly, however, his words had a sharp edge to their tone. Jimin could feel them like a slap to his cheeks or a kick to his gut. He ducked his head in shame, pain rippling through his bones that caused his knees to buckle. But he tried to stand still and pressed his lips together, he knew he deserved to hear it. He deserved every single word and he respected his brother too much to hide from them.

A dull thump from the door caused Jimin to flinch, head snapping up to see Jihyun gone. His gaze stuck to the chair where he had been sitting just seconds ago, so close and yet miles away. Jimin swallowed again, thicker than before. He sucked in a shaky breath before he bit hard on his lower lip to stop it from trembling.

“So… they might separate us?”

Upon the broken whisper from Jungkook, Jimin turned to face the young alpha who was too caught up in his own storm to see Jimin’s struggle. Jimin sighed helplessly, heart aching for Jungkook as he stared at his lap with tears in his eyes. He wished he could assure him that everything would be fine but all his words seemed to be caught in the lump in his throat. Jimin’s gaze found Yoongi who already had his eyes on him and seemed to be deep in thought.

“I will never let anything separate us, Kook”, Yoongi murmured, gaze never leaving Jimin’s, “I will not allow that to happen.”
“Sungwoon?”

The way Jihyun said his name with so much spite and disgust made Jimin want to run away. He wanted to be anywhere but here, wanted to see anything but the disbelieving look on his little brother's face.

“How- How could you accept, Jimin? You know what he did, you know it!”

Jimin hadn't been able to say anything, lips quivering with quiet sobs. He couldn't look Jihyun in the eyes, fixing his gaze on the ground.

“Jimin!”

Jimin was so incredibly sorry, he was so, so sorry. He wished he could explain, wished his brother was old enough to understand.

“Jimin, he makes my life a living hell! I don't want him in our family! He- he is so horrible! How can you accept him? Jimin!”

Jimin kept on repeating that he was sorry in his head, thinking it over and over in hope that would change anything. But he knew it wouldn't.

“I mean, it's not like you like him, right? You don't like how he treats me, right? Right?”

Jihyun had a desperate look in his eyes and his voice shot high, breaking within the last words. Jimin forced himself to look up, he knew he owed it to him to say it into his face.

“Jihyun, I-”, Jimin said with a trembling voice, “I do like him.”
“Liar! You don't even know him!”, Jiyhun cried, shoving Jimin with little force.

“I like him enough to let him court me. I like him enough to maybe love him some day.”

I don't have a choice, Jimin added mentally, not wanting to expose Jihyun to the bitter reality yet. He knew it would hurt him now but Jimin hoped Jihyun could accept their courtship some day.


The sound of the door caused Jimin to jerk, coming back to reality after he had gotten lost in memories. He noticed that his cheeks were wet and quickly wiped the tears from his face, shaking his head free from those dark thoughts.

“Hello alphas and my favourite little omega!”, Taehyung chimed with a bright smile before he realised the tense atmosphere in the room. Jungkook had been looking out the window, lost in thoughts and with a worried expression on his face and Yoongi had been scribbling rapidly into something that looked like a leather-bound notebook, frowning deeply.

“Did something happen? What's going on?”

Taehyung moved to Jungkook as if his legs were walking on their own, wrapping his arms around the young alpha as if it was the most natural thing to do. Jungkook gripped the dark fabric of Taehyung's sweater tightly, burying his face in his neck. Jimin's eyes widened slightly, never having seen the two getting close physically. But he knew Jungkook needed that right now and was glad that Taehyung could sense it.

When Jungkook didn't respond and his quiet sniffles filled the room instead, Jimin decided to speak up:

“Tae… the pack elders set the date. After the next full moon, Yoongi and Jungkook have to present themselves.”
Other than Taehyung's lips parting slightly, the omega seemed composed. He simply nodded and held Jungkook even tighter. He pressed his cheek against his reddish hair, shushing him gently as he rocked them back and forth. But Jimin knew Taehyung better than that. He was sure Taehyung did not want to show his worry in front of Jungkook and tried to be strong for the alpha. His best friend always had been selfless like that, hiding his own pain to comfort others. It was something Jimin loved and hated about him. Loved, because Taehyung always made sure to be there for the people around him. Hated, because he knew Taehyung had the tendency to neglect his own struggles and put other's feelings before his.

Before Jimin left, he walked over to the bed where Taehyung and Jungkook were lying together. Jungkook seemed to have calmed down, hiccuping only now and then. Jimin brushed the hair out of Taehyung's face, seeing his glassed over eyes that carried so much worry in them. He bent down to give the omega a kiss to his forehead and ran his hand quickly over Jungkook's messy hair.

"Don't worry too much, okay?", Jimin whispered, getting a tight smile from Taehyung in response. He left the room with a heavy heart, seeking the fresh air that greeted him outside.

Jimin tried to clear his mind, his thoughts all over the place. Jihyun's words still burned in his ears, repeating themselves in Jimin's mind over and over again. Jimin thought back to Yoongi saying he would never let anything separate him and Jungkook. But wasn't that exactly what Jimin did? He let Jihyun leave, let something separate them from each other. Jimin had always thought he did what he had to do, however, doubts filled his head now. Jimin wondered what Yoongi would have done in his place, if he would have let Jungkook go. Jimin had accepted Jihyun's decision when he wanted to have distance. He never even tried to stop him.

Jimin suddenly realised that he had given up on his brother, had accepted their separation before it even happened. He never gave Jihyun the chance to change his mind before they grew apart, estranged brothers with nothing but old memories.

Jimin exhaled shakily, wrapping his arms around himself. It was as if everything he had pushed away, everything he had tried to hide from, was suddenly crushing down on him. His courtship with Sungwoon, his relationship to his brother, his own mindset and behaviour towards alphas. His perfect life, everything that he had built for himself, suddenly turned into dust. Nothing was as it once had been because Jimin realised that it all had been a lie in the first place. A lie he had told himself, a lie that he had lived with to make it seem right. But it wasn't, nothing was right.

Jimin thought back to his grandmother, how she had warned him about this. She had said he was strong but Jimin had a hard time believing that now. He had never felt so weak.

“Chim?”
Jimin turned around to see Taehyung behind him, frown on his face. Before Jimin could ask why he was outside, Taehyung spoke up again.

“Yoongi told me Jihyun was here. He said I should look after you, that he could take care of Jungkook for now.” Jimin felt his heart beating strong and quick behind his ribcage, stomach clenching hard. He took a deep breath, gaze boring into Taehyung’s.

“Yes, Yoongi said that. He's not a monster, you know?”, Taehyung told him with a weak smile, taking Jimin’s hands in his. Jimin shook his head to agree, knowing that Yoongi was indeed not a monster. If he was honest with himself, Yoongi had turned out to be right about a lot of things.

“How are you feeling?”, Taehyung whispered, squeezing Jimin's hands, “I’m here for you.” Jimin chuckled breathlessly because, oh, he knew. He knew Taehyung was here for him, had always been when Jimin needed him.

“Do you remember when Sungwoon started courting me?”, Jimin spoke quietly, not wanting his voice to break.

“You mean when you were freaking out about your first kiss and asked me how it worked? I remember you being excited to finally being courted”, Taehyung snorted with a lopsided smile but Jimin shook his head again, brows furrowed.

“I mean before that. Before I pretended that everything was perfect. Before I tried to push everything away to build this imaginary world in my head where I am happy with Sungwoon.” This seemed to wipe the smile away from Taehyung’s face, a sad look in his eyes replacing the comforting one.

“How could I forget that? It was- Jimin, you were so young and so scared. You had no idea what to do and neither did I. I was so anxious when he asked you, I didn't know if it would be worse to accept or reject him. Of course, I remember how we cried behind the omega den, hiding from everyone and how we made plans to run away. God, I wish I could forget that, Chim.” Taehyung wrapped his arms around Jimin’s shoulders and pulled him into a hug. Jimin closed his burning eyes and let himself fall against his best friend’s body, exhausted to his bones.

“Did I do the right thing, Tae?”, Jimin asked with deep sigh, “I just pretended everything was fine.”

“I don’t know... But it was my idea, don't you remember? I told you to try to make the best of the
situation, to imagine that Sungwoon was your soulmate and that you two would be happy with each other. I don't know if that had been the right thing to do, I'm so sor-.”

“No!”, Jimin interrupted, pulling back to look into Taehyung's eyes, “Don’t you dare apologize. You were just trying to help me back then. We just... we didn't know better.” Taehyung nodded and embraced Jimin again.

“Hey, it's okay. Go back to Jungkook now, he needs you. And you need to be with him, too”, Jimin said quietly as he stepped back, not wanting to be selfish and keeping Taehyung to himself.

“Don't beat yourself up because of Sungwoon. What has happened has happened. Let's look forwards and not backwards, hm?”

Jimin agreed silently, giving Taehyung a thankful smile. The blonde waved as he stepped back into the infirmary and Jimin waited until the door closed before he made his way to Sungwoon's hut. He wondered what he should cook for him today.
Breaking Down

Chapter Summary

...where Jimin reads, runs, calls and cries.

Chapter Notes

This chapter will be a rollercoaster so buckle up! It's longer than the other ones because I wanted all of this to happen in one chapter but the next chapters will probably be the usual length again :) I really hope you enjoy it so far, I cannot explain how much your comments and feedback mean to me! <3 Special thanks to Rayne for beta reading!!

TW// degrading use of the term "omega" even if it's a fictional word the context may trigger someone so please watch out.

ENJOY!

Jimin's eyes fluttered open, his room coming into his blurry vision. He rubbed his eyes as his mouth stretched widely with a yawn, followed by a heavy sigh. It had been two days since the pack elders had set the date for Yoongi and Jungkook to present themselves and Jimin found himself not able to fully relax. His shoulders felt tense, uneasiness stirring in his stomach whenever his thoughts began to wander. No matter in what situation, Jimin kept imagining the boys being sent away, abandoned with out mercy. He thought about Jungkook's round eyes filling with tears, how Yoongi's face would morph with fury. Sometimes, he wondered what would happen if only one of them would be accepted into the pack, if Yoongi would start to fight or if Jungkook would quietly accept their fate.

The presentation would consist of three representing performances. The alphas would have to transform into their wolf form early in the morning and hunt for offerings for the elders. Jungkook would have an advantage as a trained hunter but every wolf possessed certain instincts when it came to the hunt. After the wolves exhibit their prey, they would have to fight another alpha to show whether they could defend the pack in cases of danger. If they were lucky, the other fighter would be kind to them and lay on the ground for a few seconds, indicating he had been defeated. But if the other alpha would try to really fight them, they could get seriously injured. A fight would have to be stopped before anybody's life would be in danger, although the chances of the wolf being accepted into the pack after losing were low, which means that the already injured wolf would have to be sent away in their weak state and face whatever happen ed in the woods alone. If the ones presenting, however, win the fight, they would have to hold a speech to the pack alpha and the elders and
convince them how they would benefit the pack. They would have to present themselves in traditional clothing with a prepared speech. Only then will the elders openly discuss whether they accept the request or not. The pack alpha will have the final say, however. The pack alpha would usually not go against the elder's wishes because he needed to be on good terms with them and represent the wishes of the whole pack but if the elders did not seem to agree, the pack alpha had to make his own decision.

Jimin had only witnessed such a ceremony once. Three women, two omegas and one alpha, had come from another pack which had not been able to feed everyone. They had sought out a place that could provide for them, offering help as two kitchen maids and one carpenter. Jimin had been barely 8 years old when he sat on one of the benches in the second row, squished between his father and Jihyun. He remembered how brutal the fights were, how his mother had hissed at his father to close Jimin's eyes when she already had her hands over Jihyun's. But it was too late for Jimin had already seen one omega man from the pack bite into the woman's shoulder, red colour painting her fur. The woman had been sent away then, the other two from her pack begging the pack elder's to spare her from her inevitable death. But rules were rules and so the alpha and omega who were left behind had to accept their friend's fate and present their speeches. Jimin's eyes had widened as he saw the traditional robes around their slim figures, the weakened women trying to look as strong as possible. In the end, the alpha had to leave, turning out not to be helpful to the pack. The last omega had been allowed to stay, even though she had not looked happy after seeing her two friends leave. She had married an alpha from the pack almost instantly after she had been accepted and a lot of the other pups in school had said that it was the only reason she had been allowed into the pack.

Jimin wondered how it must feel for her to attend the ceremony, more than 12 years after she had to go through the same ordeal. He asked himself whether she missed her friends or if she even remembered them. She smiled a lot these days, carrying her fourth pup already. But he knew she hadn't always smiled like that. He remembered her tired, blood shot eyes and downturned lips. He hoped neither Jungkook nor Yoongi would have to go through that.

As Jimin entered the room, he saw Jungkook focused on the piece of paper in front of him and Yoongi writing something down in his notebook. It was a sight he was used to by now, the alphas having spent a lot of time on their speeches in the past days.

“Good morning”, he hummed, noticing the trays on their bedside tables. Jungkook and Yoongi both got their breakfast on their own by now, not needing his assistance any more. Jimin was glad that they seemed to be healing but he did feel a little useless still coming to take care of them every day when the alphas didn't need him any more.

“Jimin, can you read over my speech?”, Jungkook asked with wide eyes, handing the piece of paper to him, “You know the pack alpha better than I do and maybe know what he likes to hear...” Because his son is courting you is what the younger didn't voice but Jimin knew it was what he was thinking.
“Of course! I'll try to decipher what you scribbled down here”, Jimin chuckled, eyeing the mess of a handwriting on the ivory paper in his hands. Jungkook gave him an apologetic smile before turning to his brother.

“Yooyoo-”

“Don't call me that.”

“I wanted to ask, Yooyoo, if you want to let Jimin read your speech, too? It might actually help!” Yoongi continued to write, not bothering to even glance up.

“Nah, I'm good.”

“This is about our future. Don't let your pride get in the way of saving ourselves!”, Jungkook argued, glaring at his brother when Yoongi finally returned his gaze with a frown on his face.

“Okay, okay”, Yoongi groaned, holding out his notebook with his lips jutted forward, “Thanks… I guess.”

Jimin and Jungkook exchanged a look, both raising their eyebrows in pleasant surprise before Jimin snatched the notebook from Yoongi's hands and skipped to his chair.

“You're very welcome, Yoongi”, he smiled, ignoring Yoongi's dramatic eye-roll.

“What should we do while Jimin reads our speeches?” Jungkook sighs looked at his brother expectantly.

“Guys, I think it's great that you are preparing so well for the speeches”, Jimin answered before Yoongi could, “But please don't forget that you need to get through the first two rounds as well. I know you've been taking walks now and then but you need to get in some more training for the fights. And what about the hunting? It's been a while since you hunted, right?”

“Hate to admit it, but he's right”, Yoongi agreed, furrowing his brows.
“Hunting is not something you forget to do and I was one of the best hunters in our old pack! And Yoongi hunted a little after we fled, too. We can manage big animals!”

“Then I believe you'll get through the first round but what about the second one?” Jimin loved how optimistic Jungkook sounded but they had to stay realistic: without much training, it was impossible to win the fights. He needed the alphas to take this seriously and prepare themselves as best as they could.

“I remember a lot from what I saw Yoongi do”, Jungkook said quietly, pursing his lips, “When he fought with all the alphas from our old pack.”

“Jungkook.”

Yoongi said his name in an almost a growl, warning evident in his tone. Jungkook immediately shut his mouth and ducked his head as if he just noticed his slip up. Jimin felt his breath hitch, the question of why Yoongi had to fight against all the alphas of their old pack lying on his tongue, but he had to force himself not to ask. It was none of his business and Yoongi obviously didn't want him to know so he tried to respect that. After a tense moment of silence, Jimin pushed away the uneasy feeling in his stomach, as well as the worried thoughts rotating in his head, and cleared his throat.

“How about I ask Namjoon to practice with you two a little? And Ji- Jihyun would surely help you, as well. Fighting in wolf-form is a little hard to get used to because your instincts are uncontrolled and always tell you to go for the neck but skilled fighters use exactly that to trick you.”

“How do you know this?”, Yoongi asked curiously, cocking his head to the side.

“We all had fight courses after we presented. Our pack is pretty traditional so a lot of decisions are made by fighting. If two alphas want the same omega, if children argue and it goes so far that the omegas fight it out for them, if someone challenges someone else, if they want to clear up who is stronger than who- ah, you know, all that.” Jungkook and Yoongi exchanged a worried glance before they turned to Jimin again.

“So they're all pretty skilled…”, Jungkook realised and Jimin nodded with a sigh, knowing they would probably let the alphas fight against the best fighters of the pack. But he didn't need to scare Jungkook even more.
“We only had a handful of trained fighters in our old pack”, Yoongi slowly explained, eyes staring at a spot behind Jimin, “Our- our parents were fighters. They worked as carpenters usually but in case of an attack, they had to- well, they always had to fight for the pack.” Yoongi’s voice got more quiet with each sentence and Jimin wondered about the stiffness in his shoulders before Jungkook said out loud what Yoongi probably couldn't.

“That's how they died. Another pack from the south had attacked us and... yeah.” Jungkook swallowed thickly and Jimin needed a moment to understand what he was saying.

“Wait, you mean... you mean both of- of your-”, Jimin felt his heart ache for the two, throat tightening as he took in their downturned expressions, “I'm so sorry.”

“It's a long time ago. Yoongi had been around 15, I think, and I had just turned 10. I'm glad we had each other, you know?” Jungkook gave Jimin a weak smile, leaning his head back. Jimin took a deep breath and blinked his tears away. He still had both of his parents and this was something that scared him terribly. He wished he could just run away from this topic.

“You were so young. How did you manage?”, Jimin asked, more to himself than to them. It was something he had a hard time wrapping his head around. Jungkook seemed to light up a little at that.

“A family took us in! They cared for us like we were their family and helped us through everything. We knew them because their daughter was Yoongi's best friend and-”

“And that's none of your fucking business”, Yoongi suddenly snapped, eyes widening as if he hadn’t meant to be that harsh. His breathing was ragged, eyes glassed over and there was something so pained in his expression that caused Jimin's chest to hurt. He stared at Yoongi for a moment, feeling guilty that he crossed a line and wished he could go back.

“I'm sorry, I shouldn't have asked”, Jimin quickly whispered, shaking his head. Jungkook exhaled tiredly, gaze on his lap. It took Yoongi a few unbearable long moments before he responded, breathing calmer and looking Jimin in the eyes.

“You couldn't have known. Don't... Just don't worry.”

Jimin's breath hitched strongly, a few tears falling from his face. He didn't know what hurt him that much but he felt something pulling in his chest, alarming him that something was terribly wrong. Jimin wasn't sure if it was his omegan instinct but he knew that he touched a subject that must have
been a deep wound for the alpha. He automatically released calming pheromones, the pull in his chest easing down but still burning.

Jimin wasn't sure how much he had released until both Jungkook and Yoongi slowly fell into their pillows, eyes hooded and fighting against their consciousness. Jimin had never known that he was able to release that much and quickly stopped, words stuck in his throat.

“Yoongi, for a second I thought I could sme- ah, nevermind”, Jungkook murmured, still groggy.

A knock on the door made all three of them jump. A few seconds later, Seokjin let himself inside, grimacing instantly.

“What's with all the pheromones in here?” Seokjin's gaze fell onto Jimin who quickly ducked his head, heat pooling in his cheeks.

“Um, we talked about our old pack and got a little upset so I think Jimin just tried to help us”, Jungkook answered with a sad smile on his face which caused Seokjin's expression to soften.

“I see. I know it's hard but as I told you before, it's healthy to talk about it. I'm proud of you.” He squeezed Jungkook's shoulder and nodded towards Yoongi before he continued.

“I actually came to offer you a little training. Another alpha and I could practice fighting with you two for a bit now. I think it's good if I'm present in case there are certain movements your body cannot handle. We will try to prepare you as best as possible, of course.”

The alphas quickly agreed and thanked Seokjin as they scrambled out of their beds. Jimin noticed how Yoongi didn't seem steady on his feet and moved to help but the alpha hurried away before Jimin could even stand up. A knot formed in his gut that he tried to shake off, focusing his attention onto the speeches that he still held in his hand.

“Jimin, will you be fine staying here?”, Seokjin called from the door frame and Jimin quickly nodded.

“Yeah, I'm looking over their speeches now. Have fun! Or... something like that”, he chuckled awkwardly, earning a soft smile from Seokjin. The medic stepped closer, giving the alphas a sign to go on ahead without him.
“Jimin”, Seokjin whispered almost in an excited manner, “I think Yoongi's scent is coming back.”

“What?” Jimin sniffed at the air but couldn't smell anything extraordinary.

“Don't you smell something different? It's very faint I can hardly tell what it is... maybe fir? Pine?” Jimin raised a brow at that, pursing his lips.

“I've been smelling pines for some weeks now, actually. I don't think it's Yoongi's scent.”

“Huh”, Seokjin huffed, shoulders slumping, “I thought he may be feeling comfortable and safe here by now... but with everything going on, I can't blame him. Oh well, I don't like the smell of pines that much anyway.”

“You don't? I love the smell, I could drown in it, really.” Jimin sighed dramatically, letting his body fall against the back of his chair.

“Ah, I really do prefer other scents, like cilantro, basil, dill, almonds-” Seokjin suddenly stopped, eyes widening slightly. “I- I mean of course not almonds, I confused it with... oregano. Yes, oregano.” Jimin didn't understand the flustered state Seokjin was in, not knowing why liking the scent of almonds would be anything odd. Even if it was a smell more mixed into alpha's scents, there was nothing wrong with liking it. Jimin loved the way Taehyung or some other omegas smelled, as well.

“I'm not really into any of that. Namjoon smells like almonds and I think it really suits him but I like them more in actual food, you know?”, Jimin shrugged. Seokjin spluttered and suddenly hurried to the door with a blush on his cheeks.

“Oh, um, the boys are probably waiting! See you then, Jimin!” Weird , Jimin thought but didn't think further about it as he focused on the speeches.

Jimin started with Jungkook's speech, the longer one out of the two. Jimin snatched a pencil from the mattress of the alpha's bed and wrote little notes at the side. There were certain sentences he had to cross out, some making him appear weaker than he was. Jimin knew that the pack elders would not want to hear vulnerability in his speech; Jungkook, as an alpha, had to be as strong and fearless as possible. In their eyes, they couldn't use anybody that would be a burden to the pack. And no matter how absurd it sounded to Jimin, he had to turn Jungkook's speech completely upside down to make...
him compatible to the pack. He formulated all this into a little note on the backside of the paper and hoped Jungkook would understand what he meant.

Yoongi's speech was next. Jimin noticed the left over rests of many pages, seemingly torn out. He let the tip of his finger run over the uneven lines and wondered what had made Yoongi rip them out. Jimin shook his head slightly, trying to focus on reading the speech. Yoongi had seemed to know exactly what pack alphas would like to hear. He wrote that he had been a respected chef in his old pack, giving commandos and being in charge of everything happening in the kitchens. He had apparently been trained by his parents to fight early on, had been able to defend himself since he was a teenager. Jimin's eyes widened slightly as Yoongi explained how he had been able to take care of him and Jungkook after their parents had passed away and how he had provided for them after they had flown from their pack. Yoongi described himself as a man of loyalty, only having run from his own pack because it had not been safe for them any longer. He didn't go much into detail about this, his vague statements causing Jimin's curiosity as well as worry to increase. Yoongi ended his speech with a promise: He promised to benefit the pack, to defend it no matter what and to always act honourable. Jimin wondered if he truly meant what he said, a feeling telling him that Yoongi would turn against the pack rather easily but it didn't matter for now. What was important was that he could convince the pack elders and with a speech like that, he wouldn't have to worry. Of course, there was still the pack alpha that could stand in their way but Sungwoon seemed to have calmed down since their arrangement and Jimin hoped that it stayed that way until the next full moon.

Jimin reread the speech a couple of times, the words written in a crabbed handwriting holding his gaze with an intensity that made his interest spike. Yoongi used his words with skill, forming sentences that seemed so easy to read and yet held a heavy meaning behind them. Jimin wondered what he would find on the other pages of the notebook. The speech was in the middle of the book, meaning there were plenty of pages filled with his words, thoughts, writings. He didn't want to invade his privacy and knew it wasn't his place to look at the other pages but they were so close, so easy to just turn and read.

Jimin deliberated for another moment before he closed the book, only to open it again a second later, on a random page. On the page to the left had been a text that was completely crossed out, grey lines of a pencil hiding whatever Yoongi had written before. Jimin swallowed, an odd feeling tugging in his stomach as he look at the right page. With a gasp, he remembered Jungkook telling him about Yoongi writing poems.

Forgiveness

You asked me to forgive him
You did it long ago
You loved him and you let him
You let him hurt you so
I promised I would trust you
I hadn't known I lied
I tried to and it showed me
I wished you had been right

Jimin felt his heart beat strongly in his chest, knowing he read something very personal, too personal. He wondered who Yoongi had meant, who had been this “he” and what had happened. Before he knew it, he looked at another page, the text having been written later.

Birth

Who will tell them
A father was a coward
A liar, a thief
He stole their mother's heart

The devil himself
Shakes his head as he sees
What alpha created
An alpha he stays

He will raise them like any
One amongst the pack
No mark, no blood
They would always be half

Jimin furrowed his brows, confused about this one. Yoongi seemed to tell a story but Jimin couldn’t connect the dots. He turned more pages, longing to find answers and swim in Yoongi’s words.
Jasmine

Strong

Yet so fragile

A riddle I long to solve

Soft

But oh so hurtful

A pain that has evolved

Brown

And telling stories

I see your shapeless heart

Tender

With second chances

So close and yet apart

Jimin closed the book in a heartbeat, eyes wide and unblinking. Regret clouded his mind as Jimin noticed he crossed a line. This wasn't meant for his eyes. Whoever Yoongi wrote those poems for, it was not for Jimin to see. He felt a wave of emotions building up inside of him as he lay the book onto Yoongi's bed, retreating his hand as if it had been burned. He couldn't tell what he felt but it was suffocating him, closing up his throat without him being able to stop it. Jimin ran. He didn't know where to but he ran.

Jimin ended up deep into the forest before he stripped out of his clothes and left them behind a bush. He shifted into his wolf form, the process uncomfortable but not painful, and let his body carry him through the green scenery. Jimin liked to shift when his thoughts became too much, suffocating him. Being a wolf made him feel free, in a way. It was the feeling of being bare, relying on his instincts and focusing on his surroundings more than his thoughts that made it so wonderful. When Jimin was a wolf, he didn't think much. He could forget about morals, about right and wrong decisions, about regret. But exactly that was could make being a wolf so dangerous, as well. It made people reckless,
their instincts taking over their senses. The people in their pack were not allowed to shift often but it was normal to see a wolf around the forest now and then.

After a while of running around the area, always making sure to avoid the places where either the hunters could be roaming around or the alphas would be training for the ceremony, Jimin felt exhausted enough to go back. He returned to the bush where he had left his clothes and shifted back to his human form which always felt less pleasant than turning into a wolf. Since the human body was way more fragile and sensitive to pain, changing back always left him with his bones aching and his body feeling stiff. The air around him, which seemed almost warm a moment ago, was suddenly cold as ice and made him shudder. Jimin put his clothes on in record time, wanting nothing more than a hot shower now.

It was just supposed to be a nap. When Jimin had reached his room in the omega den, after a long, hot bath, his soft bed had practically begged him to lay down for a bit. He definitely wanted to return to the infirmary as to not worry or alarm anyone but he guessed that Yoongi and Jungkook would be busy training for still some time. After a rather short debate with himself, Jimin had snuggled inside his bed, his soft blanket feeling like heaving around his sore muscles. But when his eyes fluttered open again, Jimin realised that his short nap had taken a lot longer than he had planned.

“Oh no, oh no, oh no”, Jimin muttered as he scrambled out of bed.

A look out of the window told him that it was already dark outside which meant that the hunters were also back already. Letting a curse fall from his lips, Jimin threw some clothes on as fast as he could and ran outside. His body felt too exhausted and tired to move that fast but Jimin's mind panicked. If Sungwoon was already home and Jimin wasn't, he could get suspicious about Jimin's whereabouts. Jimin truly couldn't afford more obstacles before Yoongi and Jungkook presented themselves, he couldn't do this to them. Jimin pressed his lips together and gathered all the strength in his body to hurry to Sungwoon’s hut. He had a strange feeling in his gut that only made him force himself to run faster. Something felt wrong.

Jimin threw the door open and froze when he was met with the suffocating silence inside. But Sungwoon was there, a tension engulfing him that knocked the air out of his lungs. He didn't look at Jimin, his gaze fixed on the empty wine glass that he rolled between his fingers. The few remains of the red liquid moved around the glass, leaving a dusty pink trail.

Jimin closed the door behind him. He almost flinched at the sound that echoed through the walls, cracking through the eerie silence. Jimin shuddered, suddenly noticing he only came in a sweater even though it was almost mid winter. He felt cold.
“Do you want to stay back there?”

Sungwoon's voice was quiet but heavy. Jimin's stomach turned as he took a few steps forwards, hands trembling.

“You're late”, Sungwoon stated, dark eyes locking with Jimin's, “Do you know what I did when I didn't find you?”

Jimin shook his head. He watched as Sungwoon slowly put the glass on the table, completely focusing on him now.

“I went to look for you. I was worried something had happened to my omega, worried you were in danger. So I checked at the daycare to see if maybe, just maybe, you weren't in danger but simply stuck at work.”

A breathless chuckle escaped Sungwoon's lips, sounding far too innocent and amused over the acid tension in the room. Jimin's vision started to get blurry, his eyes burning with unshed tears. He knew where this was going.

“But I didn't find you at the daycare. It turns out, you haven't been there for quite some time. Apparently, you were working… somewhere else.”

“Sungwoon, I-”, Jimin started but Sungwoon continued talking, abruptly standing up, causing his chair to fall back with a loud thump.

“Behind my back, you visited two foreign alphas for God knows how long and nursed them? You spent the whole day with different alphas, Jimin, and you did not once think of telling me?”

Sungwoon raised his voice now, his eyes burning into Jimin's. Jimin felt his stomach drop, leaving his body buzzing with fear. It felt surreal, blurry. Jimin opened his mouth but Sungwoon didn’t let him speak.

“And do you know what's the worst part? My mother knew but didn't feel the need to tell me because she expected you to tell me. She had never imagined that you would keep it a secret. And
you know what, Jimin? Neither have I.” He breathed raggedly, waiting a few seconds before he continued. “But then I thought about it. You, suddenly being unable to sleep with me. You, wanting me to meet other omegas. You, wanting to change everything that we built. It’s so obvious and I am such a fool for not seeing it sooner.”

Dread filled Jimin's mind and left him breathless. He frantically shook his head, stumbling forward and almost crashing onto the table separating him from Sungwoon.

“Sungwoon, please-"

“SHUT THE FUCK UP, OMEGA!”

Sungwoon slammed his hand onto the table, causing Jimin to jerk away. The omega raised his hands in defeat, stepping back warily. The look in Sungwoon's eyes was furious, his veins showing on his skin.

“I did everything for you. I chose you, out of all omegas. I gave you courting gifts. I introduced you to my family. I gave you a fucking status in our pack. And you betray me like that? Like I’m not the future head alpha of this pack? Like I don’t have your future in the palm of my hand?”

Jimin felt his face scrunch up as tears rolled down his cheeks. He bit hard into his shaking lower lip, needing something to ground him. Sungwoon looked at him tear up for a moment before he sighed, running a hand through his silver hair.

“I really did love you, Jimin. I wished you wouldn't have destroyed what we had. I don't know if it was greed for more or- or if that bastard alpha seduced you...”

Jimin couldn't stop sobbing now, hiding his face in his hands and feeling his world crumble down. He wanted to speak, to talk back to Sungwoon but it was true. Jimin's future lay in his palm. And Jimin was scared what would happen to him now. If he had to leave, if Sungwoon were to let his anger out on Jungkook and Yoongi, if Jihyun was in danger. It was all too much and Jimin couldn't stop crying.

“But you know what”, Sungwoon continued to say, scoffing bitterly, “I won't give him the satisfaction to have you. How would I look if I lost my omega to another alpha? I will take you back, be grateful. But for now, get out of my sight. I don't want to see you now, you can come back when you realise how much you just put in danger by your reckless decisions. Think about that. Now
Jimin heard a door shutting loudly and jolted from his position. He ran out of the hut as fast as he
could and let his instinct carry him. He wanted to be anywhere but near Sungwoon. The pull in his
chest led him towards the infirmary and Jimin guessed it was because he sought for his best friend
right now. Jimin bolted inside, Taehyung’s name on his lips already. But the only person that he was
met with was Yoongi, sitting up from his bed instantly.

“Jimin? What-“

“Where is Taehyung”, Jimin cried, clutching Jungkook's empty bed, “I need him, where is he?”

Yoongi stared at him wide eyed before snapping out of his state of shock and got up from his bed.
He walked towards Jimin who instantly flinched away and stumbled backwards. Yoongi quickly
took a few steps back, nodding towards him to indicate that he understood. Yoongi respected the
space Jimin needed.

“Taehyung and Jungkook are taking a walk. Take a deep breath, Jimin. Deep breaths, okay?”

Jimin tried to but he couldn't, his lungs gasping for air. He clutched at his chest, wanting to rip his
pain out of his skin before he couldn’t take it anymore and collapsed onto the floor.

“What the fuck happened? Was it Sungwoon? Did he- Jimin, did he hurt you?”

Somewhere, in the back of his mind, Jimin realised that Yoongi tried to sound calm for his sake,
even though he failed terribly. Jimin could hear the agony in Yoongi’s voice, he could almost feel it.
He tried to catch his breath, talking in-between hiccups.

“He- he found out ab- about this. About me being here. And- and he said he won't let another alpha
have me.” Jimin looked up at Yoongi and saw the way his fists clenched at his sides.

“Did he hurt you?”, Yoongi asked with closed eyes, speaking through gritted teeth. When he opened
them again, Jimin shook his head.
“He didn't. Not... not physically”, Jimin whispered and saw Yoongi practically deflate onto the floor, now on eye level with Jimin.

“Jimin, you don't have to stay here. There are other packs out there. Jungkook and I, we did it, too. We could do it again-”

Jimin turned off Yoongi's rambling as he tried to understand what Yoongi was suggesting. Did Yoongi not realise that this would be a death sentence for him? Jimin was an omega with a job that no other pack was lacking in. No one would take him in. He hadn't fought in years, let alone hunted for food.

“Are you listening to me?”, Yoongi said suddenly, cocking his head to the side.

“Yes and it's not an option. I don't have a future anywhere else, I'm an omega!”, Jimin argued and Yoongi's face fell.

“And so what? What if you're an omega? God, you sound just like that alphas of yours.” Yoongi's breath hitched and his eyes widened, as if he couldn't believe what he had just said.

“Sor-”

“You know what, Yoongi? You think everything is so easy and whatnot but do you even have any idea what it's like being an omega in a pack like this? Do you know that this alpha of mine can destroy my entire future just because he feels like it? Do you think I can be casually wild and free and decide to just leave like that?” Jimin felt his blood boil, his emotions all over the place. He knew he was still raging because of Sungwoon and he knew he shouldn't let it all out on Yoongi but his filter and control were completely off, Jimin just letting everything out that he wasn't able to tell Sungwoon before.

“It's not like you tried it, Jimin! You just always play it safe. Maybe if you just started to act and left, you would see that you could survive on your own!” Yoongi wasn't shouting but he was clearly distressed. Jimin just shook his head.

“And do what? Leave my life behind, everything I've worked for? Leave my job, my friends, my family?”
“Oh, come on”, Yoongi huffed before again realising what he had said and biting on his lower lip. But Jimin heard what he said and he didn't like it at all.

“What's that supposed to mean?”, he asked quietly, holding Yoongi's gaze until he swallowed and answered.

“It's just- when I saw you and Jihyun... I didn't see Jungkook and me. He hardly looked at you and the things he said… I just don't think you have a strong relationship and given that you once said the reason for it to be Sungwoon, I just wonder if it ever was that strong to begin with.” Jimin appreciated Yoongi being honest but he couldn't deny feeling the slap in his face as Yoongi uttered those words. He let the hurt engulf him, making him speechless for a few seconds before he could find his voice again. When he did, he spoke quietly, his body drained of all power.

“Yoongi… you have no idea how much I love my brother”, Jimin breathed and could see guilt flickering behind the onyx of Yoongi’s eyes, “Jihyun was bullied in school. Ever since he was a pup he wanted to be a hunter but the guys said he looked too soft, too fragile. It was… hurtful to see him bring treated like that. One of his biggest bullies was Sungwoon. It started with rude remarks here and there and by the time Jihyun presented and found out he was an alpha, it went as far as insulting and threatening him. Sungwoon would tell Jihyun he wasn't fit to be a hunter and it broke him. I saw my brother getting hurt over and over again. And I was sick of it. I was sick of being helpless.” Jimin took a deep breath, swallowing against the lump in his throat. Those memories hurt but he kept going.

“One day, I decided I had enough and walked up to Sungwoon. I told him if he wanted to be a pack leader some day he would have to start respecting the people in his pack. I told him that my brother was hard-working and a good hunter and that he should give him a chance before judging him based on his looks. I remember how Sungwoon looked at me. It was as if he didn't even listen to me but his eyes were almost hungry. I don't know if it was the power to make a headstrong omega his own or if it was my looks but Sungwoon started to be interested in me. At first, he just looked at me or winked now and then but at some point it was obvious he planned on courting me. No one else wanted me at that time so I had no excuse to tell him to back off. And Sungwoon was... hard to say no to. He was older, stronger and had this authority that made you feel small around him. I was just a teenager when he gave me his first courting gift and I was scared not to accept it. I didn't know what to do, I just accepted it and knew that I couldn't back out anymore.” Jimin felt tears running along his cheeks and his voice crack. He tried his best to continue talking, needing to get this story out.

“I asked Taehyung what to do and we both cried back then. We knew that Sungwoon was powerful and we knew there was no way out. If I had stopped accepting his gifts, it could have had consequences for my family and who knows what Jihyun would have had to to face. I was scared to disappoint, to be the one omega that rejected the pack alpha's son. So I did the only thing I could think of: I pretended everything was okay. I tried to forget what he did to Jihyun and convinced myself that Sungwoon was a good future mate. I learned to love him in a way that worked with my
conscience, that made it bearable to be with him. I- I kissed him and slept with him, I opened up to him and let him hold me. I let myself believe that I loved him for the past years... And I never forgave myself for it. Every time I saw Jihyun it was a bitter reminder what I left behind. What I lost.”

The silence that came afterwards was deafening. Jimin's gaze was far away, his mind's eye seeing all those memories and past events, good and bad. Jimin hadn't lived a terrible life with Sungwoon but it did cost him a lot.

“Jimin, I am so sorry.” Jimin looked up to see Yoongi's eyes begging him silently for forgiveness. But Jimin was tired. He was too tired.

“I don't need you to be sorry, Yoongi”, Jimin hissed. Seeing Yoongi upset made him emotional again, tears filling his eyes without him understanding why. “I need you to stop judging me before you know shit about me. Just stop. You keep doing it and I have no idea what happened in your old pack but please just stop saying hurtful things, if you don't understand how painful they are!”

With that, Jimin stood up and bolted out of the infirmary, not bearing to be in that room any longer. He didn't understand why he went there in the first place. He heard Yoongi call his name but ignored it, not wanting to talk about it now. Jimin's body was too exhausted to properly run and the snow under his feet made it hard to move forward. Jimin didn't know where he was any more, the night was dark and he couldn't see much through his teary eyes. Jimin started sobbing again, feeling useless and being sick of crying. He didn't want to cry any more but that only made him whimper more, his legs giving up eventually. He lay in the cold snow, his body freezing extremely while the sobs didn't stop, echoing through the night air. His mind was blank.

Jimin didn't know how long he was lying there, it could have merely been a few minutes that felt like hours to him, when he heard someone approach him from behind. As he turned around, he was blinded by torch light, the person behind it in the dark. Jimin squinted his eyes but couldn't see anything but he startled when he recognised the voice.

“Jimin? Is that you?”
“Namjoon?”

Jimin squinted against the light coming from the torch, his eyelids swollen and heavy from all the crying. The tall figure crouched down and Jimin could see the outlines of Namjoon’s concerned face, his round glasses having slid down the bridge of his nose.

“Oh God, Jimin what happened? You- you’re lying in the snow! Do you want to die of hypothermia? Come up, come up!” Namjoon rushed and helped Jimin to stand up. He patted the snow off of his shaking body and quickly led him into a building that Jimin recognised as the library.

As soon as they stepped inside, Namjoon dragged Jimin up the stairs where a little room was located, barely big enough to fit in a small couch, a desk with a stool and a narrow cupboard filled with books, cups and some pieces of fruit. Jimin had never seen this room before but he figured that this was where Namjoon secluded himself to, where he could find a little peace and quiet during his working days.

Namjoon all but pushed Jimin onto the couch and draped a woollen quilt over his frame that he had pulled from a basket under his desk. Jimin only then realised he was shivering severely, his dazed mind not quite catching up to what was happening. He noticed Namjoon fussing over him until his shoes were replaced with warm socks and his body tucked underneath a coat of fur. It smelled strongly of almonds and Jimin scrunched his nose reflexively but was too weak to care for any scent. His body felt drained as he slipped in and out of consciousness before he reluctantly passed out.

Jimin couldn’t have been sleeping for long because, as his eyes fluttered open, Namjoon still had a
panicked look in his eyes, handing Jimin a steaming mug.

“How are you feeling? I quickly made you a tea. Your body should heat up now and it will burn a little but I promise it will get better, okay?”

As Namjoon spoke and Jimin slowly regained his consciousness again, he found his words to be true. Heat rushed over his skin, burning as it replaced the cold. Jimin felt his muscles ache from the buzzing feeling and clenched his jaw as to not concern Namjoon even further. He accepted the mug, carefully leaning over it to let the steam hit his face.

“It probably hurts, I’m so sorry. Just hang in there, okay?”, Jimin heard Namjoon sigh and nodded weakly. He had to admit he had acted foolishly, risking his life just because he felt frustrated and upset. As a wolf, the snow didn’t affect him as much so Jimin tended to be careless about the cold but he knew that his human body couldn’t handle it.

“Thank you”, he whispered and glanced up at Namjoon who was sitting on the edge of the couch.

“I’m just glad I found you”, Namjoon waved him off, “I should have gone home from work sooner but I totally forgot the time while I was reading a book. I guess it turned out for the best. I don’t think anyone would have found you until tomorrow morning...” He didn’t voice it but Jimin knew it would have ended badly for him. He ducked his head in shame, chest feeling heavy.

“I was so stupid… I’m sorry.”

They settled into a comfortable silence as Jimin sipped his tea, waiting for the burning sensation to pass. Namjoon didn’t ask why Jimin had been lying in the cold snow at night and Jimin was glad he didn’t have to explain. He didn’t even want to think about Sungwoon’s outburst, about his plans to not let any other alpha have Jimin. Jimin didn’t want to see the look on Yoongi’s face again, neither the disappointed one nor the one filled with guilt.

“How are Jungkook and Yoongi?”, Namjoon asked suddenly, not realising that Jimin’s inner turmoil had partly to do with the older alpha.

“They’re nervous but determined. They are working hard, I hope they can make it.” He truly did hope they would make it. No matter how things ended between him and Yoongi earlier, he wished for nothing but their safety and secure future.

“I’m sure they are doing everything they can to prepare themselves”, Namjoon hummed, “I trust Seokjin to prepare them well for the fights and from what I have heard, they should be skilled enough for the other two tasks.”

“Speaking of Seokjin, your scent of almonds is crazy here. The room is soaked in it”, Jimin chuckled, hoping not to offend the other. Namjoon shrugged, sniffing the fur coat testingly but probably not smelling it that strongly.

“Sorry, I didn’t have other things here.” Namjoon gave him an apologetic smile but Jimin waved him off.

“It’s fine, it reminds me of cookies and almond bread. I just haven’t been tucked into anyone’s fur other than… Sungwoon’s in a while.” If Namjoon noticed Jimin’s internal struggle by mentioning Sungwoon, he didn’t say anything. However, his facial expression did soften.

“Why did you say ‘speaking of Seokjin’ before you mentioned my scent?”, Namjoon wondered and cocked his head to the side. His cheeks seemed to blush slightly, even though it was hard to tell in the dim light of the room.
“We talked about scents and preferences earlier. He told me he liked the scent of almonds which is why I had to think of him when I smelled almonds everywhere here.” Jimin’s giggle died down when he saw Namjoon’s startled expression.

“He- He told you he liked the scent of almonds?”

“Um… yes?”, Jimin suddenly felt unsure if he said too much, he didn’t want to make anyone uncomfortable, “I mean, he named many scents he liked! And he kind of backtracked on the almonds so I shouldn’t have said anything. I’m sorry.” Jimin was surprised to see Namjoon’s lips to curl into a fond smile, something warm flickering behind his eyes.

“Don’t worry, I’m not… I don’t mind him liking my scent. I knew he liked it, I just didn’t know he would tell anyone.”

Jimin didn’t like that look. He looked too endeared to be thinking about a mated alpha. Jimin felt his stomach turn slightly, not wanting any kind of love triangle to happen between his friends. However, he didn’t want to jump to conclusions either, he had never heard of an alpha being interested in another alpha except that one time where Taehyung had told him about his friend being interested in a mated couple- wait. Jimin was too exhausted to think properly, his thoughts a tangled mess inside his mind. He figured it was best to simply talk to Namjoon.

“Namjoon”, Jimin asked slowly, cocking his head to the side slightly, “Is something going on between you two?”

Namjoon seemed startled a little before he exhaled heavily, his shoulders deflating. He took a moment before he looked towards Jimin again.

“It’s… complicated. And very confusing”, he explained quietly, “It started after I got to know Hoseok. We talked a lot and became friends. Over the time, I developed feelings for him. I knew it was wrong because he already had a mate but I couldn’t help it. I fell for him and knew I could never be with him. At one point, it was just too much. I needed distance from him and had a long talk with Hoseok that day. He was very understanding and admitted that he had feelings for me, as well, but was still in love with his mate and ultimately bound to him. We parted with heavy hearts and I thought that this was it.” Namjoon stopped and glanced nervously at Jimin, probably unsure if he should continue. Jimin nodded encouragingly and hoped he could help Namjoon by listening to him. He owed him that much.

“Well… after a few weeks I got injured because I tried to stop a fight between two omegas. I didn’t want to see Hoseok so I got sent to another medic. And with my luck, it was Seokjin.” Namjoon chuckled at that, shaking his head. “It was so tense and awkward. Eventually, he told me that he knew about Hoseok and me and that Hoseok had never met me behind his back. Seokjin knew everything but he didn’t seem angry, for some reason. And that’s when… he asked me if I liked Hoseok’s scent. It was an uncomfortable question but I understood that Seokjin wanted to know. I wanted to be honest and answered yes and suddenly realised that Seokjin bared a similar one. Of course, their scents are mixed since they’re mated, I don’t know why I hadn’t thought of that sooner. I noticed that I liked the blend of scents, Seokjin’s part as well as Hoseok’s. And Seokjin then told me he liked my scent as well.”

Jimin could guess where this was going and his eyes went wide. He was glad Namjoon didn’t seem to notice as he continued to explain his situation, a blush gracing his cheeks.

“We know we can’t do anything about it, the pack would never allow two alphas to be in mating with one omega. If it was the other way around, maybe, but not like this. God, it’s so weird how my alpha instinct wanted to fight Seokjin for being with the omega I wanted but all this tension evolved
into something else. Something beautiful.”

“What are you doing about it now?”, Jimin wondered, frowning as he looked at Namjoon's dejected expression.

“We met up a few times, at their hut. It was so nice, Jimin, you have no idea. I thought I would feel jealous seeing Hoseok and Seokjin together but I didn’t. Instead, I wanted nothing more than to be with them, both of them.” Namjoon looked deep in thought and Jimin wished he could help him somehow. He drank his tea in silence for a moment, trying to find words to say.

“What is it like?”, Jimin asked curiously, “To like an alpha as an alpha?” Namjoon chuckled in response.

“Easier than one would think. Though I guess it would be harder if we both were more… traditional, in a way. Seokjin and I both don’t have those extreme possessive or protective instincts, like some others do. We don’t have to be dominant and don’t mind being taken care of, as well. We can see the omega we love with the alpha we love as well without feeling hurt in our pride. We are both alphas but… we are Namjoon and Seokjin before that.”

Jimin was taken aback by that statement for a moment. He suddenly remembered his grandmother’s words, how she had told Jimin that he was himself before he was an omega. Those words had accompanied him throughout all the years and yet, he had never fully understood them.

“I wonder a lot about that actually… to what extend am I an omega? What makes me me? I can’t separate the two, you know?” Jimin took a deep breath, never having spoken about it before. Yoongi’s words were still loud in his ears. He said Jimin was like Sungwoon and implied that Jimin was holding himself back. Jimin wasn’t sure why it hurt the way it did.

“You don’t need to necessarily separate it, Jimin. Just don’t degrade yourself to being nothing more than an omega. Yes, you have a scent and the instincts, you’re more affectionate and compassionate, you like being protected and to nurse people. But that’s not what makes you you. I mean, you and Taehyung don’t have the exact same personality, right? Or you and Hoseok? You’re both omegas but still different people. You’re more than your gender.”

Jimin let that sink in and turned Namjoon’s message over in his head. He did have a point but it was hard to really grasp what he was saying. His whole life, Jimin thought being an omega was all he was. He thought it determined his future, what he liked and how he lived. This was a lot to take in.

Their conversation was interrupted by a loud knocking on the door downstairs, causing both Jimin and Namjoon to flinch.

“That’s odd… the library is officially closed. Let me see who that is.” With that, Namjoon disappeared from the room, leaving Jimin with an uneasy feeling. For a second he feared it might be Sungwoon but he didn’t want to see Jimin that night, he had said so himself. It could also not be Yoongi, he would have run after him immediately and not seek him out now, especially not at the library. And if Jimin was honest with himself, he wouldn’t want Yoongi to look after him. He didn’t know the area, it was dark and some alphas of the pack could attack him since they didn’t know him and might mistake him for a threat. Jimin would never want Yoongi to be in any kind of danger and especially not because of him. He knew Yoongi hadn’t followed him when he had run outside because he had to wait for Taehyung and Jungkook and Jimin appreciated that Yoongi was able to think rationally in those kind of situations. It was probably the reason Jungkook trusted his brother that much.
Jimin was torn from his train of thought as he heard someone stomp the stairs up. A few seconds later, Taehyung’s body appeared from the door before the blonde lunged himself at Jimin, knocking the air out of him. Jimin was glad that he had reflexively put the mug on the floor before it fell out of his hand.

“Oh God, I was so worried, Chim!” Taehyung panted as he pulled back and Jimin could see his red cheeks and nose, “When Jungkook and I came back to the infirmary, Yoongi was losing his mind! He snapped at us what was taking us so long because you were gone and upset and he couldn’t look for you on his own.” Taehyung took a short break to catch his breath, his hands cold as they grabbed Jimin’s. Before Jimin could even grasp what he had said, Taehyung continued.

“Yoongi said that Sungwoon found out about everything and I saw red. I was so worried, so, so worried. I was scared that he- he hurt you or screamed at you. And then Yoongi said that he was an idiot because he said some ignorant things, although he didn’t want to tell us what, and believe me, I was about to rip his head off in that moment. If Jungkook hadn’t been there to hold me back—” Jimin shushed Taehyung by cupping his ice cold cheeks. A smile found his lips at his friend’s worry and defensiveness but Jimin was also glad Taehyung didn’t end up hurting Yoongi.

“I will talk to Yoongi about it, let me handle it. I was emotional because of Sungwoon and then we got into an argument and it was all such a mess. But it’s nothing we can’t work on”, Jimin reassured, hoping his words would turn out to be true. Yoongi did look guilty and he did apologise but Jimin wanted to talk to him nonetheless. Especially now, that he found out that Yoongi was so concerned about him.

“What happened with Sungwoon?” Taehyung asked but Jimin subtly motioned to Namjoon at the doorway and Taehyung seemed to understand that he would explain later when they were alone.

“Okay, I actually need to hurry back and tell the others. Jungkook stayed at the infirmary, Hoseok wanted to check the omega den and then wait with Jungkook, and Yoongi went out to the woods.”

Jemin froze. He stared wide-eyed at Taehyung, refusing to believe what he just heard. Jimin gripped Taehyung’s shoulders to ground himself as his words sank in.

“Taehyung”, Jimin said slowly, “Please tell me you did not let Yoongi run alone through the woods. In a territory that he is not familiar with. Where Sungwoon who despises him could find him. Where any alpha could see him as a threat.” Taehyung paled as his face fell. He raised his hands and let his head fall into them, mouth agape and eyes disbelieving.

“I didn’t even think of that- Oh God!”

Before Taehyung could say anything else, Jimin snapped out of his state and jumped out of the bed as quickly as he could. He bolted out of the library, relying on his instincts to find the forest. He could sense Taehyung running next to him but kept focusing on sprinting as fast as he could.

“Jimin, you’re not wearing enough! You’ll freeze to death!”, Taehyung hissed and Jimin knew he couldn’t repeat his earlier actions. He had to shift.

Jemin came to a halt and stripped out of his clothes before pushing them into Taehyung’s arms who seemed to know what Jimin was planning to do.

“Go to the infirmary and tell the others I’m fine, I will be back as soon as possible”, Jimin shouted, already running towards the woods and preparing to shift.

“Take care of yourself!”, Taehyung called after him and Jimin was glad he didn’t protest.
The change happened quickly, his body knowing how to act in an emergency. Before he knew it, he was deep into the forest, relying on his instincts to lead him. After a moment, Jimin could sense Yoongi and only sprinted faster. Jimin could feel Yoongi’s distress, could smell it. He heard a low weeping from further away and hauled himself towards the wolf. Jimin slowed down when he reached a tree, a sheer black wolf crouching under it. He turned when Jimin came closer, sharp eyes finding his. Jimin recognised Yoongi immediately, and mentally released a breath. He walked towards him tentatively and nudged his side, asking if everything was alright. Yoongi seemed to relax at his touch, his snout nudging Jimin back. Yoongi’s raven fur shined almost blue in the moonlight and Jimin couldn’t help nuzzling against it, his instinct taking over.

Suddenly, the smell of pines engulfed him, strong and calming. Jimin pulled back and stared at the wolf in front of him. *It was his scent, after all*, Jimin thought, completely stunned. Something inside of him settled, calming down. Jimin couldn’t explain how he felt or why. He quickly pushed his thoughts aside and led both of them back. Jimin suspected that Yoongi had gotten lost and probably heard him approaching which caused him to hide behind the tree. He wasn’t sure if Yoongi was hurt but the medics would check that when they got back to the infirmary.

Outside the forest, they had to shift back. Nudity wasn’t something unusual within the pack but Jimin still felt his skin flush, not able to look at Yoongi. He walked ahead quickly, freezing and hoping that no one would see them. He didn’t feel Yoongi’s gaze in his back and thought that maybe Yoongi felt as uncomfortable as he did.

Taehyung and Jungkook rushed towards them before they reached the infirmary, coats of fur in their hands that they handed Yoongi and Jimin.

“Yoongi, I’m so sorry I let you alone in the forest! I was so worried for Jimin, I didn’t even think”, Taehyung apologised as they made their way back but Yoongi just shook his head.

“Don’t worry, I wanted to help. But I think I twisted my ankle.” Jimin’s head snapped to Yoongi’s feet and he only now saw how the alpha slightly limped.

“Oh my God!”, Jimin and Taehyung screeched simultaneously, causing Yoongi to scrunch his nose.

“I already twisted my ankle, I don’t need my eardrums to tear as well, Taehyung”, Yoongi deadpanned. Jimin wondered why Yoongi ignored his scream but he figured they were still on rocky terms.

As soon as they were inside, Jimin changed back into his clothes in an empty room and Yoongi changed into some of Seokjin’s spare clothes that hung a little loose on him. Jimin and Taehyung were cuddled underneath a warm quilt as they sat in Jungkook’s bed, the alpha sitting on the edge of it.

“I’m so sorry, you guys”, Taehyung sighed, laying his head on Jimin’s shoulder, “You had to go through the snow naked!”

“Tae, I already told you not to worry about it, it’s not your fault! Let’s not… let’s not talk about it, yeah?” Jimin answered, not specifying that he was still slightly embarrassed. He glanced towards Yoongi who still refused to meet his eyes, mouth downturned and brows deeply furrowed. Jimin knew something was bothering him and it was almost suffocating to simply watch without being able to do anything. At least not with the others in the room.

Jimin wondered if he should initiate a talk with him, ask him to go outside, but he wasn’t sure if Yoongi wanted to. He put the mug of tea Hoseok had given him earlier on the bedside table and let his gaze wander to Yoongi again, unsure of what to do.
“You okay?”, Jungkook asked quietly and Jimin noticed that his and Taehyung’s hands were intertwined. It looked so natural, so easy that it hadn’t even caught Jimin’s attention before. He made a mental note to ask Taehyung later if he had missed anything concerning the two.

“Yeah, I’m fine”, Jimin smiled and reached out to ruffle the boy’s hair.

“I hope everything will be fine before the ceremony, with Yoongi’s ankle and all”, Jungkook admitted and Jimin wished he could be more confident in reassuring him but he was worried himself.

“If he’s careful, it will heal in a day or two. It would be different for me or Taehyung, the last time I twisted my ankle, it took around five days before it got better, I think.” Jungkook gave him a tight smile, still looking uneasy.

Taehyung and Jungkook started a quiet conversation about past ankle injuries but Jimin couldn’t bring himself to listen. His mind was full of the scowling alpha on the other bed, so clearly upset about something. It wasn’t Jimin’s responsibility to care for him emotionally but he wasn’t one to simply ignore it when someone felt sad. And Jimin was also aware that he could be the reason for Yoongi’s mood, with their fight and his twisted ankle he got looking for him. A part of him told him to mind his own business, that they weren’t friends and Jimin should just leave Yoongi alone. But that didn’t feel right.

“Yoongi, can we talk?”, Jimin carefully called, seeing Yoongi’s head whirl to him, “Outside maybe?”

“Um, sure.” The alpha nodded for a few seconds, gaze on the floor before he got out of the bed and followed Jimin outside. Jimin was glad Jungkook and Taehyung ignored their interaction, focusing on each other instead. He thought it would have made Yoongi uncomfortable.

As soon as Yoongi closed the door behind him, Jimin wasn’t sure what exactly he wanted to say. The hallway was empty and quiet and there wasn’t much to busy himself with as an uncomfortable silence settled between them.

“You wanted to talk?”, Yoongi started, not really meeting Jimin’s eyes and fiddling with loose threads on his sleeve.

“You seem upset”, is all that Jimin could say for an explanation but Yoongi apparently understood, nodding shortly. He seemed to struggle with his words, opening and closing his mouth a few times and Jimin waited patiently, not wanting to pressure him.

“I just keep messing up”, Yoongi said eventually, voice quiet and gaze averted, “I keep judging you and make you feel like shit. I think I know you, know people like you but- I’m wrong. I criticise other alphas for not respecting omegas and yet, I do the same. I expected you to simply leave Sungwoon or the pack, to stop caring about them. God, I didn’t even realise what consequences you would have to face. And with Jiyhun...” Yoongi took a deep breath, expression conflicted before he continued.

“I was so quick to compare you to Jungkook and me. I thought you were just some omega hunting after wealth and a good status who left their family just like that. When you told me your story, I didn’t even grasp what you had to go through and it only really sank in after you stormed out. And, well, I realised that I’m a grown up who never courted anybody and pretty much ignored the omegas that showed interest in me. Nobody cares because I’m an alpha. If anything, people think of me as honourable to wait for... someone. Omegas get pressured into having a successful courtship, to start a family, to have someone to care for. And I know that, it’s not new information to me. I simply didn’t think. So, in short, I’ve been an idiot. To you more than to anyone else since I’ve been here.
And I’m sorry.” He glanced up to Jimin before looking away again, shaking his head slightly.

Jimin felt relieved. He knew words weren’t the same as actions but Yoongi has obviously thought a lot about it and Jimin appreciated it. He smiled softly at the alpha.

“Hey, it’s okay. Don’t beat yourself up about it.” Yoongi just grimaced in response and Jimin knew that Yoongi would not forgive himself that easily.

“I have to learn when to shut up, I guess. Being an honest person doesn’t give you a free pass to say hurtful things to people”, Yoongi shrugged. Jimin actually had to chuckle at that, thinking that this was such a Yoongi thing to say.

“I’d rather have you honest than in denial, Yoongi. Yes, what you said was ignorant and based on some prejudiced image you had of me but you reflected on your words and could see what you did wrong. You are willing to learn and that is… well, it’s a lot.” Jimin wasn’t sure why he felt a little choked up all of the sudden. He took a deep breath to calm down, blinking away tears he didn’t understand.

He was lost in his own thoughts before he realised that they still stood in the hallway, quiet and both dealing with their own mind. Yoongi was frowning as he looked at the floor, hands in his pockets but still not quite looking relaxed.

“That wasn’t all that was on your mind, was it?”, Jimin guessed and Yoongi didn’t seem surprised that he found out, his lips curling upwards slightly.

“Not really.”

“Yoongi”, Jimin said softly, “I won’t judge, okay?”

“I know”, Yoongi sighed and Jimin thought that Yoongi’s smile seemed sad. It was tugging at his heart, pulling him on an invisible string towards Yoongi. But Jimin knew better than to scare him away, no matter how his instincts were screaming at him to comfort the alpha, to embrace him or reassure him. Yoongi looked at him for a moment before his eyes wandered to the short hallway, teeth nibbling on his lower lip.

“When you came into the infirmary, well, even before that- I don’t know how to say it- I mean, before you even entered the room, kind of- and, I just- I think I felt- well, I can’t explain it, really but – it hurt, kind of. I mean, there was this pain- I just- I think-”, Yoongi continued to stumble over his words, cheeks flushing and expression nervous.

After a moment of rambling, Yoongi’s eyes found Jimin’s again, flickering over his face as if he was looking for something. But Jimin was sure his face showed nothing but concern and confusion. Had Yoongi been in pain now? Did he need medical help?

“I just felt.”, Yoongi started again, something desperate in his eyes, but he didn’t finish his sentence, letting silence take over. Jimin felt helpless and a little frustrated, seeing that Yoongi was clearly trying to say something important to him but Jimin couldn’t understand what.

“What is it, Yoongi?”, Jimin asked worried, “Are you in pain? Should I- should I call Seokjin?”

Yoongi stared at him, looking conflicted and unsure what to answer before he decided to give up. He sighed, shoulders slumping, and closed his eyes for a few seconds.

“Forget it. It’s not important.”
“No, Yoongi, please tell me! I’m sorry, I’ll try to understand”, Jimin told him but Yoongi was already shaking his head.

“It was stupid and now I just confused you. Just forget I said anything. Please.” He scratched his head, wetting his lips with his tongue.

“Okay”, Jimin assured, not wanting to push Yoongi into telling him something. He tried not to feel too disappointed at the fact that Yoongi almost trusted him with something, almost opened up, and ended up retreating.

“Yoongi?”, Jimin almost whispered, fidgeting with the hem of his shirt.

“Yes?”

“Can we be friends?” Yoongi’s eyebrows shot up and Jimin could feel his cheeks flush instantly.

“Friends?”

“Yeah”, Jimin nodded, his eyes staying locked with Yoongi’s, “I know we started off badly but I feel like we didn’t have a reason to act that way. I don’t hate you, I never did. I thought I disliked your character but I think I was wrong. I do care about you. I realised it when I looked for you in the woods. And I don’t think it’s fair that you’re friends with the others but not with me. I deserve a fair chance and I want to be your friend.” Jimin jutted his lips forward and crossed his arms over his hammering chest. He was glad he finally said that out loud.

Yoongi blinked for several moments before he seemed to snap out of his thoughts. He looked as if he tried to suppress a smile, pressing his lips together and furrowing his brows.

“Um, yeah. Sure. Let’s be friends.”

“Really?”, Jimin gasped, not having thought it would be so easy. His lips stretched into a shy smile as Yoongi nodded, casually biting on his lower lip.

“Oh, okay then. That’s nice”, Jimin muttered and held out his hand. He knew his face grew even more red as Yoongi stared at his hand before glancing towards him and then staring at his hand again. This time, Yoongi didn’t seem to be able to hold back a small smile as he reached for Jimin’s stretched out hand, shaking it gently.

Jimin suddenly felt something pull at his heart. He couldn’t tell what it was but his chest felt lighter than before, warmer than just seconds ago. A wave of emotions rushed over him, leaving him with flushed skin and an odd lump in his throat. When Jimin looked at Yoongi, he could see that the tip of his ears were covered in a deep blush, the look in his eyes dazed as well.

“Um, yeah”, Jimin coughed and pulled his hand away. He felt good but also more emotional than he could explain. He swallowed thickly, averting his gaze even though he still felt Yoongi’s on himself.

“I’m gonna ask Seokjin for some ice for my ankle”, Yoongi announced but didn’t move.

“Okay. I’ll go back in, so... see you later.” Jimin watched as Yoongi slowly walked down the hallway before he stopped and turned to face Jimin over his shoulder.

“See you then, friend.”
Jimin walked back into the room smiling. When Taehyung gave him a questioning look, Jimin simply waved him off. He couldn’t explain it, even if he wanted to.
Jimin couldn’t walk to the omega den without his shoes that he had left in the library so he decided to stay in the infirmary over night. Hoseok had informed them about a spare room with two beds in which Taehyung and he could rest, and the omegas were quick to accept the offer. Jimin was glad he wouldn’t have to spend the next hours completely alone, the events from the day still swirling in his head. Jimin couldn’t stop thinking about Yoongi’s notebook, Sungwoon’s outburst, the conversation with Namjoon, seeing Yoongi’s wolf form and the talk with Yoongi. The whole day had been overwhelming.

Jimin wasn’t sure how to feel about all of it. Should he be sad because of Sungwoon or happy that Yoongi and he became friends? Should he be glad that Taehyung and Jungkook seemed closer or should he feel sorrowful for Namjoon’s forbidden love? He hoped a good night’s rest would clear his mind, at least for a little while.

There was one thought that wouldn’t leave his mind though as Jimin climbed into the bed: he knew what Yoongi’s scent was. Jimin wished he could go back and analyse all the times he smelled the pleasant aroma of pines in the air and regretted having pushed it aside as imagination. But it meant
that Yoongi felt comfortable, even if it was only at certain times. It was definitely progress.

“Watcha’ smiling about?”

Taehyung was sitting cross-legged on the other bed, facing Jimin who was already curled up under the blanket. His blonde hair was messy on top of his head and his fluffy sweater hung loosely around his shoulders. A smirk was tugging on Taehyung’s lips and Jimin huffed at his best friend’s teasing.

“It’s not what you think”, he defended himself, even though he wasn’t sure what Taehyung was thinking. But based on his grin, Jimin didn’t expect anything decent.

“Tell me what you and Yoongi talked about when you were outside!” Taehyung leaned forward, his boxy grin stretching over his face.

“Why are you so excited to hear about it?”, Jimin chuckled, sitting up in his bed too. It reminded him of the time they had sleepovers as teenagers, whispering about alphas until deep into the night and trying not to wake any of their family members.

“Oh, come on! You smiled from ear to ear when you came back and Yoongi seemed so relaxed compared to before!” Jimin sighed, admitting to himself that he would be curious as well.

“He apologized for the things he said and we decided to be friends”, Jimin explained vaguely with a smile, “Leave the past in the past, you know?”

“Oh! That’s… that’s nice.” Jimin could see the concern in Taehyung’s expression, his grin not reaching his eyes. Taehyung probably had a reason for that but Jimin wasn’t sure if he wanted to know. He didn’t want Taehyung to ruin this moment for him and deliberated for a second before he decided to ask.

“What?”

“It’s just”, Taehyung sighed, propping his chin up on his palm, “I don’t know if this is the right time to get attached to someone. I want to believe they will make it into the pack, I really do! But what if they don’t…” Jimin could see now that Taehyung was not only talking about Yoongi and him now. He wished he could promise Taehyung that Jungkook and Yoongi would make it or reassure him that it was indeed a good time to get close to them. But the truth was, Jimin had no idea. He wasn’t
sure if they were completely foolish to get close to the alphas before the ceremony. Jimin’s expression softened as he tried to lift his best friend’s mood again.

“I saw you two holding hands earlier.” Jimin giggled as Taehyung hid his face in his hands, which hid neither his blush nor the shy smile on his lips.

“When we went on a walk, there was this path near the school that was really slippery. He said I should hold his hand so I won’t fall and, well, he kind of didn’t let go after that”, Taehyung explained, lowering his hands to gauge Jimin’s reaction. Jimin squealed, almost falling out of his bed as he threw himself forward, body thrumming with excitement for his best friend.

“Shhh, the others will think something happened”, Taehyung hushed but snickered himself.

“You two are so cute!”, Jimin cooed, clutching at his chest dramatically.

“I know”, Taehyung winked cheekily before his face turned thoughtful, “Chim, do you know Kim Gayoung?”

“The woman who came from another pack and was the only one who managed to be accepted into it?”

“Yeah. It was a long time ago, huh?”

“What about her?” Jimin’s brows furrowed as he could practically hear Taehyung’s thoughts turning in his head. The blonde crawled under his sheets, fidgeting with the hem of his blanket.

“She saw me and Jungkook. We never really talked so I wasn’t sure how to react. She just… looked at us.”

“That’s weird”, Jimin hummed as he also lay down, pulling the blanket up to his chin. “Maybe seeing Jungkook just brought a lot of memories back, you know? She lost both of her friends with whom she probably grew up with in the ceremony, it must have been traumatic. It’s probably hard for her, knowing that there will be such an event again.”
“That’s true.” Taehyung sounded half asleep so Jimin left it at that, simply hoping to himself that this
time things will turn out differently and that both brothers will be allowed to stay.

He noticed that the light was still on and tip-toed across the room to turn it off. The moonshine was
suddenly bright as it broke through the darkness of the room. Jimin closed his eyes and begged the
moon to just wait a little longer, to give them more time. He fell asleep with an uncertain feeling and
the wish for everything to turn out right.

Jimin woke up in the middle of the night, heart thrumming in his chest and skin clammy. He wasn’t
sure what exactly he dreamed about but he remembered Sungwoon had been in it. Jimin sat up
warily, trying to calm down and maybe get a glass of water before he would try to sleep again. But
as Jimin glanced to the other bed, he found it to be empty.

Confused and still sleepy, Jimin walked out of the room to look for Taehyung. The halls were dimly
lit for the medics that worked the night shifts and Jimin had to squint at the sudden brightness. He
shuffled over to the room where Jungkook and Yoongi slept, noticing that the door was slightly
agape. As he stepped inside, Jimin could see Taehyung curled up against Jungkook’s sleeping body,
the alpha’s arm hanging loosely around Taehyung’s shoulder. Jimin sighed and smiled a little at the
sight; his best friend must have sought out Jungkook sometime during the night.

Jimin’s gaze found the bed next to them, in which Yoongi soundly slept, facing the window. With
quiet steps, Jimin made his way over to him, hoping the older wouldn’t wake up. Yoongi looked
calm in his sleep, lips parted, breathing evenly. Moonshine illuminated his face and hair, letting the
black locks shimmer in the darkness. Jimin thought back to the forest, remembered Yoongi’s raven
fur. Yoongi looked so much less intimidating than Jimin had imagined. The perfume of pines lingered
in the air, Jimin now easily sensing it around Yoongi. It brought a small smile to his face before he
looked out the window and saw the moon in the night sky. It wasn’t completely full but could be any
day now. He took a deep breath and massaged his own neck, his shoulders feeling tense. Jimin knew
he couldn’t change anything about the situation. Yoongi and Jungkook would have to do the
ceremony. He could only pray and hope that Yoongi’s injured ankle wouldn’t stand in their way.
But he knew the alphas by now, they weren’t ones to give up easily.

Running a hand through his hair, Jimin wondered how he should approach Sungwoon. He felt
ashamed thinking back at how tongue-tied he was, how he couldn’t do anything but cry and… and
beg. How would his mother react, seeing him like that? The son she raised to be strong and
determined, begging his alpha in tears. Begging for him to have mercy, to spare him. Tears welled up
in Jimin’s eyes as he imagined how he must have looked. Weak and prideless, with no dignity. Jimin
had always thought he was a happy omega, one of the lucky ones. It all seemed ridiculous to him
now. The only thing he could do now was survive. Play the submissive omega Sungwoon wanted
and keep his thoughts hidden. Because the one thing Jimin wouldn’t let Sungwoon have was his
mind. He knew better now than to lie to himself. Jimin would think and judge and wish the hell for
Sungwoon because that was the only thing he could do. And it was so much more than he had been
able to do before. Jimin felt almost liberated at the idea to not let Sungwoon have him. To have him play the fool, thinking Jimin would be on his side when Jimin saw through him now. Jimin would get a bit of his old strength back, would cleanse his mind from his former chains. It wasn’t much but it was something. And something was all Jimin needed at the moment.

The next day was rather uneventful. Before Jimin made his way back to the omega den, Namjoon stopped by to bring him his shoes. They talked for a while and Jimin thanked Namjoon for helping him the day before. However, as soon as Seokjin and Hoseok lingered in the hall, Jimin left the three of them alone. He washed himself properly before checking up on the daycare and visiting the kids he hadn’t seen in a while now. Afterwards, Jimin noticed he wasn’t ready to face Sungwoon just yet. Instead, he wrote a letter to him, apologising in the most agonising way and promising him that nothing ever happened between him and another alpha. Jimin swore that he only offered to help because Hoseok was his friend and he didn’t want to let the medic down. He didn’t have an excuse as to why he kept it secret so Jimin simply left it out, filling the ivory paper with other meaningless words.

He pushed the letter in under Sungwoon’s door before hurrying away from his hut, not eager to speak to the alpha. Since Yoongi and Jungkook would be training the whole day, Jimin spent the day with Taehyung, telling him everything about the situation with Sungwoon and letting his best friend distract him from it later. The both of them stayed at the omega den, only standing up to get food or hot chocolate. Jimin felt his mood lift, could relax in the calm atmosphere. It wasn’t until Taehyung noticed it got dark and walked towards the window that it all fell apart.

“Jimin”, Taehyung called, voice shaking, “It’s full moon.”

Three knocks on the door. Jimin heard them, somewhere in his mind even thought about answering the door, but his body stayed frozen. Taehyung was tucked under Jimin’s left arm, his body curled over the edge of Jimin’s bed and his cheeks covered in dry tears. Other than the occasional sniff, Jimin hadn’t heard any sound from him. But his own head was filled with cotton, mind blurry and blank. Jimin had cried. Not as long as Taehyung, nor as painfully, but he hadn’t been able to hold his own tears back as he listened to the heart-wrenching sobbing of his best friend. He had realised that this could be the last night of Yoongi and Jungkook in the pack. The last night they could see each other. Something inside of Jimin hurt and his chest felt unbearably heavy but he still tried to grasp what was happening.

Someone knocked again, this time louder. Jimin jerked a little before swallowing dryly and trying to find his voice.
“Yeah?”, he croaked, voice hoarse.

The door opened and Jimin saw Heejin, a younger omega from the pack, peeking in, her eyes unsure as she saw Jimin’s and Taehyung’s state.

“Um, I have a letter for you from Sungwoon”, she informed him and held up a folded piece of paper, “He saw me when I was on my way to the omega den and told me to give it to you.”

Jimin blinked at the letter in her delicate hands for a moment before he nodded and gestured for her to come in. He would have expected for Sungwoon to speak to him personally but was relieved nonetheless.

“Thanks, Heejin”, Jimin said as she handed him the letter, an uncomfortable smile on her lips.

“No problem. I guess I see you tomorrow? At the ceremony?”

Jimin tried not to choke up at the words, even though he felt Taehyung tense under his arm. He tried his best to smile politely.

“Yes, of course.”

As soon as the door closed behind her, Jimin opened the letter, desperate to think about anything but the ceremony.

“What’s he writing?”, Taehyung whispered and looked up, eyes swollen and red. Jimin cleared his throat and read out loud.

“Dear Jimin, I was very pleased with your letter. Although I can not trust you yet, I am relieved to hear that you did not betray me with another alpha. I would have not known how to ever look into your eyes again. But Jimin, you have to know that what you did was with great fault and that I expect you to work on that. For me and for us as future mates. Please spend your time thinking about your actions. Jimin, I know you are not the evil kind but you should be aware of how you and your actions affect others and not only how they affect you. This is how this world works, Jimin. I hope you learned from your mistake and take my advice. I will spend the night somewhere else so don’t
seek me out. We will see each other at the ceremony. I believe it is for the best if we don’t speak again of this incident. Without any further incidents, we can be happy together. Love, Alpha Sungwoon.”

“I feel sick.”

Jimin sighed heavily and had to agree with Taehyung. He felt nauseous, as well.

“It’s just how he is. I’m glad I don’t have to see him today.”

“I cannot believe he talks to you like that. You know he’s wrong, right?”, Taehyung scoffed, looking disgusted as he took the letter away from Jimin and scanned the written text.

“Yeah, I know… I think.”

“Why did he sign with Alpha Sungwoon? As if you didn’t know that he’s an alpha already.” Taehyung rolled his eyes, before crumpling the letter into a ball and throwing it into the direction of the garbage can.

“Honestly? I don’t even care how he signs. He seems to be satisfied with my apology and that’s all I need to know. Let’s just forget him and visit the guys. Jungkook will want to see you”, Jimin said exhaustedly and slowly stood up, stretching his stiff muscles.

They hurried to the infirmary, hoping the cool air would help with their swollen eyes. Jimin held Taehyung’s hand tightly and hoped it would help him to calm down a bit. They wouldn’t want Jungkook to worry too much about Taehyung when he had enough other things to worry about. And Taehyung wanted to be strong for him.

The atmosphere was tense when they stepped inside after hanging up their coats in the hall and greeted Jungkook and Yoongi. Hoseok and Seokjin were also with them, both of them sharing the chair that Jimin had been sitting on for the past weeks. Taehyung immediately crawled under Jungkook’s blanket and hugged the alpha’s body close. He hid his face in Jungkook’s neck and Jimin knew that he tried to hide his tears. With no other place to sit on, Jimin slowly moved to Yoongi’s bed, sitting down at the edge of it. Nobody seemed to even notice, all of them lost in their own thoughts.
“How’s your ankle?” Jimin asked Yoongi quietly, turning to face him.

“It’s fine. I think the adrenaline will help tomorrow”, Yoongi shrugged, voice just as low.

“Yeah, probably. When do you have to be out?”

“As soon as the sun rises. We won’t have too much time so we just have to hope a few animals will be around.” Yoongi swallowed and gave Jimin a weak smile, something sad but accepting in his eyes. Jimin’s heart tugged at his chest.

“You can do it”, Jimin whispered, nodding to emphasize he believed his own words, “I believe in you two.” Yoongi’s smile turned warm as he huffed slightly.

“Then I have no other choice than to believe in us too, hm?”

“Exactly”, Jimin snickered. Their moment was interrupted by a knock on the door. Namjoon stepped inside, a tray of steaming muffins in his hand.

“Hey, I just saw the full moon and thought you could all use some power food”, the librarian said and walked around the room, letting each of them take one of the huge cinnamon muffins. Jimin noticed that everyone’s eyes started to sparkle instantly, looking at the treats in awe. Namjoon put the tray with the remaining muffins on the nightstand next to Yoongi’s bed and picked up one for himself, waving off their thank-you’s with a smile on his face. He sat down at the edge of Jungkook’s bed and started eating with the others in comfortable silence.

“I didn’t know you could bake so well”, Seokjin praised on a mouthful of his muffin and Jimin saw Namjoon blush at the compliment.

“I read so many books, I thought one about baking wouldn’t hurt to try out.”

“They really are good”, Yoongi chimed in, “And I tell you that as a top level chef.” Jimin snorted and lightly hit him which only made the alpha smirk.

“What? It’s true, I’m one of the best.”
“You still have to prove that, Min Yoongi!”, Hoseok chuckled and Seokjin was quick to agree.

“Ah, you all haven’t tasted his food yet. After that, you will believe him”, Jungkook said dreamily, probably thinking about Yoongi’s past cooked dishes.

“Don’t feed his ego before you have tasted my famous rabbit stew”, Taehyung answered, causing Jimin, Namjoon, Hoseok and Seokjin to grimace.

“It’s famous for tasting like feet, Taehyung”, Seokjin commented which made Namjoon laugh and choke on his muffin. Jimin couldn’t stop the tears from rolling down his cheeks as he laughed at the sight, the tense mood long forgotten.

“And how would you know what feet taste like?”, Taehyung wondered with a grin on his face, “I don’t even want to know what you and Hoseok do in your five minute breaks.” At that, Seokjin folded the wrapping paper from his muffin into a ball and threw it towards Taehyung where it hit his forehead.

“You’re really good at aiming!”, Jungkook gasped which earned him an offended gasp from Taehyung.

They all continued to bicker and laugh together, talking about food, skills and whatever the conversation led to. Jimin was glad to see that Jungkook and Yoongi seemed to enjoy themselves as they ate and joked along with the others. He found himself staring at Yoongi’s bright smile now and then, something he hasn’t seen often on him. He hoped to see it the next day as well, after the brothers would have been accepted into the pack.

As much fun as they all had, they knew that Yoongi and Jungkook needed some rest and made their leave far too soon for anyone’s liking. Namjoon was the first to go home, with Hoseok and Seokjin joining him soon after. Jimin offered Taehyung to stay at his room for the night so they decided to leave together. Jimin hugged Jungkook and wished him good luck before he turned to Yoongi, giving Jungkook and Taehyung some private time to say their goodbyes.

“Everything will go well”, he sighed, more to himself than to the alpha.

“Will you be watching?” Jimin nodded and Yoongi smiled.
“Cheer for Jungkook, it’ll help him.”

“I’ll cheer for the both of you. If Sungwoon doesn’t stand in my way, that is.” Yoongi’s face fell a little.

“I forgot he’d be there. Remind me to kick his ass after the ceremony.” Jimin giggled at that and hit his chest lightly.

“Don’t you dare to get yourself banned from the pack right after they let you in!”

“Why? Will you miss me?”, Yoongi teased but his expression changed when Jimin froze, looking into his eyes.

“Of course I will.” He watched as Yoongi took a deep breath, eyes looking slightly glassy.

“God, I’m so scared”, he chuckled breathlessly, “I’m so fucking scared.” Jimin stepped forward and wrapped his arms around Yoongi’s shoulders, breathing in his comforting scent.

“You can do this, Yoongi. Not just for you but for Jungkook too. You made it this far and you will not lose now, okay?”, Jimin reassured him, tightening his hold for a second before he pulled back. He only realised then that Yoongi had hugged him back.

“Okay”, was all that Yoongi answered, eyes locked with Jimin’s.

It almost hurt to turn around and walk away, letting Taehyung press a soft kiss to Jungkook’s lips before they would have to part. They both waved towards the alphas with tears in their eyes and made their way home again with heavy hearts. Jimin and Taehyung cried themselves to sleep that night, holding each other and praying for the best.
“Time to wake up, guys.”

Yoongi stirred from his sleep rather quickly, his nerves having kept him awake for most of the night anyway. Dread and fear instantly filled his gut upon hearing Hoseok’s voice as he knew what awaited him.

“I thought one of the night shifters would wake us up”, Yoongi grumbled, not wanting silence to fill the room. He could sense the heavy tension pour from Jungkook’s body, his gaze dazed but filled with terror.

“I thought it would be better if someone you trusted helped you through the morning. I’ll get you your breakfast now, please try to eat even though you might not feel like it. You will need all the strength you can get”, Hoseok informed before he left the room again, for once without a bright smile on his face.
Yoongi knew they had to eat, especially if they wouldn’t be accepted into the pack and would have to go without any food for a while, but as he saw the tray full of dishes in his lap, he couldn’t bring himself to eat it. It felt like a last meal of some sorts which only caused Yoongi to feel nauseous. He could see Jungkook nibble on his cheese next to him and was worried since his brother hadn’t spoken a word today.

“Come on, Yoongi. Please eat”, Hoseok prompted and Yoongi reluctantly picked up the spoon to start with the soup. At least the warmth was pleasant.

Time passed in a blur and before Yoongi knew it, they were ready to go. They were dressed just in their coats since they had to turn into their wolf forms to hunt. Before they stepped outside, Yoongi’s eyes roamed over the room. It had been so familiar, the closest place to a “home” he had in a while. It wasn’t an awful long time but enough to get used to it, to get used to the beds, the walls, the chair on which the others always sat. Taehyung sat there to tell them stories about his day, Seokjin would rant about some of his patients, Hoseok would sing them some songs and Namjoon read them something out of his books sometimes. And, of course, there had been Jimin who Yoongi quickly pushed out of his thoughts. Just the memory of his encouraging words, his anxious eyes, his warm hug caused Yoongi to shudder, his chest full of different emotions he couldn’t even understand.

“Yoongi?” Hoseok asked, laying a hand on Yoongi’s shoulder, “You okay?”

“Yeah, yeah. Let’s go.” Yoongi hated how choked up he sounded but couldn’t waste any time on that now. He needed to focus. After one last glance into the room, Yoongi walked away.

His body was buzzing with nervousness and adrenaline, the way from the infirmary to the beginnings of the forest feeling too long to bare. Yoongi clenched and unclenched his fists as he set one foot in front of the other over the snow covered ground. The crunching sound from his boots seemed to mock him as it pierced through the peaceful quietness of the morning. The landscape under the calm twilight setting seemed too beautiful for a day like this. Yoongi swallowed thickly, not wanting to think about what he could possibly have to face throughout the day. He needed to focus on the task at hand.

“Okay, strip out of your coats and boots and hand them to me. I will give them to you as soon as you come back. Try to be back around noon, we still need to clean the animals before you two present them”, Hoseok instructed, looking more serious than Yoongi had ever seen him. And he had every reason to, there was no going back now. Yoongi and Jungkook would have to give one hundred percent if they wanted to survive.

Yoongi’s hand hovered around the loop fastening of his fur coat, he needed a moment before he could step into the woods. Automatically, his head turned to his brother and he could see teardrops on his soft, rosy cheeks. Yoongi’s heart broke at the sight because there was nothing that could hurt
him more than seeing Jungkook in pain.

“Hey, don’t cry”, Yoongi muttered as he placed his hands on Jungkook’s shoulders, “We’re gonna manage this, okay? We made it this far. I have always told you that you can do anything you want in life, have I not? I know you can do this, Kookie. We’re both gonna fight until we’re in the pack and then we’ll have a new future here.” Jungkook sniffed and nodded, letting Yoongi pull him into a tight hug.

“Yooyoo will always be by your side. And mom and papa will watch over us and guide us, okay?”, Yoongi whispered into his ear, feeling Jungkook nod against his shoulder. When he pulled back, Yoongi didn’t trust himself to look at Jungkook again, hurrying to open his coat. He gave it to Hoseok whose eyes seemed glassy all of the sudden but he tried to ignore it as he pulled off his boots.

“You guys ready?”, Hoseok asked, voice surprisingly steady. Yoongi’s eyes were focused on the trees deep into the forest, feeling the change starting deep in his bones. He nodded.

“Good luck, guys.”

Jimin wasn’t sure when he finally managed to fall asleep but he woke with a jolt when he felt a strong grip on his shoulder.

“Chim! Chim, wake up!”

Jimin tore his eyes open and quickly sat up, feeling shaken up after being woken like that. Taehyung gaped at him, hair messy and brows furrowed.

“What- what happened?”, Jimin asked hoarsely, struggling to keep his eyes open.
“I think you had a nightmare”, Taehyung sighed and leaned against the wall with a soft thump. “You were breathing really quick and murmured about something pulling in your chest and- oh God, you seemed to be in pain. I was so worried.” Now that Taehyung said it, Jimin remembered that he had had a wild dream but he could barely remember what it was about. Hunting? Or was he perhaps running? It had all been blurry and the only thing Jimin clearly recalled was something being pulled out of his chest, something close to a string. He could still faintly feel it when he rubbed his palm over his chest.

“Yeah, I think I had a nightmare. Probably from the stress over the ceremony. Sorry, I didn’t mean to worry you.” He gave Taehyung an apologetic smile but the blonde waved him off.

“Don’t worry about it, it’s not your fault. I didn’t sleep too well either. Kept thinking about Jungkook and the ceremony.”

“Oh Tae”, Jimin murmured, rubbing his friend’s arm soothingly up and down.

“It’s almost noon so I guess they’re already out hunting. I wish I could have wished him luck before they left”, Taehyung grimaced and Jimin agreed, he felt terrible having slept while the boys were facing their first task.

“Do you think they’re doing well?” Taehyung brushed his hair out of his face and looked at Jimin questioningly and the slightest bit hopefully.

“I hope they do”, was all Jimin could answer as he shrugged helplessly. He stretched his neck to his left and right until he heard it crack, suddenly noticing how stiff his body felt.

“I really wonder what I dreamed about, I’m feeling all sweaty and stiff”, Jimin wondered out loud and stepped out of the bed to stretch his whole body.

“Maybe it was the same dream you used to have a few times? The one where you were locked up in a cell?” Jimin froze, totally having forgotten about that. He realised that he hadn’t had that dream for a few weeks now.

“No, I don’t think that was it”, he responded simply, not wanting to analyse it further.
After Jimin took a shower and convinced Taehyung that he would feel better after a relaxing bath as well, the both of them decided to get ready for the ceremony. As absurd as it sounded, even this event was seen as an important social gathering which meant that everybody had to dress up. Children would wear light coloured dresses and robes which stood for youth and innocence, whereas the older generations would come in dark, rich colours, showing their status. Jimin put on a scarlet coloured traditional dress that hung loosely to his ankles. The collar of the satin dress was covered in braided stripes of garnet coloured fabric that hung down to his torso, while his arms were bare. Taehyung wore a graphite grey dress, without the braided fringes but ruffles at the front and around the high collar. Since it was still cold outside, the both of them wore two wool tights underneath and fluffy socks on top of them.

Jimin and Taehyung both sat on the ground in front of Taehyung’s wide mirror as they powdered their faces. Omegas and alphas had to wear make up at events like this and usually had fine, black lines around their eyes and accentuated cheekbones. Jimin was putting some balm onto his chapped lips when he heard Taehyung chuckle.

“What?”

“Oh just”, Taehyung shrugged and continued to pull curling clips out of his hair that made his blonde locks look wavy, “I kissed Jungkook yesterday.”

“I saw! Who initiated it?”, Jimin gasped, pulling his own clips out of his hair.

“I think he did but I kind of met him half way? I mean, I know we were both sad and scared and I know it’s not the most romantic situation but kissing him just felt so… so right.” Jimin giggled at Taehyung’s smile, glad to see him giddy instead of anxious.

“Were his lips soft?”

“I think so. We didn’t kiss for long but it definitely felt nice!”

“You two seem to be made for each other”, Jimin sighed dreamily and was happy Taehyung had finally found someone he liked. He trusted Jungkook to treat his best friend with respect and that was relieving to know.

“So, um, I saw you and Yoongi hug.” Jimin pulled the last clip out of his hair and looked at Taehyung through the mirror.
“What about it?”

“I mean...” Taehyung picked up the balm and played with the lid of the box nervously. “You two seem to be getting closer.” Jimin frowned and turned to face the blonde, having no idea what he could be getting at.

“What are you saying, Tae?”

“Don’t be mad but I just think you two have a weird connection. Like, you two are kind of close in an intimate kind of way.” Taehyung warily looked up to Jimin who was still frowning at him.

“Have you lost your mind? We’re friends for two days and you see a connection?” Jimin snorted even though it wasn’t at all funny.

“It’s just a gut feeling, okay? I’m not saying you two would get together-”

“Then don’t. You know I’m stuck with Sungwoon for the rest of my life so don’t even talk about me having any connection with anyone.” He didn’t want to snap at Taehyung but he couldn’t help the frustrated tone in his voice. His best friend should know better than to bring something like that up.

“So you don’t deny that there is something between you two? It can be platonic, Chim, I’m not even talking about love!”, Taehyung argued, not letting this go. Jimin looked at him for a long moment, thinking this over in his head. Taehyung’s words didn’t make him uncomfortable like they would have been if Taehyung had suspected the connection between him and Jungkook, Seokjin or God knows who. Jimin didn’t feel his stomach drop or face flush like the time someone had asked him if he was courted by Namjoon even thought they had been nothing but friends. So, Jimin wasn’t completely opposed to the idea of having a connection with Yoongi. He knew Taehyung believed in spiritual bounds between people, even between the two best friends. He believed that people were sometimes bound to meet, that their souls were connected, either in a platonic or romantic way. And Jimin had to admit that he believed it a little as well.

“I don’t know”, Jimin admitted eventually, “I believe we are very different but can learn from each other. And I’m glad that we are friends.” He gave Taehyung a weak smile as his stomach filled with warmth. He and Yoongi had a rocky start and they’ve come a long way. He was relieved that things were good between them, that they could talk honestly to each other. Taehyung nodded, his lips stretching into a fond smile.
Yoongi’s ankle was throbbing as Hoseok pressed a cloth filled with ice over it. He hissed at the stinging pain but tried not to squirm too much. Yoongi was seated on the bed, wrapped in a warm blanket while Seokjin washed the animals. Yoongi was not in the best mood, the hunt could have gone a lot better. There had been two deer but only Jungkook had managed to get one. Yoongi had been so close but it had escaped before he could jump at it. And with his hurting ankle that he somehow managed to twist again sometime during the hunt, Yoongi wasn’t able to run after it properly. He ended up getting a beaver with Jungkook’s help but was still disappointed in himself.

“Will you be able to fight?”, Jungkook asked, sitting crossed-leg on the other bed, also covered in a thick blanket. His temples and forehead were covered in sweat, hair messed up from the hunt. Yoongi was proud of him despite feeling guilty of not having been able to help him more.

“It’s better in wolf form but the transition hurts. We have an hour between the fights and the speeches so I’ll have to cool it again then.” He sighed exhaustedly, hoping he would do better in the second task.

“Don’t worry, you both did great. After the animals are cleaned, we will decorate them and make them look bigger and more pompous. They will most probably let you pass with this, believe me. You have about an hour to change back after they announced the first task to be succeeded and wear the traditional fighting clothes. After the fights are over and they announce what will happen to you, you two need to come to the infirmary immediately, you got me?”, Hoseok told them with a stern expression, “No matter if you’ll succeed or not, Seokjin and I will wait here for you. If the worst thing happens – and we hope it won’t – we will be treating your wounds and give you stacks of food so you will be able to travel to the next pack.”

Yoongi felt his throat closing up, hoping it wouldn’t come to this. He was more than thankful that Seokjin and Hoseok had a plan B and wanted to help them but the thought of trying to find another pack was terrifying. Yoongi swallowed and hoped Hoseok wouldn’t notice how much his words affected him.

“Oh, and please trust me on this: Do not reject the pack’s acceptance. If they choose only one of you,
“Certainly not”, Yoongi interrupted Hoseok, his face hardening, “If they take me and not Jungkook, there is no way I’ll let him go alone.”

“Yoongi, the chances are higher to survive on your own. We’d have more food supplies, other packs wouldn’t see one alpha as threatening as two and we could still seek them out because it’s less obvious”, Hoseok countered, eyes hard on Yoongi. But Yoongi really didn’t want to hear any of this, he could never leave Jungkook alone. Yoongi had always promised Jungkook to never leave him when they were younger and he was not about to break that promise. He growled at the medic and straightened in his seat, hands curling into fists around the fabric of the blanket.

“Listen to me, you little-”, he spat but was stopped when he felt a strong hand on his shoulder.

“Guys, stop this!”, Jungkook scolded and Yoongi realised that he truly wasn’t the young pup he once had been anymore, “We still have to fight so let’s give our best and hope it doesn’t come to this situation. Yoongi, you need to realise that if only I were to be sent away, you could help me more if you stayed in the pack where you have resources and everything. You could still always leave the pack and come with me after you think of a plan. So accepting doesn’t mean we would part ways. And Hoseok, you need to understand that we’re a little on edge here with everything going on and you can’t just expect Yoongi to agree with something as brutal as this. I know we’re all nervous and scared as hell but you two fighting won’t help anyone now.”

Yoongi and Hoseok both ducked their head, ashamed that the youngest of them had to step in. Yoongi’s pride for Jungkook got overshadowed by guilt once again and he forced himself to get it together now. He wasn’t on his best behaviour today and really needed to change that before he stepped out again.

“Sorry, you’re right”, he murmured at the same time Hoseok muttered his apologies. In that moment, the door opened again and Seokjin and another medic who Yoongi wasn’t as familiar with carried the dead animals inside. The sight wasn’t pretty but Yoongi got used to it as a chef. The other medic also had a basked full of flowers and ribbons in his hands and Yoongi guessed it was to decorate the prey. He saw some flowers with a longer stem and knew he had to use those to make his beaver look bigger.

He just hoped he wouldn’t mess up again.
“There’s Sungwoon”, Taehyung whispered as they walked towards the many rows of benches that formed a circle with a wide space in the middle. The ground was freed from the snow and covered in what seemed to be a leathery blanket where the fights would be held barefoot later that day. The circle had one open space where the wolves would enter and leave through and the elders were seated opposite from it. The six men and women, all suspected to be over 200 years old, were already sitting in extravagant wooden chairs that were a little higher than usual ones and full of traditional carvings. Words and pictures could be found on the dark wood and it was told to be a spiritual experience to sit in one of them. The elders wore long, black dresses which were almost completely covered in many dark coloured robes. Each of them wore a different hat, representing what the elder stood for. There were wisdom, rationality, compassion, calculation, resourcefulness, solidarity...

...And of course power. This hat was worn by no other than the pack alpha. His chair was placed in the middle of the pack elders, painted in a deep black. Unlike the other chairs, it was smooth and free of the carvings, the design very simple which only made it look more powerful. It was still empty which relieved Jimin as he did not want to bare the pack alpha’s withering glare.

“I don’t see Sungwoon, where is he?”, Jimin asked, looking around the benches. A lot of people were already there, all in traditional clothing, curled hair and sparkling jewellery. Jimin wore his best earrings that had two golden hoops hanging low, a smaller one and a bigger one with a golden feather in the centre of the bigger hoop. Taehyung wore silver bands of earrings, one of the bands in the form of a cross.

“There, he’s talking to Kihyun”, Taehyung showed Jimin and indeed, he could see Sungwoon talking to one of the other alphas from the pack. Sungwoon wore his most expensive coat, made out of eagle feathers. He wore nothing but loose cotton pants in a burgundy colour and had his family name painted across his toned chest. Every alpha between the ages of 18 and 28 had to do the same since they were possible fighters and therefore representatives of the pack and their families.

“Ah, yeah, I see him. I better go talk to him”, Jimin sighed before he walked to his direction with a slight wave to Taehyung.

“Good luck, Chim! I’ll be with my family if you need me, okay?” Jimin nodded and already saw Taehyung’s younger siblings run towards him. A part of him wanted to look for Jihyun and his parents, wanted to see if they were all fine, but he knew he had to speak to Sungwoon first. They
were supposed to be on good terms, after all.

Sungwoon looked up as soon as Jimin got closer, probably smelling his scent. He waved him over with a tight smile, eyes following Jimin intensely. Jimin wrapped the coat further around himself and tried not to grimace at Sungwoon’s strong scent, the aroma of burnt wood attacking his senses. He didn’t know how he could have fooled himself to find it pleasing at some point for it seemed to only make him nauseous now.

“Ah, Jiminie, my beautiful omega!”, Sungwoon greeted and pulled Jimin to his side, his hand curling around Jimin’s waist.

“Jimin! Long time, no see, huh?”, Kihyun chuckled and Jimin hoped his smile looked genuine.

“Yes, that’s true! I hope work is going well?” He remembered that Kihyun was responsible for the trades between their packs and others. If they lacked anything, they usually traded it with something other packs had plenty of. It was a very important job.

“It’s usually pretty busy this season but we’re doing well. Eastern packs definitely lack nutriment but the southern ones are rather well off. We kind of want to try to trade more with the northern and southern ones from now on, they seem to make good deals.”

“That’s interesting!”, Jimin replied but couldn’t talk further as the pack alpha arrived at the place, wearing furs of exotic birds and a big hat on top of his head that resembled the head of a wolf. Jimin remembered how scared he was of the hat when he had been younger and a shiver ran down his spine at the sight still.

“We better sit down”, Sungwoon announced and bid Kihyun goodbye. His hold on Jimin tightened as they walked to the very front, sitting almost next to the elders in the front row.

Jimin could see a glimpse of his father as everyone moved to sit down but lost him just a second later. He huffed frustratedly and only calmed down a little when he saw Taehyung sitting on the other side, next to his parents. They locked eyes and Jimin could see the fear in his best friend’s face, anxiety eating him up. Jimin nodded and hoped to look confident but he knew that his stomach was stirring nervously as well. Taehyung pressed his lips together but nodded back and Jimin was glad he could see him right now.

Jimin heard his heartbeat loud in his ears, accompanied by the sounds of the huge drums two teenage
pups played at the sides of the entryway. In the back of his mind, Jimin remembered how he had always wanted to play the drums at a ceremony since only boys that hadn’t presented yet were allowed to do it. But the majority of his thoughts were just prayers that everything would turn out right. Like a mantra, Jimin told himself that he wished for nothing more than the Jungkook’s and Yoongi’s safety, that he needed the guys to survive. He felt his breath quicken with the beat of the drums, felt his vision swimming in unshed tears as he waited for the ceremony to start.

And then the drums stopped and all that Jimin heard was the ringing in his ears. He looked up from his lap to see two large wolves standing a few meters behind the circle, the prey in their snouts. Jimin looked at the wolf with copper fur, saw Jungkook’s features in him. He was tall but slender, muscular and lean for a wolf. He looked like a typical young alpha and Jimin knew he would grow even further. He swallowed thickly when his eyes switched to Yoongi, his fur even more stunning in broad daylight. He was not as tall as Jungkook but very broad and muscular, his black fur long and wavy. His onyx eyes were fixed to the front, looking strong and fearless. Jimin chuckled breathlessly, remembering Yoongi telling him how scared he was. Jimin was indescribably proud of him for standing here, in front of everyone, glowing with confidence. You’re doing so well, Jimin internally praised him, hoping Yoongi could somehow feel it.

“You’re doing so well, Jimin” internally praised him, hoping Yoongi could somehow feel it.

“Presenting to the Ha Pack”, one of the boys that were playing the drums called into the tense silence, “Min Yoongi and Min Jungkook, torn from the Shin pack of the South.”

The drums started playing in a slow rhythm as the wolves slowly stepped forward, entering the circle. Jimin could finally see their prey and was shocked to see a whole deer carried by Jungkook, it’s body bound in orange ribbons and garlands of colourful, big flowers. Jimin knew that Jungkook would impress with his prey and exchanged a hopeful look with Taehyung. He had trouble recognising what Yoongi’s prey was since it was almost completely covered in white bergenias, including their thin stems. But Jimin could see light grey braided ribbons and also a few bells fixed on it and hoped it was enough to impress the elders.

The wolves stopped before the pack alpha and lay their prey on the ground in an offering gesture. Their ears were pulled back and heads ducked as they took a few steps back. White noise tuned the drums out as Jimin held his breath. The pack elders tilted their heads to the side to inspect the animals, not allowed to actually touch them. After what felt like ages, the drums stopped again, signalling that the elders were supposed to give their judgement. A raised hand stood for success while no reaction indicated a failure.

“Min Yoongi”, the pack alpha growled, his voice booming through the air. Jimin saw five hands in the air and swallowed down a curse at the one who decided against Yoongi. The pack alpha looked around before he nodded shortly, “Accepted.”

Jimin closed his eyes and exhaled, forcing himself not to cry. He was so relieved. He was so incredibly relieved.
Min Jungkook… accepted.” Jimin opened his eyes in time to see all hands raised and couldn’t help to smile as everyone started to clap. Jungkook and Yoongi were already leaving the circle but Jimin caught Taehyung’s eyes, red and glassy and a wide smile on his face. Jimin clapped as strongly as he could, euphoria rushing through him.

Yoongi and Jungkook quickly changed into warm clothes before they jumped into joyful jog, patting each other on the back.

“I’m so proud of you”, Yoongi repeated over and over, not wanting to think about the second and third task. A new wave of motivation and energy rushed through him as he knew they passed the first obstacle.

“I take it you both succeeded?”, Seokjin suddenly asked with a nervous smile on his face. As soon as Yoongi and Jungkook nodded, the medic pulled the both of them into a tight embrace, Hoseok joining the group hug just seconds later.

But of course, the mood couldn’t last forever. Jungkook and Yoongi had to eat before the fight and Seokjin took over from Hoseok with cooling Yoongi’s ankle. They still had an hour which felt like an awful long time and Yoongi was glad for the smalltalk in the room.

“Hey, by the way, did you see the others?”, Hoseok asked, munching on a bowl of berries.

“Taehyung sat in the front row but relatively in the back. I saw him first and then Namjoon who was a little further in the front, I think second row”, Jungkook told them and Yoongi was surprised that Jungkook had the mind to look for anybody in the crowd. He had been busy with the task at hand.

“I didn’t see anybody”, Yoongi shrugged and swallowed down a bite of the meat stew Seokjin cooked for them, “But I did feel somebody’s eyes on me. Like more intensely than the other stares. It came from the front so I suspect one of the elders or something.”

“Ah, that must be Jiminie! He probably sits with Sungwoon at the front”, Hoseok chirped and Yoongi saw Seokjin elbow him not so subtly.
“It’s fine, I won’t vomit as soon as I hear that jerk’s name”, Yoongi grumbled but he had to admit that just hearing Sungwoon’s name made him sick. He hated that idiot.

The rest of the hour passed painfully slowly and Yoongi felt his nerves spiralling out of control when Seokjin told them to change into their fighting trousers. Yoongi pulled on a honey coloured one that hung loosely around his hips while Jungkook’s was sapphire blue and a little tighter around his thighs. Hoseok drew their family name Min onto their chests, the black colour cold on the skin.

“Jungkook, did you eat well? The whole plate?”, Yoongi asked his brother with authority. It reminded him of the time Yoongi had to take care of Jungkook for the first time after their parents had died and Yoongi had no idea how to handle a pup. He had been way too strict at first and it took him a long time to trust Jungkook to take him seriously without that tone.

“I even started a second plate so don’t worry”, Jungkook grumbled, grimacing as Hoseok’s brush touched his nipple.

“I will only stop worrying when they accepted you into the pack, brat.” Yoongi took a box with black paint and a delicate brush Seokjin handed him and drew black lines around his eyes. It was a little smudgy and not as thin due to his shaking and inexperienced hands but he knew it was obligatory so he did the job as best as he could.

Once he was done with his face, Yoongi moved to Jungkook to draw the lines around his eyes. Jungkook winced and complained about Yoongi hitting him in the eye but Yoongi simply held his head in place and continued.

“Make it look good, Yooyoo! Taehyung will see me in this”, Jungkook whined and Yoongi did feel a little bad about the smudginess.

“He will like you no matter how you look”, Yoongi simply answered, earning a snort from Seokjin who eyed his artwork with a raised brow. But Yoongi chose to ignore him and hoped Jungkook wouldn’t look into the mirror before they stepped out again.

“Don’t forget the gel, your hair will fall into your face”, Hoseok reminded and handed them a strongly smelling box. Yoongi took it reluctantly before scooping up some of the gel, the white slimy texture rather uncomfortable.
“I just put it into my hair like that?”, Jungkook asked with a disgusted expression on his face.

“Jep! You need to take a big amount and then brush your hair back with it. It should stay back”, Hoseok explained and watched with an amused smile as the brothers brushed their hair back.

“If Yoongi’s painting didn’t do the job, this will make me look like an idiot in front of Taehyung”, Jungkook huffed but Yoongi clicked his tongue.

“This is the least of our problems right now, Jungkook. Be glad we didn’t shave your whole head to fight, that’s what they would have done in our old pack. And besides, it’s in our blood to look good with our foreheads exposed”, Yoongi told him, brushing his hair back repeatedly until his fringe didn’t fall back.

“That’s true, Taehyung will think you look like a warrior!”, Seokjin mused, a fond look on his face.

The mood dropped immediately when the drums played again and they all knew the second part of the ceremony would start now. Yoongi laid his hand on Jungkook’s shoulder and squeezed it once. Their eyes locked and Yoongi gave him a trusting look. He knew Jungkook could do it. He knew he could do it as well. They both just needed to fight.

“Okay, you guys have to go”, Seokjin sighed, a nervous frown on his face, “Good luck, guys. Don’t forget what we practised.”

“We won’t”, Yoongi promised and they both stepped out of the infirmary. The wind was cold on their bare skin but Yoongi felt hot. His skin was already burning and he knew his body was preparing the change. Adrenaline was a risky thing for wolves and Yoongi needed to keep a clear head for the fights. Even in his wolf form, he shouldn’t let his instincts take over and fight smartly.

Walking towards the circle was different in his human form, especially since he knew what would be coming. He balled his hands into fists, forcing his body to not change just yet. He hoped to be fighting after Jungkook so his brother wouldn’t have to see him get hurt. But he hoped for many things.

The pups stopped drumming again when Yoongi and Jungkook were near and Yoongi could see how all eyes focused on them. This time, he did see Jimin, saw his anxious expression, his wavy locks, his dress and shiny lips. He looked away quickly before anybody could notice, fixing his gaze onto the pack alpha. Yoongi would have thought the man looked bored if his eyes wouldn’t pierce
him with a sharp glare. Yoongi knew it was Sungwoon’s father, knew the man wanted him out of his pack. But the pack alpha couldn’t just do as he pleased, not with the pack elders around him. If they fought well, the pack alpha had no excuse to throw them out because the pack would question his actions and that was the only hope Yoongi had. He had to do a good job.

“Attending to the fights, Min Yoongi and Min Jungkook, torn from the Shin pack of the South!” the boy announced again and Yoongi and Jungkook left their slippers behind and walked to the middle of the circle before lowering themselves onto their left knee, heads ducked. The hard leather felt uncomfortable under his skin but Yoongi knew it was the least amount of pain he would have to handle today.

“For the first fight,” the pack alpha said so calmly that Yoongi felt a shiver running down his spine, “I choose my own son Ha Sungwoon to fight against Min Jungkook.”

Yoongi’s head snapped up, eyes wide on the pack alpha. His thoughts were racing in his head, his stomach dropping instantly. Sungwoon was taller than Jungkook and way stronger, his wolf form more trained than Jungkook could be in his young age. Yoongi clenched his jaw until it hurt because he knew what they were doing. They would hurt Yoongi in the only way possible: by hurting Jungkook.

But before Jungkook could so much as stand up, Yoongi grasped his arm and held it tight, not letting Jungkook attend this fight.

“If you want a fair fight, let me fight Sungwoon”, Yoongi gritted through his teeth, eyes hard on the pack alpha, “No alpha his age and experience could fight Sungwoon, not even the ones from your own pack. In a real fight, I would handle the enemies like Sungwoon, the younger ones would fight against the pups. Your pack wants a fair decision and you will only get that if I fight this battle.”

Yoongi heard several gasps, especially Jungkook’s right next to him but his eyes stayed on one man before him, challenging him.

“Yoongi, don’t-”, Jungkook tried but Yoongi nodded his head sharply, not changing his mind on this. He wouldn’t let Jungkook fight against Sungwoon, that was his battle.

“Min Yoongi will fight against Ha Sungwoon on his own wish”, the pack alpha said eventually, the ghost of a smirk on his lips before he added, “But not in wolf form. They will fight as humans.”
Chapter Summary

...with blood, sweat and tears.

Chapter Notes

TW// graphic depiction of violence, please read with care! (If you want to skip it, you can start reading when Jimin's POV begins)

Hello everyone!! I have a few things to say so I hope you all take the time to read this uwu

First of all, I totally forgot to mention the POV change last time (I hope you weren't too confused) so I just wanted to clear up that I will only change POVs to special events (like the ceremony!). I will stay with Jimin's POV otherwise. Secondly, I wanted to explain some things about the pack alpha: He basically represents the values of the pack. He doesn't have a personal vendetta against Jimin (he is harsher towards him now ofc bc of his son but beforehand he didn't care much about him) but he views omegas just like the majority of alphas do. Just in case some people expected a huge backstory with Jimin there! AND LASTLY, I was told that the links I post here don't work and I am sorry about that :( I spent a lot of time trying to find a good playlist and I am sad it didn't work. Our twitter is @jinslostlines in case anybody tried to find us but couldn't click on the link. The CC is @jinsbabies

Special thanks to Rayne who beta read this chapter <3

Thank you for all the support on this story so far, I love to read your comments and theories!!!

I hope you enjoy!!

Yoongi felt all blood rushing out of his face as he stared at the pack alpha. His mind came to a halt as he realised what was happening, his throat closing up. Yoongi's head turned on instinct as he watched Sungwoon confidently stand up and pull off his coat. Yoongi saw him hand it to Jimin, not even sparing him a glance. But Yoongi did. His eyes found Jimin's indistinctively and he wanted to tear up at the sight. Jimin's eyes were glassy, wide and full of dread. His lips were parted slightly as a tear got caught in them.
Yoongi was a good fighter, a skilled one. He fought a lot in his life, fought against taller, stronger, older alphas. Yoongi knew how to trick his opponent and how to catch him off guard. But Yoongi only ever fought in wolf form. Not once had he attacked someone in his human form, his limps going slack as soon as he thought about using them. He wasn’t sure if he could fight Sungwoon who obviously knew what he was doing.

Yoongi stood up, feeling his legs shake slightly. From his peripheral vision, Yoongi saw Taehyung come up to get Jungkook off the fighting area. Right, Jungkook was supposed to watch, Yoongi remembered. Jungkook would see his brother get beaten up. Yoongi wanted to scream, to cry, to run away. He hadn’t felt that helpless in a long time. But he would fight.

Sungwoon and him moved to stand opposite each other in the centre of the wide circle. Without any warning or sign, Sungwoon lunged forward, turning Yoongi around, wrapping his arm around his neck, his other hand twisting Yoongi’s arm painfully. Yoongi chocked out a scream, his eyes stinging with tears. Yoongi raised his leg to kick Sungwoon against the hip with all strength he had, freeing himself from his hold. But as soon as he turned around, Sungwoon’s fist connected with his face, punching him with such a force that Yoongi stumbled to the side. He could only raise his hand to his nose and see that it was covered in blood before a hand pulled at his hair and forced his head up. The next punch was even more forceful and Yoongi could only just hold himself upright, spitting blood onto the ground. Sungwoon was already in his space, kicking Yoongi in his stomach, before grabbing his arm and throwing him to the ground. He angled Yoongi’s arm behind his back before he grabbed the other arm and did the same. Yoongi kicked with his feet but he couldn’t reach Sungwoon who was pulling on two of Yoongi’s fingers until they cracked. An agonising scream left Yoongi’s lips as he felt the pure pain waving through his body. But before Sungwoon could do the same with his other fingers Yoongi took all the strength he had to roll around. Sungwoon’s hands reached for his neck and pressed them together, choking Yoongi with a wild look in his eyes. Yoongi tried to pull his hands away but his hold was too strong. And then Yoongi properly looked at Sungwoon.

Yoongi saw into his dark eyes and suddenly thought of Jimin. Those were the eyes Jimin had seen before he had come crying to the infirmary, the eyes that had bored into Jimin’s when he had felt too scared to reject the alpha, the eyes that had caused Jimin to not fight back when he’d first met Yoongi. Sungwoon was the reason Jimin thought less of himself, less of being an omega. Sungwoon was one of those alphas that used their power, too ignorant to even notice, to make omegas feel like they were worth nothing. Yoongi saw into Sungwoon’s eyes and remembered looking into another alpha’s eyes a long time ago. The reason he had to leave his pack, the reason he stood in front of Sungwoon now. He had once fought an alpha like that and he would do it again.

Using an immense force, Yoongi pulled Sungwoon’s hands of his neck, roaring loudly. He dodged a hit from Sungwoon before Yoongi raised his hand to slap Sungwoon so hard that he fell onto the ground with a loud thump. Yoongi took the opportunity to kick him repeatedly before he used his hands. Yoongi punched Sungwoon with all the strength he had, leaving his face just as bloody as his own face. Yoongi spat blood onto Sungwoon’s face, showing no respect for this man. He didn’t deserve his respect. Yoongi hit him repeatedly until no response came back and a booming voice
interrupted them. He quickly checked Sungwoon’s pulse to see if it was still intact. Once he knew the guy was still alive, Yoongi forced his body to stand up properly. Everything hurt, his ankle, his stomach, his fingers, his face. But he stood with his head held high. Yoongi looked the pack leader in the eyes, showing him that his plan backfired.

“Min Yoongi”, the man said and Yoongi watched all six hands come up, heart beating loudly in his chest, “Accepted.”

Jimin had hurt before. He had fallen down and scratched his knee when he was four, had broken his arm at ten, had seen his first crush kiss someone else when he was thirteen, had to train fighting at 15 and had to let his brother go at 17. Jimin had hurt before. But nothing, and he was sure that truly nothing, could compare to the pain he felt as he watched the fight. Yoongi’s tortured scream, the blood coming out of his nose and mouth, the dull thump of every punch that haunted Jimin even when he saw the men leave the circle. Sungwoon was being carried away by two alphas and Namjoon steadied Yoongi as he limped to the infirmary. Jimin just stared at them, watched their figures getting smaller and smaller in his blurry vision.

Jimin couldn’t move. His nails were digging into his clothed thighs so forcefully that he was sure it would bleed any moment. But he couldn’t move. His chest ached in a way that left him breathless, almost burning under his cold skin. Jimin felt every hit, every punch, every strained muscle. His body hurt in a way he couldn’t even describe nor understand and all he wanted was to be able to breathe again. A shiver ran down his spine and Jimin thought that his arms must be covered in goosebumps. He stuttered a breath and immediately tried again, gasping for air. His eyes stung and his stomach clenched painfully. Jimin forced himself not to cry but his throat hurt from the growing lump in it. His hands curled into fists as Jimin tried to hold it together, to snap out of whatever state his body was in.

“Chim, hey, breathe.”

Jimin recognised Taehyung’s voice, recognised his comforting touch as a warm palm ran up and down his back. He let Taehyung soothe him, let him hush him and calm him down bit by bit. He knew they didn’t have much time before the next fight would start and wished his body would cooperate and let the aching in his body disappear.

“It’s okay… they both will be fine”, Taehyung whispered and Jimin closed his eyes, hoping he could
un-see the fight, the pain, the blood.

“The- the fin- fingers, Tae”, Jimin stuttered, hearing the cracks and Yoongi’s scream again.

“It was really brutal, I know. I think everyone here was shocked to see that.”

“It hurts-”, Jimin started but was interrupted by the pack alpha, an angry scowl on his face.

“Fighting against Min Jungkook”, he announced gruffly, “will be Park Jihyun.”

“What?”, Jimin hissed and was about to stand up before Taehyung held him back.

“Hey, hey, Jihyun is on our side, remember? They won’t actually fight, this is perfect! None of them will get hurt, they will make sure of it!”, Taehyung reassured Jimin, his eyes sparkling with relief. Jimin knew he was technically right, that Jihyun wanted Jungkook in the pack and that the boys wouldn’t hurt each other seriously. But fury stirred in Jimin’s stomach, knowing the intentions behind the pack alpha’s choice.

“He wants to hurt me, don’t you see?”, Jimin whispered frustratedly, “Why would he pick Jihyun? Why my own brother?” Taehyung opened his mouth to answer but shifted his attention suddenly as the fight was about to start.

Jimin reluctantly let his eyes wander to the centre of the circle where Jihyun and Jungkook faced each other. Jimin felt nauseous seeing Jungkook and his brother stand at the same spot where Yoongi and Sungwoon had started just moments before. Jimin remembered the look in Yoongi’s dark eyes, remembered how he wanted nothing more than to stand up and stop the fight which probably would have cost Yoongi his life. Jungkook looked pale, obviously scarred from what he had just seen and Jimin hoped he wouldn’t have to fight for too long.

The both of them changed into their wolf forms quickly and Jungkook was the first one to make a move. He attacked Jihyun lightly but Jihyun showed a strong reaction, making it look like Jungkook hurt him. They continued like that, fighting like pups would do but acting so that it looked more dramatic.

“They always turn so that the attacks look worse from the elder’s perspective”, Taehyung noticed with a low chuckle, pride in his eyes. Jimin simply nodded, not liking the sight even if they didn’t
actually hurt as much.

After a few minutes, Jihyun stayed on the ground for a while, indicating he has been defeated. Jimin thought it was a little early and he hoped the elder’s bought the act. If the fight looked too easy, it wouldn’t help Jungkook look like a fearless alpha.

“Min Jungkook”, the pack alpha scoffed, looking for the elder’s reactions. All elders raised their hand, except for one: Solidarity. The pack alpha’s eyes stayed on Jungkook for a moment before he lowly said, “Accepted.”

Jimin heard Taehyung sigh in relief and he himself released a breath, even though his body still felt as if on the edge of breaking down. They watched as Jungkook helped Jihyun stand up and hurried to the infirmary, still in wolf form.

“Let’s go, too! They will have a program over the next two hours now, with the choir and all, we can visit the boys!”, Jimin begged, gripping Taehyung’s hand. He wanted nothing more than to get away from there, to see if Yoongi was okay.

“I don’t know if we can just leave”, Taehyung answered with an unsure expression. Jimin wanted to persuade him when someone suddenly sat down beside Taehyung.

“Can I speak to you for a moment? In private.”

Jimin blinked at Kim Gayoung, surprised to see her here. He had expected her to not attend the event, given her memories that must have been attached to it. She smiled friendly at Taehyung but her hazel eyes seemed intense, as if she had something important to say. Jimin noticed the scar above her right eye and knew it was a mark from her fight many years ago. It looked healed now but it was still there, a constant reminder of the day she had been accepted into the pack. And the day she lost both of her closest friends.

“Um, I guess?”, Taehyung muttered, glancing towards Jimin with a confused frown before he followed her to the huts. Jimin wondered what she wanted to discuss with Taehyung that they couldn’t talk about in front of the others but his instincts told him to trust her.

As the choir started to sing, Jimin snapped out of his daze and knew he had to go the infirmary immediately. His eyes were still stinging with unshed tears and the lump in his throat hadn’t eased
down. Jimin swallowed thickly as he stood up and walked away from the circle. As Sungwoon’s omega, nobody would question him leaving for the infirmary.

Jimin felt like he had been walking for hours as he reached the familiar hut. He didn’t understand the response of his body, the exhaustion and aching in his bones even though he didn’t participate in the fight himself. He was so lost in his thoughts that he almost ran into his own brother as he stepped inside. Jihyun looked at him with something close to disgust and even though Jimin was used to it by now, it took him all the strength he had to not start to cry at this moment. He hadn’t wished for a hug from his family in a long time but in this moment, Jimin longed for his family’s warmth.

“I was just about to leave. Hadn’t been hurt anyway, not like you care”, Jihyun grumbled with a shrug.

“Of course I care. I was worried about you.” Jimin hated how his voice cracked and quickly looked away, not wanting to see his brother roll his eyes.

“Yeah, right.”

“For fuck’s sake~”, Jimin started but stopped himself, knowing it wasn’t the time nor the place, “Can you tell me where Yoongi is?” Jihyun looked surprised at that, before he cocked an eyebrow.

“You mean Sungwoon? He’s in the room right here.”

“I need to know where Yoongi is! Is he in the operation room? Emergency room? In their usual room?” Jimin hated how he got louder and more desperate but he couldn’t help it. Jihyun’s judging glare was unbearable.

“He’s in their usual room, of course! What’s up with you, he wasn’t the one beaten into unconsciousness”, Jihyun scoffed disbelievingly, “Sungwoon ended up much worse. Why don’t want to know where that jerk is? Isn’t he the one you love?”

Jimin’s silence was answer enough. Jihyun’s eyes seemed to widen in realisation that whatever he believed for the past three years was nothing but a lie. Jimin didn’t love Sungwoon, he never did. Jimin stared into his brother’s eyes, stripped from his lies and fabricated stories he told him to keep him from the cruel reality. That Jihyun himself had been one of the reasons Jimin ended up with Sungwoon, with no way out of it.
“Then why did you-”, Jihyun choked up but Jimin knew it wasn’t the right time to speak about it. Not here, not during the ceremony. Jihyun needed time to grasp this and Jimin wasn’t in the right state to talk about it.

“I need to see Yoongi now. I- I promise I’ll explain”, is all Jimin could say before left, his legs carrying him quickly to Yoongi’s and Jungkook’s room. He just wanted to get away.

“I’m fine, Jungkook. Stop sulking”, Yoongi groaned, followed by a wince when Seokjin smeared a balm over his swollen lip. The bigger wounds were already treated but the small cuts didn’t hurt any less.

“I cannot believe you fought against him! It was my task and you had a disadvantage because of your ankle and you shouldn’t have put yourself in danger like that!” , Jungkook argued with his arms across his chest and lips jutted forward. When Jungkook had come back, he’d immediately crawled into Yoongi’s bed and started complaining. But Yoongi had seen the tears caught in his lashes and he knew that Jungkook wasn’t actually mad at him. His brother had always trouble crying in front of others, a trait the both of them got from their father. And one way to handle vulnerability was to hide it with anger. Yoongi could only let him sulk since he knew he wouldn’t have reacted differently.

“Well, I’m glad you had to fight against Jihyun so I would do it again”, Yoongi shrugged, “You should learn your speech now we don’t have too much -” He was interrupted by the door being thrown open with a force that made all of them jump. Jimin stood in the doorway, eyes wide and glassy. He looked at Yoongi for a few seconds before his eyes flickered to Jungkook, Hoseok and Seokjin.

Yoongi released a breath as he saw Jimin. Somewhere, in the back of his mind, he had wanted to see him ever since the fight was over, wanted to know if he was alright. Especially since everyone that fought today had been someone close to him. Yoongi watched as Jimin’s gaze wandered over the bandages from his ankle and fingers, the cuts and scratches on his skin and his swollen and violet coloured left eye. Jimin breath hitched audibly as he closed the door quietly behind him and walked towards the bed, single tears rolling over his cheeks. The room was completely silent, the only sound filling the walls being the low steps of Jimin’s feet. And then Jimin sniffed.
Suddenly, he started sobbing loudly as his legs gave in, letting him fall to the ground with a loud thump. Yoongi attempted to stand up but a sharp pain in his stomach and back held him back. Jungkook and Seokjin both hurried towards Jimin, trying to get him to stand from the cold floor. Yoongi was filled with worry as the alphas hived Jimin up on the bed and he could see his whole body shaking. The others in the room seemed just as concerned as they tried to hush him. Yoongi sucked in a sharp breath as Jimin bend down to hug his body from where he was sitting on the edge of the bed, his face crying into Yoongi’s stomach.

“Jimin, what’s going on? What happened?”, Yoongi asked helplessly, hands hovering over Jimin’s head, not quite knowing what to do.

“I am s- so sorry he- he hurt you”, Jimin cried, his fists holding onto Yoongi’s trousers tightly, “The p-pack alpha wouldn’t ha-have let you fight in- in human form if it wasn’t for me.” Yoongi stared at Jimin’s sobbing face, seeing his smudged make up and red nose. He didn’t understand why Jimin cried the way he did. Surely, it was just because of his fight. The others seemed to agree, their expressions all utterly confused.

“So you’re crying like God knows what happened because you feel guilty that Yoongi had to fight against Sungwoon like that?” Seokjin stepped forward and squinted at Jimin who looked at him with wide eyes.

“Yes and because Sungwoon hurt Yoongi!” Jimin sniffed before he rubbed his eyes and slowly sat up again.

“God, Jimin, we were worried something happened! I have never seen you cry like that, you couldn’t even breathe”, Hoseok sighed before he brushed Jimin’s fringe out of his face. And Yoongi had to agree, he still couldn’t grasp why Jimin had been so affected. Of course, it must have been brutal to see but Yoongi was still fine and he hurt Sungwoon way more.

“You haven’t seen the fight, okay? Sungwoon cracked his fingers and-”, Jimin stopped talked as his voice broke and fresh tears filled his eyes. Yoongi’s heart broke at the sight.

“Jiminnie, he’s an alpha, it will heal in no time! Were you worried he was seriously injured? Believe me, he was worse when he first arrived here”, Seokjin said with a lopsided smile, his soft voice apparently calming Jimin.

“It was just so painful to watch”, Jimin whispered and Yoongi didn’t miss the glance between Seokjin and Hoseok at those words. “I just wanted to stop the fight but I know it would have been bad for Yoongi if I did. But it was so horrible to see. Just thinking about it hurts so much.”
“I understand what you mean, Jimin, it was a really cruel fight. Especially since it was Sungwoon”, Jungkook piped in, an understanding expression on his face. Both Jungkook and Jimin tended to blame themselves for things that were not in their hands so Yoongi knew why his brother could relate to him. He wished the both of them would see that the fight wasn’t their fault.

“Jungkook is right. Why don’t we give them a moment?” Seokjin suggested and before Yoongi could even find his voice to respond, the three were gone.

Yoongi didn’t know how to react or what to say. He hadn’t expected Jimin to react like that and he had trouble to understand it. Jimin was sitting next to his legs, staring at his hands in his lap and hiccupsing slightly every few seconds. His eyes were swollen and his hair was falling messily into his face but he didn’t bother to brush it away, shaking his head instead.

“Jimin...”, Yoongi started slowly, “Did you really cry like that because of me?” Jimin sniffed again and shrugged.

“Hm?” Yoongi tried again, leaning sidewards to get Jimin to look at him.

“I didn’t want to cry. I don’t know how it happened”, Jimin shrugged again, his dark eyes roaming over Yoongi’s face again.

“Your face looks horrible.”

“Thanks”, Yoongi snorted but Jimin didn’t seem to be in the mood for jokes. The omega scooted further up on the bed before he tentatively reached out, his finger stopping just inches from Yoongi’s face.

“Can I?”, he breathed, his voice sounding wet. Yoongi nodded.

The pad of Jimin’s finger traced the skin around Yoongi’s eye with a feather-light touch. The skin there was still sensitive from the punch and Yoongi winced slightly when Jimin accidentally put too much pressure. He quickly retreated his hand, eyes going wide but Yoongi caught it before Jimin could pull back completely.
“It’s okay”, he whispered, heart beating loudly in his ears. Jimin’s brows furrowed slightly but he nodded, relaxing his wrist in Yoongi’s hold.

“Did you know”, Yoongi murmured quietly, curling his lips to a small smile, “You helped me during the fight.”

“How?” Jimin cocked his head to the side, a few strands of his hair falling into his face at the motion.

“I was losing… But then I remembered what he did to you, how he hurt you and treated you. I got a lot of strength from that.” Jimin face hardened at that but his voice was still soft and quiet, not breaking the moment.

“Are you telling me him beating you up was not enough to make you mad but my stupid history with him was? You’re really something else, Min Yoongi.” Jimin huffed but there was a dust of pink around his cheek.

“I’ll gladly be something else if it means I’m different from Ha Sungwoon”, Yoongi shrugged and at that Jimin did smile. It was small, barely there but so much better than his frown.

“Believe me, you are very different from him.”

-

Jimin walked back to the circle with a lighter heart. He had visited Sungwoon shortly after he left Yoongi’s room but Sungwoon didn’t want to speak to him. There was still some time before the third part of the ceremony would begin but Jimin thought he might as well see some of the shows the pack had prepared and give Yoongi and Jungkook some time to clear their heads.

He was surprised to see that Taehyung still hadn’t come back and felt slightly anxious to sit alone when the pack alpha or head omega could approach him any second. How would Jimin respond when they asked him why he kept a secret from Sungwoon for such a long time? Jimin nibbled on his lips as he sat down on the bench, hoping to not attract any attention. The choir was just done singing and pups entered the circle to perform a dance. It was an adorable sight and Jimin was distracted for a moments to see the kids swing their chubby arms and legs. That was before he caught
Jimin saw his mother and father sitting in the second row and watching the dancers with fond smiles on their face. His mother had her hair up with parts of her hair curled at the front. She wore a beautiful, elegant dark blue dress with a simple pattern at the front. She wore her best furs, a white coat Jimin’s father had given her for their mating ceremony. He was sitting next to her now, hands not touching hers but laying close, like they always did in public. He wore an alpha dress which was always without pattern and very simply hanging to the ankles. His dress was a dark grey colour, the fabric slightly worn out. Jimin saw the grey in his dark brown hair and the wrinkles around his mouth and eyes. He saw that his mother must have lost some weight and wondered if she had eaten well.

Sometimes, when Jimin was alone in his bed and his thoughts led him to his parents, he had wondered if they knew. If they knew why he chose Sungwoon. No one ever stopped him from going, no one ever asked him to come back. They had told Jimin they loved him so, so many times. But why did they let him go that easily? Jimin thought that maybe they had known that Jimin made the right choice back then, that there wasn’t much they could have done. But Jimin was so young, still is so young. He had needed guidance. He had needed someone to hold him and tell him that it was okay. Even if he was already living in the omega den, they were still his parents, were they not? Jimin knew they hadn’t abandoned him or ignored him like Jihyun did. They still talked to him sometimes, still asked him if he was doing okay now and then. However, Jimin always felt like something changed. Like their gazes that used to be so warm and loving changed into something distant. Maybe they were disappointed. Maybe they simply loved him less. Jimin forced himself to look away, knowing that one day he would try to find out. He felt stronger than before, felt like he could confront them now. One day he would ask for answers.

The program went on and on and Jimin became less patient with every act. Traditional songs performed with instruments, fighting dances that told old tales of the ancient warriors, presentations of the most exotic fur coats and a few single singing performances. Both Jimin and Taehyung had been asked to perform as well since they had been part of the choir many years back but they had declined, knowing they would feel too nervous during the ceremony. Jimin tapped his fingers against his knee, not bearing another act. His lips felt chapped as he nervously nibbled on the dry skin, all of his balm already off like most of his make up. Jimin had fixed most of the smudged mess on his face at the infirmary with some of the products Hoseok had given him to not attract too much attraction from the pack. Even though he would have been officially allowed to cry given that he had seen Sungwoon fight, Jimin didn’t want to risk anyone suspecting him to cry for Yoongi or Jungkook. It would only cause problems for the boys that they couldn’t use now.

Taehyung came back shortly before the third part of the ceremony started, a deep frown on his face. He said down next to Jimin silently, looking as if he struggled with something internally. Jimin was instantly worried and ready to confront Gayoung about whatever she had discussed with his best friend that obviously troubled him. He opened his mouth to ask when the drums started to play, indicating the beginning of the last task.
“Tae”, Jimin whispered still, reaching out to take Taehyung’s hand.

“I will explain later...”, Taehyung sighed, an unreadable expression on his face, “Just- just trust me. Whatever will happen, trust me.”

“What? What’s that supposed to-” Taehyung hushed him then, stopping Jimin from asking what he meant. Taehyung was usually an open book, at least to Jimin, and this was nothing like him. Jimin had an odd feeling in his stomach, his chest tightening with uncertainty.

However, he didn’t have much time to think about it for too long because the alphas arrived just seconds later. Jimin’s breath hitched as he saw them, goosebumps rising over his skin. Jungkook wore a hunter green alpha dress under a large, white fur coat, his hands covered in black ink as he held a torch out of wood in his hand, the fire flickering right next to his face. All the previous make up had been removed and the only colour on Jungkook’s face was a red stripe of dark blush that covered his cheekbones and bridge of his nose. His auburn hair flew wildly in the evening wind, nothing left from the previously applied gel.

But what left Jimin completely breathless was the sight of Yoongi, exuding nothing but strength and fierceness. Fire danced behind his dark eyes and the bruises on his skin made him look like a strong fighter. Yoongi looked untouchable. His alpha dress was made out of amber-brown coloured leather and looked stunning under the thick fur that had brown and grey tones. Jimin noticed that it almost looked like Sungwoon’s fur and gulped at the message Yoongi symbolised with that. He had the same make up as Jungkook, his eyes looking even sharper bare of the black lines.

Jimin hadn’t noticed he stared until Yoongi’s black orbs were suddenly looking back at him, piercing him with a gaze that was softer than Jimin had expected. For a second, he thought he had seen the alpha smile but it was so quick that he wasn’t sure if he had imagined it.

“Holding his speech to the Ha Pack, Min Yoongi and Min Jungkook, torn from the Shin Pack of the South”, the boy announced, his voice raspy from having used it all day long. Yoongi stepped forward while Jungkook stayed back, holding his speech after him since he was the younger brother.

Jimin was completely in trance during the whole speech Yoongi gave. He had read it so many times and yet, he was completely fascinated by Yoongi’s words. It sounded even better spoken out loud, the determination in Yoongi’s deep voice absolutely convincing. He practically roared his words, his gaze roaming around the audience. Jimin felt his heartbeat pick up when Yoongi’s gaze met his and he couldn’t help smiling with pride. Yoongi was incredible and Jimin adored him. He knew Yoongi had a lot to learn as well but he wanted to be there for every step, every failure, every part of his journey. His stomach was filled with warmth and Jimin felt ecstatic as he applauded with everyone else once Yoongi finished.
“God, that was- he’s so-”, Jimin chuckled breathlessly, balling his hands into fists with all the energy he suddenly felt.

“You like him a lot, hm?”, Taehyung murmured, his smile not quite reaching his eyes.

“Like is an understatement, I-”, Jimin stopped himself before he said something he shouldn’t, “Yes, I like him a lot. More than… more than I should, probably.”

Jimin looked at Taehyung and Taehyung looked at Jimin. Taehyung’s smile turned sad and Jimin shrugged. They both knew. There was no sudden realisation, no dramatic moment. Jimin liked Yoongi but he would never be with him. They both knew and that was that. Jimin didn’t want to feel sad about it so he quickly looked away again. Taehyung left it at that and Jimin was glad for it.

- 

Jungkook’s hands were shaking. The applause of the pack turned into white noise in his ears, the cheering people turning blurry. Jungkook tried to calm down but with every second, he felt more nauseous. This was the last step. If they succeeded now, they would finally belong to a pack again. The pain after they tore themselves from their old pack was not as tormenting as it had been at first but it was still there, like a hole inside his body that was desperate to be filled.

“Min Yoongi”, the pack alpha called and Jungkook held his breath. He blinked rapidly, trying to get his view into focus again as he saw the pack elders raise their hands, one by one. There was a moment of silence in which the pack alpha seemed to contemplate, looking almost frustrated as he eyed the pack elders.

“Accepted. Congratulations, you are as of now a member of the Ha Pack.”

Jungkook swallowed down a lump in his throat, smiling with tears in his eyes. He was so incredibly relieved for his brother. Jungkook watched as his brother bowed deeply before the pack alpha pulled out a knife to form the bond to the pack. Yoongi walked towards him and let him cut his thumb slightly. He pressed the bleeding thumb against the pack alpha’s wrist, directly onto what looked like a burn mark in form of the pack’s name. Yoongi was part of the pack now.
After that, Yoongi stepped towards him, his expression tense. Jungkook knew that Yoongi could only be happy if both of them got accepted into the pack. Yoongi reached out and squeezed his shoulder, giving him an encouraging nod.

“You can do it”, he told him and Jungkook hoped it was true. He hoped he could do it.

Jungkook slowly stepped to the centre, feeling his heart hammering in his chest. He felt all eyes on him, saw their curious gazes from his peripheral vision. Jungkook instinctively looked towards Taehyung but was surprised to see him staring down in his lap. Why did Taehyung look sad? Jungkook felt his thoughts turning in his head, his worry for Taehyung completely throwing him off the loop. Jungkook didn’t realise he walked passed the centre until the pack alpha cleared his throat loudly. Jungkook’s head suddenly snapped forward and he quickly walked back to the centre, his neck and ears flushing. He knew he should start his speech now but his mind was blank.

Fuck, fuck, fuck!, Jungkook cursed in his head. He needed to focus but all he could think of was Taehyung. Why had he looked down? Jungkook shook his head to get himself to concentrate but his mind was still blank. He opened his mouth and started to talk, hoping to remember anything from his speech.

“Pack Alpha, Pack Eld.-”, Jungkook called when he suddenly realised he was supposed to begin with the elders as a matter of respect. His stomach dropped.

“I- I mean, Pack Elders, Pack Alpha and members of the Ha Pack, I am Min Jungkook and I would be honoured to be a part of the pack. I am a young and stro-, no, young and responsible alpha and could contribute to- um, as a hunter. I am strong and hard working and very skilled in hunting. I am... If you accept me into the pack, I will be loyal and... hard working.” Jungkook knew he messed up. He had completely mixed up what he had wanted to say but he couldn’t back out now. Jungkook took a deep breath and continued to talk, “Leaving the pack I grew up in was the hardest thing I ever had to do and I don’t ever want to do it again so- so I wouldn’t leave this pack too. I mean, I left because I had to but I am loyal so I wouldn’t do it. Again. And I think I will like the pack and the pack could like me too. I am friendly and will help everyone that needs it, like, like older people or children. And when the pack will get attacked, I would fight, of course. Yeah. And that’s why I would love to be accepted. I mean, it would be an honour to get accepted into the Ha Pack. Thank you.”

The silence that followed was almost suffocating. A tear rolled down his flushed cheek and Jungkook tried hard not to start crying at the moment. He felt so humiliated but what was worse was the fear settling in his bones. This speech would determine his future and he forgot everything he had wanted to say. Jungkook bit hard onto his lower lip as he internally begged for a miracle.
“Min Jungkook”, the pack alpha grumbled and Jungkook was convinced he imagined the amused expression on his face. His breathing quickened as he watched one elder raise his hand. Jungkook wasn’t even sure what he stood for but he hoped the others would follow. They *had* to follow.

One other elder raised his hand. The seconds stretched on and Jungkook felt his resolve crumble as he realised that no other elder would raise their hand. This was it.

“I see”, the pack alpha hummed lowly, scratching his nose before he continued to talk, “Min Jungkook...n ot -”

“**WAIT!**”

Taehyung suddenly stood up, his eyes wide open. Jungkook wasn’t sure what was happening, he didn’t know what to do. And then Taehyung said something Jungkook never had expected him to say:

“Min Jungkook cannot leave the pack. The laws of the pack say that any alpha or omega are obligated to be accepted into the pack of their mate. Jungkook has to be accepted… because we are planning to mate.”
“Thank you for coming with me. Your name is Taehyung, right? The eldest son of Kim Haewon and Kim Daeshim.”

Taehyung nodded, unsure what to say. He had an odd feeling ever since he caught Gayoung looking at Jungkook and him two days ago. Taehyung wasn’t sure if he could trust her, even though her hazel eyes had no trace of evil in them. He could hear her children play in one of the rooms further back and was glad that the both of them sat in the open kitchen room, with a large window and the living room right next to them. It made him feel like he could always leave, that she wouldn’t trap or hurt him.

“Please, don’t be scared as to why I wanted to talk in private. I just wanted to talk to you to give you an… alternative. Information that you can use or chose to ignore”, Gayoung told him calmly even though there was a hint of urgency in her expression.
“Is this about Jungkook?” Taehyung still felt uncomfortable with the situation but if she knew something that could help Jungkook, he would definitely want to hear her out.

“Yes”, Gayoung answered before she hesitantly continued, “I have seen you two and you seem close.”

“What does this have to do with anything?” Taehyung saw her take a deep breath and he didn’t have a good feeling about this. His stomach turned as he waited for her to explain.

“Before I got accepted into the pack and had my ceremony, my chances to survive weren’t high. I was weak, starved and didn’t have any fighting skills. But I met someone. He was just an alpha that I ran into a few days before the ceremony. We talked and he felt very compassionate. And that’s why he offered me a deal.”

“A deal?”, Taehyung asked, his frown deepening.

“He could make sure I would get accepted into the pack if I was willing to mate with him.” Taehyung’s eyes widened in shock, disgust stirring in his stomach.

“That’s- that’s horrible! Why would he play with your life like that?” Gayoung quickly shook her head, a panicked expression on her face.

“Oh, no, he had no ill intentions! He had told me he would not pressure me to fall in love with him but we had to become mates for me to be accepted into the pack”, she sighed before she leaned forward, almost whispering her words, “Any alpha or omega are obligated to be accepted into the pack their mate is in. This is a rule every pack follows. I had to get accepted into the pack because word got around that I would mate an alpha in the pack. More mates means less rivalry amongst the pack members. Alphas that have mates are less aggressive, less possessive and fight less over the attention of an omega. This is why the pack alpha and the pack elders approved of me.”

“But… you weren’t mated in your ceremony. I remember your mating ceremony, it was afterwards.” Taehyung’s eyes flickered to her neck, slightly exposed under her long, chocolate brown hair. He saw the pale scars in the form of a bite, her mating mark long healed. His chest tightened.

“No, we weren’t mated yet. But he talked to people about his interest in me and made sure the pack alpha knew about it. My mate… he didn’t want people to think I chose him only because he was my only chance. It is very important for alphas to have people know that their omega chose them out of
all alphas. That they are so attractive, talented, charismatic or whatnot that they could woo their omega.” Gayoung didn’t hide her grimace as she gave this explanation to Taehyung. But there was a fond smile on her lips when she continued.

“It was scary to mate someone I didn’t know. I knew he was a good alpha, I knew he never forced me to love him… emotionally or physically”, she hesitated for a moment, “But I never had the chance to try to get to know someone else. And that was a risk I was willing to take. I won’t lie to you, I don’t- I was never in love with my mate. However, I love him as the father of my children, as my friend throughout the past twelve years, as my partner who respects me. In the end, I feel very lucky to have mated someone I like.” Taehyung knew what she was hinting at and even the thought of it made his expression harden.

“I will not ask Jungkook to become my mate to keep him in the pack. I don’t want to force him to take me.”

“I understand what you are feeling, Taehyung. But if you don’t step in, he might have to leave. I saw him during the last two tasks, it may have been enough to get to the next round but he looks too scared, too fragile to be accepted. There is a high chance his speech won’t work out”, Gayoung sighed and Taehyung clenched his jaw.

“I read his speech and it is wonderful. How dare you underestimate him? You don’t even know him!”, he hissed through gritted teeth.

“I stood where he stood and I could see in his eyes what I had seen in my friend’s eyes all those years ago. His brother is fearless and strong. Jungkook isn’t, he is gentle and more fearful. I won’t lie to you and I have no benefit if you choose to do it. I am just telling you my honest prediction.” Gayoung looked at him apologetically and Taehyung felt anxiety swirl inside of him.

“I- I cannot ask him to become my mate. He won’t understand, he won’t want me. We only just met a few weeks ago and we are not there yet. I don’t even have the time to explain it to him!”

“Then don’t talk to him yet. Let him hold his speech and only act when you know for sure that he won’t be accepted. You will save his life with this.” Taehyung felt way too hot, his skin burning with nerves. He wasn’t sure what to do.

“I can’t make that decision for him. I can’t just claim that we are mates. I can’t-”
“You don’t have to do it”, she quickly hushed him, a worried look in her eyes, “I just wanted to tell you that there is a way to stay together. I know you like him and I know you don’t want him to get banned from the pack. You don’t have to do it but you have the possibility now to step in. Trust your instincts to do the right thing.”

“The right thing? Nothing about this is right! If I do it, I force Jungkook into something we both aren’t ready for but if I do nothing, I will forever live with the guilt that I could have saved him!”

And in that moment Taehyung knew that whatever he and Jungkook shared would break if Jungkook failed to convince the pack elders. He knew that if that moment came, he would have to choose between their trust and Jungkook’s safety. He knew that whatever decision he would make, it would eat him up from inside and destroy the young love that blossomed between him and Jungkook. He would lose him either way.

- 

Jimin gaped in shock, blinking at his best friend. No one said a word after Taehyung’s announcement, not even the pack alpha. Jungkook’s eyes were blown wide in shock as his gaze seemed stuck on Taehyung.

“Is that true?”, the pack alpha asked eventually, his jaw set as his eyes found Jungkook’s. Jimin prayed for Jungkook to confirm it. If Jungkook denied it, the pack alpha would have to punish Taehyung for lying to the pack.

“Uh, yes...” Jungkook’s voice wavered but it seemed to convince the pack alpha. With a loud sigh, he massaged the bridge of his nose.

“Why wasn’t I aware of this beforehand?”, he growled, causing Taehyung to wince and sit down quickly again. Jimin could see the tears caught in his lashes and the guilt flickering behind his eyes. He wished he could comfort his friend but he knew that the pack alpha wasn’t too fond of him as it was and didn’t want it to have a negative effect on Taehyung’s situation.

“I wanted to prove the pack that I am good enough. Even without my… my mate”, Jungkook responded, face paler than Jimin had ever seen. He was utterly confused and Jimin related to that.
“Well, then”, the pack alpha muttered, obviously not pleased, “Min Jungkook, accepted.”

The applause was subdued, the pack not as cheerful as the first time. Jimin clapped warily as he watched Jungkook press his bleeding thumb onto the pack alpha’s wrist, his head ducked with shame. Jimin knew that even if Jungkook wasn’t the typical proud and arrogant alpha, he still bared the natural instincts of an alpha. Being accepted into a pack, not because he was a skilled fighter or delivered a good speech but because he was about to be mated, could be very hurtful for someone’s pride. Jimin knew that Jungkook would have to suffer from that, he knew the other alphas in the pack and how easily they could mock someone.

“The ceremony is hereby over. The Ha Pack has gained two new members, two new brothers. May it come to us in favour”, the pack alpha called after he stood up, his expression hard but less irritated. There was nothing he could do now.

The crowd disappeared quickly after that, the pack members wanting to finally eat or having to get the pups to bed. Some people helped the pack elders to get to their rooms, the pack alpha walking amongst them and discussing things quietly. Soon, there were only four people left. Jimin saw Yoongi embracing Jungkook tightly, whispering something into his ear he couldn’t hear. Their torches were gone and Jimin could barely see their expressions from the distance. He turned towards Taehyung whose gaze was also fixed onto the two alphas.

“Tae…”, Jimin said quietly, “What did you do?” Taehyung’s eyes stayed far away as he shook his head helplessly.

“I had to- I couldn’t let him die, Chim, I couldn’t”, Taehyung whispered, his voice cracking as tears rolled down his cheeks. Jimin reached out to hold his hand but Taehyung suddenly jumped up as Jungkook approached them, a frown on his face.

“Kookie, I am so sorry-”, Taehyung wept but Jungkook cut him off.

“What the hell, Taehyung? How could you do that?” Jimin winced at the tone in Jungkook’s voice and the hurt in Taehyung’s eyes. Yoongi stood behind his brother, his hand squeezing Jungkook’s shoulder, probably to calm him down. Jimin could see that Yoongi looked just as conflicted as he felt himself, not wanting to interfere too much but still wanting to help.

“It was the only way to keep you in the pack! I wouldn’t have done it otherwise, I promise!”, Taehyung explained but Jungkook just shook his head.
“I never said I wanted you to help me to stay in the pack! I want to be accepted because I deserve it, not because I am mated to one of the omegas! I didn’t need you to save me, Taehyung.” Yoongi squeezed Jungkook’s shoulder again but the younger simply shrugged his hand off.

“God, and you couldn’t even tell me about your plan?”, Jungkook continued, his expression turning frustrated, “I had to stand there and get humiliated in front of the entire pack?”

“I didn’t know I was going to do it, Jungkook! Please believe me when I say I didn’t even know about this rule before Gayoung told me! I wasn’t going to do it but I couldn’t let you just die alone when I knew a way to keep you here!” Suddenly, Jimin realised why Gayoung had wanted to speak to Taehyung in private. It all made sense now, how she had got to stay in the pack back then and why she had observed Taehyung and Jungkook before. Jimin’s heart ached for his best friend, he knew that having that kind of responsibility over someone’s future must have been torturous.

“Keep me here? I am not your pet dog! You can’t get to decide what happens to me. That’s not how it works. How should I ever trust you again? We just got to know each other and now I have to spend the rest of my life with you?”

“Jungkook”, Jimin warned. He knew that Jungkook was upset and helpless but his words sounded hurtful nonetheless. Taehyung looked so lost, so incredibly hurt that Jimin had to stop Jungkook from saying things he couldn’t take back once he calmed down.

“No, it’s not fair! Everyone just decides what happens to me and I am not even allowed to be mad about it!”, Jungkook shouted, eyes filling with tears.

“Of course you are allowed to be mad”, Yoongi sighed, stepping forward and looking into his brother’s eyes, “But you need to listen to Taehyung as well. He just tried to help you, kid. Don’t say things you don’t mean without trying to understand him first.” Jimin nodded in agreement, hoping Jungkook would understand.

“You’re one to talk, Yoongi. You’re the reason we’re not in our old pack in the first place! You and Taehyung both just push and pull me into directions I don’t even want to go! I didn’t want to leave our old pack and I didn’t want to mate until I completely trusted the person! Do you even care about what I want?”, Jungkook spat, though there were tears escaping his eyes. Yoongi took a deep breath, his Adam's apple bobbing as he swallowed thickly. But before he could respond, Taehyung spoke up.

“Do you think it’s just as easy as that? Do you think I wanted to force you to mate me? If I didn’t care I would have let you die in the forest, because you and I both know that was what would’ve
happened! I care about what you want, I care about you which is why this is killing me right now. And I’m sorry, okay? I’m sorry you don’t want me, I’m sorry I had to make this decision without being able to talk to you beforehand but I would do it a hundred times again if it means you will be safe! Don’t act like the world is against you when we are just trying to keep you alive!”

It was quiet for a moment, the tension heavy between them. Jungkook’s eyes were wide and furious, something that didn’t fit him, Jimin thought. Taehyung’s jaw was clenched but Jimin knew his best friend and he knew he tried desperately not to break down right now. The only person who looked down was Yoongi. He bit hard onto his lower lip, his hands fidgeting subtly. Jimin suspected that Jungkook’s words hit him harder than the younger brother was aware of. None of them ever talked about why Yoongi and Jungkook escaped their old pack and Jimin only realised now that he had always thought it had been a decision both of them had made. He wanted to tell Yoongi that he trusted him to have had a good reason to leave and that Jungkook probably didn’t mean what he said. But it wasn’t the right moment because Taehyung and Jungkook were still there, breaking right in front of them.

“I don’t need you to keep me alive”, Jungkook eventually said, quiet and with finality, “Stay away from me before the mating ceremony. I can’t even look at you without feeling disgusted.”

Jimin sucked in a breath at Jungkook’s harsh words, momentarily in shock. He watched Jungkook walk back to the infirmary before he heard Taehyung sob next to him.

“Oh God, Taehyung. He is just upset and probably all over the place because of the ceremony, I’m sure he didn’t mean it!”, Jimin tried to console him and pulled him into a hug.

“He hates me”, Taehyung whimpered and Jimin felt his heart break.

“He doesn’t hate you. You just wanted to help him and deep inside he knows that. Let him calm down and then you two can talk again, okay?” Taehyung pulled away and shook his head, tears and snot all over his scrunched up face.

“Did you hear what he said? I disgust him! He looked me straight in the eyes and said that! God, I- I just have to be alone right now” Taehyung ran into the direction of the forest before Jimin could respond. It meant that he would go running in his wolf form which would help him calm down but Jimin still felt uneasy letting his friend alone when he was hurting like that.

“Jungkook will apologize.”
Jimin’s head suddenly turned to Yoongi who was still standing there, a tired expression in his eyes. Jimin immediately stepped towards him and closed his open fur coat, not wanting Yoongi to freeze.

“I know he will. But I’m worried for him, I never saw him this angry.”

“It was my fault”, Yoongi muttered, watching Jimin as he pulled the hood of his coat over Yoongi’s head, hands lingering on the material, “When I stepped in, he felt like us three were against him. Like we were grouping up against him. That’s why he snapped.” Jimin took a deep breath before he let his hands fall to his sides, unsure whether he should push the topic.

“Yoongi… don’t beat yourself up about what he said. You’re a good brother to him.” Yoongi averted his eyes, wetting his lips with his tongue.

“He was right. I did something… It was my fault we had to leave. Yes, it was to keep him safe but it would have never happened if it wasn’t for me. I don’t think I can ever forgive myself for that.”

“What happened?”, Jimin wondered quietly, hating how low Yoongi thought of himself. Yoongi’s eyes found his again and the alpha smiled softly, dark orbs turning to honey. He reached out to push a lock out of Jimin’s face. His cold hands felt warm on Jimin’s skin, causing Jimin’s cheeks to flush.

“I will tell you one day. But you have to go now. Eat something and wait for Taehyung to come back, I will talk to Jungkook”, Yoongi said lowly before he let his hand fall from Jimin’s face. Jimin simply looked at him, lost in the way his eyes didn’t leave his, as Yoongi slowly stepped backwards. Only when he turned around, did Jimin find his voice again.

“Yoongi”, he called and the alpha turned to him with a curious expression on his face.

“Congratulations on winning all three tasks. I’m proud of you.”
“God, when will they come back?”, Seokjin groaned, running his hand through his dark hair. He had done it so many times that his locks looked completely dishevelled and Hoseok was close to taking his hands to keep them still. Seokjin’s pacing through the room made him even more nervous than he already was and he was glad when Namjoon spoke up.

“Let’s stop making each other go crazy, okay? They will come when they are finished, we can only wait.” Namjoon set Seokjin down on the bed and wrapped an arm around him, instantly calming him down. Hoseok longed for this warmth as well as he hurried to Namjoon’s other side and nuzzled in his chest. Namjoon’s scent mixed with Seokjin’s had a healing effect on Hoseok, he noticed as his nerves calmed down.

“You both helped them so much. I’m sure everything will be alright”, Namjoon said calmly, pressing soft kisses onto their heads.

“I just want them to come and tell us that they got accepted”, Seokjin sighed, his hand finding Hoseok’s and squeezing it gently.

“Me too, Jinnie”, was all Hoseok could respond, the thought of the boys not making it, causing his stomach to turn.

Hoseok wasn’t sure when it happened but he got attached to Yoongi and Jungkook. It was like they were the missing piece in his life, being the close friends Hoseok never knew he needed. Because of Yoongi and Jungkook, he also got closer to Taehyung and Jimin. Even though they had talked before, Hoseok had never really felt a connection to them, not the way he did now. Each of the six men were important to Hoseok now, a significant part in their little group of friends. The thought of losing just one of them was terrifying and he hoped they could stay together for many years still.

Suddenly, the door was thrown open and Jungkook all but sprinted inside and fell into their arms. Namjoon, having sat in the centre, was laying right under him as Jungkook cried into his neck and Hoseok and Seokjin both rubbed his back worriedly.

“What happened, Kookie?”, Hoseok asked, hoping to conceal his panic.

“We- we’re both inside the pack”, Jungkook sniffed and Hoseok send a hopeful look to Seokjin, “But-” Jungkook didn’t finish his sentence as he started crying again.

“But what?”, Seokjin prompted and Hoseok gave him a scolding look for not being more sensible.
“They were going to send me away and then Taehyung said we would mate so that they couldn’t and- and then we fought”, Jungkook explained while he sat up again, giving Namjoon an apologising look.

“Wait- they were going to ban you and then Taehyung just said you guys were mating?” Hoseok couldn’t believe what he just heard. He helped Jungkook to get underneath the sheets and tucked him into bed, his omegan instincts telling him that Jungkook needed to be cared for right now. Seokjin and Namjoon simply stayed at the foot of the bed, seeming unsure how to react.

“Yes, there is this rule that I have to be accepted into the pack if I am mating someone. That’s why he said it.”

“But… isn’t that good then? I mean, he saved you, right?”, Hoseok wondered but Seokjin was quick to step forward and brush his hand through Jungkook’s hair.

“It’s not that easy for alphas, love. We take a lot of pride in courting the omega of our interest. The gifts, the courting time… it is a very important time for us. A time, in which we can prove ourselves to the person we love. And Taehyung – even if I do believe he had only good intentions – took that away from him”, Seokjin explained gently and Hoseok was glad to see Jungkook relaxing under his motions.

“We had a huge fight and everyone seemed to be on his side and I was just so- so angry”, Jungkook told them and buried his face in his hands. Hoseok looked at Namjoon and Seokjin before all three of them hurried to Jungkook in bed and hugged him tightly. Jungkook let himself be squished under their bodies, their legs a tangled mess.

“You had to go through so much today, Jungkook”, Namjoon comforted him, “You were so nervous and then had to see Yoongi fight which shook you up quite a lot. And in addition to that, you almost got banned from the pack! I know Tae pretty well and he will understand that you need time to calm down and grasp the situation.”

“I don’t want to mate him like that, though. I wanted to get to know him and court him and then mate when we are ready. Now it’s just forced.” Hoseok pulled away a little to give Jungkook a sympathetic smile.

“I know that this must be horrible for you and so different from what you planned. But you can’t change what happened and ultimately, it is the reason you get to stay here with us. You are safe and
bonded with a pack again. You will get to be with Taehyung, someone who is close to your heart, right? Try to look at it from another angle: you could be abandoned alone in the forest right now or forced to mate someone that you hate. Taehyung is a good guy and you two clicked since you met each other for the first time. Now, that doesn’t sound so bad, hm?” Hoseok knew it was a risky shot and he didn’t like telling people who were upset that their situation could be worse. But he knew that Jungkook needed to hear this, needed to realise that it maybe wasn’t that bad. Jungkook seemed to think for a moment before he huffed, averting his gaze.

“Of course it could be worse. That doesn’t mean that the situation doesn’t suck. You guys don’t understand, you don’t know what it’s like to never be able to court the person you wanted to be with!” Jungkook didn’t seem to notice the shift in mood at his statement. Hoseok knew Jungkook wasn’t aware of their situation but it stung nonetheless. He glanced towards Namjoon who seemed lost in thought and Hoseok caressed his cheek softly. Namjoon startled at the touch before he relaxed, giving Hoseok a warm but still sad smile.

The moment was interrupted by Yoongi who all but burst into the room. He seemed distressed but his shoulders slumped as he saw the four of them cuddled up in the bed.

“That’s my bed but I guess I’ll have to build a hut for myself anyway, huh?”, Yoongi joked but Hoseok could see the concern in his eyes.

“We’ll help you with the hut, of course”, Namjoon offered to which Seokjin scoffed.

“You can, Seokkie and I have enough to do here.” The teasing atmosphere quickly died down when Yoongi looked at Jungkook who glared at him.

“I want to be alone.”

“You don’t seem to have a problem with the other clowns here”, Yoongi argued but Hoseok sensed that Jungkook wasn’t in the mood for banter.

“Good, then let me correct myself: I don’t want to see you, Jimin or Taehyung.”

“What did Jimin do now?” Yoongi’s tone got harsher at the mention of the omega and Seokjin quickly got out of bed to stand between the brothers.
“Do you think I didn’t see how he looked at me? He only cares about how I hurt Taehyung not the other way around”, Jungkook scoffed. Hoseok could clearly see that Jungkook was speaking on nothing but emotion now and that it was best if they stopped arguing until they calmed down.

“You know that that’s not true”, Yoongi growled, ignoring Seokjin’s attempts to make them stop, “Jimin cares a shit ton about you and so does Taehyung and – for your information – I do as well. Get your head out of your ass and stop acting like a goddamn child!”

“How would I know how a child acts? When did I ever even get to be a child? I was raised by a damn child myself, don’t you see? And now I’m being mated and bound to someone for life! While you can relax and dance around Jimin for the next ten years until you decide to admit your feelings, I have to live with someone who I only just got to know!”

“Okay guys, that’s enough!”, Namjoon said with authority. He got up and led Yoongi outside, giving Seokjin and Hoseok a sign to take care of Jungkook. Hoseok had to admit to himself that he had no idea how to react. He didn’t know their backstory but he could sense that it hadn’t been easy for them. So Hoseok did the only thing that Jungkook needed at the moment: he wrapped his arms around Jungkook and let him cry. It didn’t matter if Jungkook said things that crossed the line or if the others were to blame. Jungkook had to face something that clearly upset him and he needed a friend now.

After a few moments, Seokjin joined them as he pressed a soft kiss onto Hoseok’s cheek and hugged Jungkook protectively.

“Am I really acting like a child?”, Jungkook asked after a few moments.

“Yes”, Hoseok chuckled softly, “But that’s fine sometimes, you know?”
Members of the Ha Pack,

Hereby we invite you to celebrate the bond of two young wolves.

Two families will come together and witness their loved ones mate for life.

Alpha Min Jungkook and Omega Kim Taehyung will swear upon their loyalty and companionship for the rest of their lives on earth and beyond.

Attendance is obligatory for everyone but the hunters who will provide the food for the feast afterwards.

The Mating Ceremony will take place during the next sunset.

With kind regards,

Ha Chun Hei, Head Omega.
Jumin’s heart ached when he had to leave the omega den before Taehyung returned. He wanted to comfort his best friend and be there for him just as he had been there for Jimin so many times before. But Jimin couldn’t afford to be reckless with Sungwoon now, he couldn’t risk to anger him even more. Even though he felt incredibly relieved that Yoongi and Jungkook had been accepted into the pack, he was aware that the conflict between Sungwoon and them wouldn’t vanish so easily. Jimin knew he had more power over the situation than the others might have thought since he held Sungwoon’s reputation in his hands as well. Not as much as Sungwoon did, of course, but enough to be able to prevent some of the conflicts. If Jimin handled this with thought rather than arrogance and lust after power, he believed he would be able to keep Yoongi and Jungkook safe from Sungwoon – and inevitably his father too.

Jimin wasn’t sure how he could ever face the pack alpha again. He knew he didn’t care much about the alphas and was just making things hard for them because they hurt Sungwoon’s pride. The whole plan obviously backfired since both Yoongi and Jungkook had succeeded and Sungwoon was the one lying beaten up in the infirmary. Jimin wasn’t sure to what extend Sungwoon’s parents would blame him for that. Jimin had taken care of the men, had neglected their own son to help the two alphas. He wondered if they would ever invite Jimin over for a family dinner again but decided he wouldn’t mind if they didn’t. All they had ever talked about was how great Sungwoon was and what
expectations they had of him as the future pack leader.

Jimin felt odd returning to the infirmary to visit Sungwoon. It felt wrong, in a way, as if Sungwoon was in his private space, in the one place where Jimin could be alone. The place where Jimin met Yoongi.

Jimin wondered if he should check on Jungkook beforehand but he guessed the younger would not welcome it. Jungkook would need a little more time to handle everything that happened and Jimin wanted to respect that. He made a bee line towards Sungwoon’s room, smelling the aroma of burnt wood less strong than before which meant that Sungwoon’s wounds had stopped bleeding. After a timid knock, Jimin stepped through the door, not expecting to see the girl that was sitting on the edge of the bed, hands in her lap and head ducked. Jimin knew she was a few years younger than him and remembered seeing her work in the kitchens now and then but he didn’t know much more about her.

Upon seeing him, she jumped from the bed, brushing her waist-long, cinnamon brown hair out of her face. She looked even younger now, her fine facial features almost doll-like and her body very slim and fragile.

“Am I interrupting?”, Jimin asked with a raised brow. He wasn’t jealous but he knew that Sungwoon would have started a huge fight if he ever found another alpha sitting at Jimin’s bed. Sungwoon’s hypocrisy regarding that matter irritated him to no ends.

“No, Sunhee was just leaving”, Sungwoon responded calmly, his eyes cold, “Her mother was concerned about my state and sent Sunhee to wish me well.”

Jimin pretended not to see the hurt that crossed the girl’s eyes as she gave him a forced smile and a tight nod. He had to admit that he was curious now, wanted to see what their relationship was, what she felt towards Sungwoon. Everyone knew that Jimin and Sungwoon were courting and he doubted any of Sungwoon’s omegas for the night would visit him like that unless there was something more.

Giving in to his curiosity, Jimin stretched out his hand towards her, giving her a nice smile. She visibly stiffened before she shook his hand, her pale fingers much longer and thinner than his own.

“Nice to meet you, Sunhee. It’s so kind of your mother to check up on him. She must care a lot about him”, Jimin said politely, taking his hand back.

“Yes. Yes, she is very fond. He will be the future pack leader and therefore extremely important.”
Jimin suppressed making a face at her words, nodding instead. She didn’t seem pleased to talk to Jimin but also tried not to challenge him. She knew Jimin’s rank as the future head omega, even if Jimin didn’t like to see himself that way.

“Well, he’s an alpha, a strong one at that. He’ll survive”, Jimin responded lightly. Sunhee stared at him disbelievingly before her shoulders tensed and her brows furrowed.

“I still believe the outsider should have treated him with more respect! How should we accept anybody that hurt our future pack alpha? He should be ashamed of himself.” Jimin knew Sungwoon was keeping an eye on him so he tried not to growl at the girl. It was obvious she was just parroting what Sungwoon and maybe her parents had told her.

“Sunhee, how old are you?”

“I’m 18. Why?” She seemed taken aback when Jimin’s tight smile turned into a hard line.

“You did not only insult a member of our pack but disrespected someone older than you which is something we don’t tolerate in the Ha pack. You are taught better than that. Don’t speak of things you don’t understand, it won’t benefit you”, Jimin told her as calmly as he could before he let a smile appear on his face again, “Now, I better don’t hear you speaking ill of another member of the pack ever again. I want to speak to Sungwoon alone now, if you two are done?” Sunhee looked perplexed but nodded, glancing towards Sungwoon one more time before she hurried outside.

“Was that necessary?”

Sungwoon didn’t look angry but rather exhausted. Every bit of skin visible to Jimin was bruised or swollen, his silver hair a mess on top of his head. Jimin almost felt bad as he stepped towards the foot of the bed.

“You know I don’t like that kind of talk. We don’t need that kind of tension in the pack.” Jimin shrugged and Sungwoon raised a brow.

“Already speaking like the head omega, I see”, Sungwoon smirked and Jimin felt a knot in his stomach. He quickly changed the topic before he started to think about it further.

“How are you feeling?”
“It’s fine. Most damage happened on my face so it’s nothing too dangerous.”

“I’m glad.”

They were quiet for a moment and Jimin squirmed under Sungwoon’s intense gaze until the alpha spoke up.

“You were worried about me, right?” Jimin held the eye contact as he answered, suppressing a shiver.

“Of course.” It wasn’t a lie, Jimin didn’t want Sungwoon to get seriously injured. He simply didn’t tell Sungwoon that most of his worries had been focused on Yoongi.

“Good. I want you to worry about me. It means that we are slowly getting closer again. That’s what we both want right?”, Sungwoon responded with a gentle tone that Jimin couldn’t find comforting, even if he wanted to. He wondered if that was what Sungwoon told himself, that everything would be alright if they just pretended nothing had ever happened. Jimin had lied to himself for many years but Sungwoon seemed to be completely blinded.

“Sure”, Jimin agreed shortly, feeling uneasy, “Do you want me to bring you anything?”

“I’m tired, it’s best if I sleep now.” Only then did Jimin see the basket full of food on the night stand, the same scent of raisins clinging to it that had accompanied Sunhee. Sungwoon accepting a present from a different omega was something very unusual and very uncommon. Jimin would argue about it but he was glad to be able to leave already. He did, however, make a mental note to look into Sunhee to find out what could be going on between them.

“Sleep well”, sighed as he stepped forward to squeeze his hand. On his way back, he had an odd feeling in his gut.

Jemin quietly went to his room once he reached the omega den and startled when he was met with a figure sitting on the foot of his bed. Clutching his hand to his chest and exhaling when he realised
who it was, Jimin closed the door behind him.

“What are you doing here?”

Jihyun had a stern frown on his face when he stood up. As intimidating as he might looked to others, to Jimin, he would forever be his baby brother.

“I need answers. You can’t just drop a bomb on me like that and expect me to patiently wait until I find out what it even means”, Jihyun explained, his fury morphing into something that looked liked frustration. Jimin understood him but this day had been exhausting as it was and Jimin wasn’t sure he wanted to open this wound now. He looked at his brother, seeing the urgency in his eyes. He knew Jihyun deserved answers and to some extend, he wanted him to know the truth, after all those years.

“How much time do you have?”, Jimin sighed.

“All night. I couldn’t care less about sleep right now.” Jimin nodded and sat down at the edge of his bed. He patted the spot beside him, gesturing for his brother to sit down. Jihyun suddenly looked nervous and took a deep breath before he sat down.

And then Jimin talked. He explained how Sungwoon had first taken interest in him, how scared he was of the consequences of rejecting the alpha and how Jimin had tried to cope with it all those years. Jihyun was mostly silent, except for a scoff or sigh every now and then. Jimin was glad he had told Yoongi the story before, it made it easier to let those words run over his tongue.

“So it’s my fault?”, Jihyun had said once Jimin claimed to be done, shaking his head slowly. “The reason why you talked to Sungwoon in the first place, the reason why you didn’t want to reject him and the reason I hated you for the past three years... it was all my fault.”

“No, don’t say that. There wasn’t anything you could have done.” Jimin wasn’t sure what he felt. He was glad that Jihyun knew but at the same time, he didn’t want him to feel guilty for what had happened. It felt surreal to even talk to him without Jihyun’s furious glare.

“If I hadn’t cried at home all the time about how he bullied me you wouldn’t have talked to him.” Jihyun let his head fall into his hands and Jimin almost instinctively reached out before he pulled his hand back.
“Nonsense. You were hurting and I am glad you told us. You couldn’t have known that everything would turn out like that”, Jimin told him quietly, hoping to calm him down.

“But why didn’t you tell me? I despised you and insulted you and – God, why didn’t you stop me?”, Jihyun asked and turned to look at Jimin again. His gaze wasn’t piercing but Jimin felt the need to duck his head.

“I was so young. I didn’t know how to handle it, I didn’t know if I was doing the right thing. A part of me always thought that maybe... I deserved it.” Jimin shrugged and suddenly felt all of the emotions he had been able to keep in in front of Jihyun crashing down on him at once. His eyes filled with tears and a big lump formed in his throat as he let all those feelings wash over him.

“You didn’t deserve any of this. Ever since you asked me where Yoongi’s room was, I- I felt like I was missing a huge piece of a puzzle and now it finally makes sense. And I am so sorry for just shutting you out like that.” Jihyun’s voice cracked and Jimin wrapped his arms around his brother before he could think twice about it. They both started to cry, the arms of the other feeling so different, yet familiar. Jihyun stayed the whole night in Jimin’s room, asking questions and trying to grasp past situations. Even though Jimin was tired and emotionally exhausted after the whole ceremony, he took the time to answer every single question. The only time Jimin stayed vague in his descriptions was when he talked about Yoongi. Of course, Jihyun asked about the two alphas as well but it was something Jimin wasn’t sure he was able to explain.

Only when the sky was painted in a light blue again did Jihyun leave and Jimin fell into his bed before he could even think about everything that had happened that day.

Jimin woke up to the sound of sniffling. Deciding to ignore it in his half-sleeping state, Jimin turned around, pressing his cheek into his soft pillow. He was already falling asleep again when the mattress dipped and Jimin felt a body hugging him from behind, Taehyung’s scent suddenly in the air.

“Tae?”, Jimin mumbled with his eyes still closed, letting the omega press his nose between his shoulder-blades. When he only got another sniffle in response, Jimin turned around, his mind slowly catching up to what was happening.

“Hey, what happened?” Taehyung’s face was red and scrunched up, tears rolling over his cheeks. In his hand, he clutched a folded paper that seemed to be thicker and more expensive than what they usually used for assignments or letters.
“Everyone got this today. It’s the invitation for the mating ceremony”, Taehyung explained, his voice low and rough. Jimin blinked at him for a few seconds before he suddenly realised what Taehyung was talking about.

“Y-you mean, your mating ceremony? Already?”, Jimin gasped and snatched the paper out of Taehyung’s hands to read over the invitation, “And they didn’t even tell you?” Jimin sat up and scanned through the text, scoffing in disbelief.

“No, I didn’t know anything. I guess I have to visit the head omega today and ask what I’m even supposed to do.” Jimin looked up from the invitation, still outraged. He wanted to comfort Taehyung but his blood was boiling and he held himself back not to run to the head omega this second and bite her head off. Metaphorically or literally he wasn’t sure yet.

“They can’t do this. What if Jungkook doesn’t show up? He wouldn’t even know what to do, you two didn’t get any explanation!”

“They will probably send someone to tell him where to be”, Taehyung shrugged, looking as if he had given up already.

“But where would you stay? You would need a hut to stay in if you two are going to mate!” Jimin raised his voice now, having a feeling that they simply rushed this because Sungwoon’s parents despised Yoongi and Jungkook. It made no sense to rush the mating ceremony when the two of them had no place to stay at and two mated people could never stay in the alpha or omega dens.

“I don’t know, nothing makes sense!” Taehyung sat up as well, pulling at his hair, “People usually make their mating marks when they sleep with each other but Jungkook hates me and I am also not ready for that so I don’t know how on earth we are going to do this and we have no place to stay at and I haven’t talked to Jungkook since yesterday and- and I don’t know how to handle all this!” Something inside Jimin switched then and his expression softened. Taehyung needed to be soothed right now and not for him to pointed out how wrong everything about this situation was. Jimin let Taehyung fall against his chest and brushed his hand through his hair. He was still tired from yesterday and had no idea how early it was but he knew sleep could wait until this mess was over.

Jimin walked Taehyung to the “main hut” from their pack where all formal things were discussed. It was where the elders and pack alpha held all important discussions and meetings and where members from other packs came to talk about trades. The head omega worked in there as well, organizing events and everything else that concerned the omegas in the pack. After a tight hug and a promise that everything would be alright, Jimin made his way to the infirmary, needing to speak to Jungkook.
Just as Jimin got closer to the infirmary, he saw Namjoon stepping out, shivering at the cold before he spotted the omega. Jimin waved and Namjoon gave him a wide smile as he walked towards him, hair messy and coat wrapped tightly around himself.

“Jimin, hey! How are you doing? Yesterday was tough, huh?” Jimin was taken aback at first, wondering how Namjoon could have found out about Jihyun’s visit until he realised that he was probably referring to the ceremony.

“It was pretty cruel, yeah. How’s Jungkook? Did he get the message?”, Jimin asked warily, already seeing how Namjoon’s brows furrowed.

“Yeah, someone sent Seokjin to the head omega this morning, he will have to prepare Jungkook and make sure he knows what’s going to happen… Jungkook is calmer than yesterday but he still needs to talk to Taehyung.”

“I agree”, Jimin nodded, “They hopefully have time before the ceremony. Did Jungkook talk to Yoongi yet? How’s he doing?” Something in Namjoon’s expression changed then, his lips twitching as his eyes squinted slightly.

“They got into another argument yesterday when Jungkook mentioned, well, you. I talked to Yoongi for a long time and Hoseok to Jungkook and I think they settled things this morning.”

“What do you mean he mentioned me? What did he say?” Jimin didn’t like that the brothers had an argument because of him and he couldn’t understand what role he played in any of this in the first place.

“Ah, it’s not my place to say. I also don’t think Jungkook meant it but Yoongi is quite protective of you”, Namjoon shrugged and Jimin was thankful he didn’t comment on Jimin’s furious blush that spread over his cheeks.

“I see… Well, I guess I’ll talk to Jungkook myself now. Give him a big old hug as a peace offering, you know? We’ll see each other at the ceremony?”

“Yeah… Tae’s mating ceremony”, Namjoon sighed, a nostalgic expression on his face, “It’s been a while since Tae and I used to sneak around behind the huts, huh?” Jimin smiled at that, remembering how he had always thought Namjoon and Taehyung would mate some day. They were too young to
even understand the concept of love, of course, but Jimin was always fascinated with the aspect of two lovers finding together, like pieces of puzzle.

“A lot has changed. We’re not pups anymore.” Namjoon let his shoulders sack then, a soft smile on his face.

“I suppose that’s how it is”, he said before he waved Jimin goodbye, whistling an old melody Jimin hasn’t heard in a long time.

Jimin knocked on the door to Jungkook’s and Yoongi’s room and waited until he heard a low “Come in!”. He felt unsure how to approach Jungkook after yesterday and was glad to see Yoongi in the room, scissors in his hand that caused Jimin to raise a brow.

“What are you doing? Is Jungkook not here?” Although he didn’t see Jungkook, his stuff was spread all over the room, making it look like a tornado had caused a huge mess in there. Yoongi was in shorts and a lose shirt that were way too thin for the cold winter, his wet hair indicating that he just got out of the shower. Jimin was relieved to see that his bruises looked much better than the day before, his swollen eye still yellow and purple but looking much better.

“Jungkook’s in this bathroom, I’m cutting his hair. You wanna’ watch?” Yoongi smiled wide at Jimin, his teeth and gums showing that caused Jimin’s heart to do a backflip in his chest. He wondered if Seokjin have him the medicine that made him loopy again but he doubted Jungkook would let Yoongi cut his hair in that state.

“Sure”, Jimin agreed, following Yoongi to the bathroom, “You seem to be a good mood today?” Yoongi stopped before the bathroom door and turned around, smile still on his face.

“I just realised that we made it, you know? All this stress from the past weeks and the worries that we wouldn’t make it… that’s all gone now. I don’t mean to sound egoistic, I know Jungkook’s situation is difficult but I know he likes Taehyung a lot and that Taehyung will treat him with respect and do everything to make him happy. I am glad he will be with someone that cares about him and that Jungkook stays here in the pack with me. And that I stay in the pack, as well.” There was something intense in Yoongi’s gaze that made Jimin believe he was talking about more than the pack. His lashes fluttered as Yoongi averted his eyes, drops from his damp hair rolling down his flushed cheeks.

“I talked to Jihyun yesterday”, Jimin said quickly, not having been able to tell anyone yet. He longed
to talk about it, to have a moment to even comprehend what had happened. It felt like a blurry dream rather than a memory and Jimin had a hard time believing that Jihyun had finally forgiven him.

“What?” Yoongi’s eyes opened comically and Jimin’s heart squeezed at how worried the alpha looked. He quickly gave him a reassuring smile.

“He came to my room yesterday and we finally talked”, Jimin sighed, feeling emotional just thinking about it, “He feels bad for pushing me away and we both apologized for not trying to talk sooner. We cried most of the time tough.” Jimin chuckled and blinked the tears away that threatened to fall. But before he could add anything further, he was engulfed by the scent of pines and had two strong arms wrapped around him.

“Oh.” Jimin froze for a moment as he realised that Yoongi hugged him, tightly at that, before he slowly relaxed in his arms and hugged Yoongi back. Letting his head fall against his shoulder, Jimin exhaled slowly, letting all tension slip from his body.

“I’m so glad you guys finally talked”, Yoongi murmured and Jimin could hear the honesty in his words, “You didn’t deserve all of this.” Jimin smiled against his shoulder, breathing in Yoongi’s scent mixed with his mild shower gel. He wanted to believe Yoongi on this and told himself that maybe he truly didn’t deserve it.

When Yoongi pulled back, he looked nervous and little unsure, scratching the back of his neck with a shy smile on his face. Jimin felt his cheeks flush as well and he couldn’t help but giggle lightly at their awkwardness.

“We should get in, Jungkook’s waiting”, Yoongi muttered before he hastily turned around and pushed the door open.

Jimin hesitantly stepped inside and saw Jungkook sitting on a chair in the middle of the room, shivering in his robe. He didn’t seem surprised to see Jimin but still seemed slightly uncomfortable with the situation.

“I thought I heard Jimin”, Jungkook murmured, handing Yoongi a comb.

“Yeah, I hope it’s okay, I wanted to see you”, Jimin answered before sitting down on the ground in front of Jungkook. He didn’t want to stand above him after their fight and hoped it would calm the alpha down a little.
“Sure”, Jungkook shrugged, grimacing as Yoongi silently combed through his hair.

“Hey, Jungkook, I wanted to apologize for yesterday”, Jimin said, deciding it was best to get straight to the point, “I didn’t mean to disregard your feelings. What you feel is absolutely valid and I completely understand where you were coming from yesterday.” Jungkook ducked his head shamefully and chewed on his bottom lip. Jimin noticed that Yoongi only gently brushed his hair now, his other hand lying securely on his brother’s shoulder. He admired the bond between the brothers and how they often communicated without needing words.

“I shouldn’t have reacted that way. I was just so angry and frustrated. I know I shouldn’t have said what I did.” Jungkook glanced upwards and Jimin gave him a warm smile, meaning he had long forgiven him. It was easy to forget how young Jungkook was and Jimin had to remind himself of that sometimes.

“Keep your head straight now”, Yoongi murmured, taking the scissors into his hand. Jimin watched them for a while, amused to see Yoongi cutting his brother’s hair with skill.

“Not too short, I don’t want to look like an idiot in front of Tae”, Jungkook said at one point and Jimin had to stop himself from making a comment. It showed that Jungkook didn’t give up on them and that he still cared what Taehyung thought of him, even now that they would definitely get mated.

“Jungkook, please talk to Taehyung once you find a moment, okay? For both of your sakes. He feels awful and it will only get worse the longer you push the talk away”, Jimin asked Jungkook and he was glad to see the alpha hum in agreement.

“I know, we can’t avoid each other forever. It just feels awkward now and I don’t know how to approach him.” Jungkook sighed heavily, his shoulders deflating as if they carried a great weight.

“I believe you. Just try to get it over with, I’m sure you will feel better afterwards”, Jimin tried to reassure him but Jungkook didn’t seem to agree.

“I don’t know about that”, he muttered, hands fidgeting with his robe, “A mating bond is so strong and I don’t know if we are ready for strong feelings like that yet… What if we will be just uncomfortable all the time? There is no turning back.” Jimin exchanged a worried look with Yoongi who looked just as helpless as he felt. The alpha got rid of the scissors before he sat down next to Jimin, a hand on Jungkook’s knee.
“Taehyung and you are friends, right? Try to think of you two as friends that share a hut. You don’t have to act like a couple, okay? You also don’t need to be intimate for the mating, it will hurt a little more but it’s fine to do it without having to even kiss each other. There is no pressure for you to do anything you aren’t ready to, I promise you that.” Jimin watched quietly as Yoongi soothed his brother, wiping away the tears that escaped Jungkook’s eyes. His heart broke for Jungkook, seeing him worry like that and knowing that he couldn’t escape his situation. Jimin suddenly felt awfully thankful that he hadn’t had to mate in that age, knowing it would have been to Sungwoon. He shivered just thinking about it.

A knock on the door made Yoongi stop before Seokjin entered the bathroom, looking awfully tired as he ran his hand through his dark hair.

“Ah, Jimin, good that you’re here too. You will be interested in this as well.” Seokjin leaned against the sink as he pulled a little notebook from his pocket, skipping the pages until he found the seemingly right one. Jimin glanced nervously towards Jungkook, the younger gulping visibly.

“Okay so, I talked to the head omega, Taehyung joined us at some point too. It seems that there is no option to postpone the mating ceremony which was a little fishy, considering that we don’t have many other events planned for the future. But she was set on this date and no begging helped, sadly”, Seokjin clicked his tongue before he continued, “You will have to visit one of the elders that will prepare you for the mating spiritually. You will change into the traditional robes -that you’ll have to give back at some point, by the way – and then go with me to the house of the elders. One of them will do a small ritual on you, nothing hurtful, just some water on your neck to ‘clean’ your scent gland for your future mate and some smoke to haunt the evil spirits away. Okay? Don’t worry, you won’t have to do a thing there.” Seokjin waited until Jungkook nodded before he continued, looking at his notebook.

“I will pick you up then and take you to the main hut. There is a room extra for mating ceremonies, it’s not too big which means people won’t have much space. The pack alpha will hold a speech about mating and the pack will have to both kneel down before you and Taehyung. You are obligated to hold vows but you can keep it as short as possible, believe me, nobody will judge. Then the two of you will have to eat a berry for good luck and that’s basically it! You two will be escorted to your hut and will be expected to mate within the first night. There will be a check-up after two weeks to see how things are going.”

“But they don’t have a hut! And why does it have to be within the first night, it’s not any of the pack’s business when they do it”, Yoongi objected, standing up. Jimin didn’t even want to calm him down, feeling the same rage as he did towards the situation.

“Apparently, they do”, Seokjin answered massaging the bridge of his nose with a soft groan, “Don’t
ask me whose stupid idea it was but there is a small hut a little further away that was used as for
storage. They will bring some of the things inside into the main hut so that Jungkook and Taehyung
will at least have some rooms available. They will have a bathroom, kitchen and some kind of living
room area in one and a bedroom with a closet.”

“That’s ridiculous”, Jimin spoke up as well, standing up to look into Seokjin’s eyes. The alpha
seemed as frustrated as he was as he shrugged resignedly.

“Are you telling me my brother has to stay in a storage hut? With people coming in every day
picking up stuff?” Yoongi stepped forward and Jimin decided to step up this time, pulling Yoongi
slightly away from Seokjin with his hand on his shoulder.

“There will be a certain time they will pick up some stuff, probably every two weeks. Believe me,
Yoongi, I tried to talk her out of it but there was nothing I could do. We can only try to built another
hut and let them stay there until we are finished”, Seokjin countered surprisingly calm.

“But we still need to build Yoongi’s hut and I don’t think the pack will supply us with enough
materials for two huts”, Jimin objected, feeling the headache pounding between his temples, “And
Yoongi can’t stay in the alpha den with all those young alphas that are just looking for a fight! There
is a reason you’re not supposed to stay in the alpha den for longer than a few years after presenting.”

“I don’t care about these pups, I can stay there if it means Jungkook get’s a proper-”

“They could group up against you and hurt you, Yoongi -”

“Okay, can you two stop talking for a moment, this is about Jungkook”, Seokjin intervened, focusing
the attention to Jungkook who was still sitting on his chair, hair damp and gaze on the ground.

“Jungkook”, Seokjin said gently, “I know this is hard. But you can get through this. You and
Taehyung need to work as a team now. The reason you have to mate in the first night is because you
will be unable to leave the house for a while once you are mated and the hunters need to work you in
quickly. The longer it takes you to mate, the longer the hunters would have to wait for you to be
ready to work.” The room was silent for a while before Jungkook quietly spoke up again.

“How do we… I don’t want to sleep with him yet. I mean, won’t it hurt?” Jimin’s head whipped to
Seokjin, the only one who has mated before. They never told much about it in school and Jimin had
often wondered about the pain. He knew why Jungkook feared this aspect and he hoped that Seokjin
would tell him that it was half as bad. The alphas expression, however, looked rather apologetic.

“I won’t sugar-coat it, Jungkook. It will hurt. We usually mate during sex because the pheromones can dull the pain and your body will have an instinctual craving to mate the person you are sleeping with. Pain mixed with pleasure will make the mating a lot easier. But I completely understand why you would want to do it ‘dry’, as some people call it.” Jimin has heard of this expression before and wondered how many people had chosen this option. But knowing some of the alphas in the pack, he suspected that most omegas were just expected to do it the other way.

“I will give you some medicine that can make your neck feel a little numb. If you cool the scent gland with some ice and bite down immediately until it bleeds, it will hurt less. You need to work quickly though and, most importantly, lick the wound afterwards. Your saliva will help the healing process.” Jungkook listened and nodded with wide eyes, looking pale in his face. Automatically, Jimin walked over to him to pat his head soothingly, feeling the goosebumps on his own skin as well.

Yoongi left the room quickly, murmuring something about fresh air and Seokjin gave Jimin a look.

“What?”

“Go to him”, Seokjin urged, “I need to prepare Jungkook, you take care of Yoongi. I don’t want him to sabotage the whole thing because of his protective instincts, this could throw the both of them out of the pack.”

Jimin have Jungkook a tight hug before he hurried outside, hoping Yoongi didn’t run off to the head omega. As much as he despised what she had done, Jimin didn’t want Yoongi to risk his future. Luckily, the alpha was just outside the hut, leaning against the back wall. He stared into the forest, frown on his face.

“Aren’t you cold?”, Jimin asked and was glad that Yoongi had at least thought to pull on boots and one of the spare fur coats from the infirmary. Yoongi just shrugged, letting Jimin lean against the wall beside him.

“We should have lost.”

Jimin hummed questioningly at that, turning his head to look at Yoongi. The alpha still had his gaze far away as he answered, his voice quiet.
“Jungkook and I. We should have lost the ceremony. We could have escaped, find a new pack, a better pack. As soon as our wounds had healed, we should’ve had ran away.” Jimin felt his stomach clench at his words, the truth behind them hurting him more than he’d like to admit.

“You needed a bond.” Jimin knew it wasn’t much of an excuse, knowing there were other packs willing to take in the alphas.

“I wonder… Maybe it’s better if we leave again. Run away before Jungkook is mated.” Yoongi turned to Jimin them, his eyes desperate, urgent. Jimin felt sick.

“You can’t”, he quickly replied, “Yoongi, you can’t. You- You are already bonded with the pack. It will hurt to be torn from it. No, it’s- it’s dangerous!” Jimin felt something close to panic fill his chest as he lifted himself from the wall, trying to find reasons why Yoongi should stay. But Jimin already knew the one reason why he didn’t want Yoongi to leave.

“I feel like it would be best for Jungkook. I don’t know what else to do.” Yoongi’s eyes flickered between Jimin’s and Jimin struggled to breath.

“Yoongi”, Jimin whispered, holding onto his coat tightly.

“Come with me! We can go together!”, Yoongi urged, holding his own hands over Jimin’s. His breathing was ragged and for a moment, Jimin considered it. But then he thought of Jihyun, his parents, Taehyung and their other friends. He thought of the pain Yoongi and Jungkook would have to endure if they broke the fresh bond with the pack. This wasn’t something they could just do.

“Yoongi, you’re not thinking straight. A fresh bond is strong and tearing it will hurt both you and Jungkook. You would need to actually plan this. Plus, if Sungwoon saw you running away with me like that, he wouldn’t just let it go. He would do everything in his power to get you killed, you know that.” Jimin turned his hands to intertwine his fingers with Yoongi’s. Yoongi seemed to calm down, nodding dejectedly.

“You are right. I don’t know where that came from.” Jimin squeezed his hands before giving Yoongi a sad smile.

“I wish we could just run away. But… now’s not the time.”
“I know.”

Jimin let go of Yoongi’s hands then, eyes lingering on his face. The pull in his chest was stronger than ever and Jimin knew he had to talk to Yoongi about it. After the ceremony, he decided and let it be.
The room was already crowded when Jimin entered, the stuffy air causing a displeased frown to form on Jimin’s face. He had just left Taehyung at the door to the elder’s hut, not surprised that the elder of compassion was the one assigned to prepare Taehyung. Taehyung had been there for Jimin through all of his darkest times and Jimin had always admired his best friend’s ability to comfort him in the darkest of times. He wanted to be there for him now as well and help him as much as he could.

“Not the red dress today?”

Jimin spun around and immediately smiled when he saw Yoongi, the alpha dressed in an all black attire. His hair looked shorter, letting his eyebrows peak through the dark hair strands, and Jimin noted that it suited him very much.

“Ah, I helped Tae get dressed and didn’t really have time to change. Did you let Seokjin cut your hair?” The alpha ran a hand through his air, a nervous smile on his face.

“Hoseok did it. Seokjin joked about giving me an eagle-style look and I didn’t trust him after that.”
Jimin chuckled, relating to Yoongi in that matter, before he spotted Jihyun further in the back. His brother was just like him dressed in simple cloth pants and a warm sweater and Jimin suspected him to have slept until late because of their long talk the night before. Jimin was glad he finally wouldn’t have to avoid Jihyun during an event like this.

“You can go over to him”, Yoongi suddenly said, an understanding look in his eyes. But Jimin could see the rest of the hunters around Jihyun and knew he would rather not have their attention. Sungwoon had always known that Jimin and Jihyun had stopped talking and for some reason, Jimin wanted him to keep thinking that.

“Ah, I better stay away from the hunters. Sungwoon’s still on resting order so I have to take advantage of him not dragging me with him to make small-talk with them”, Jimin murmured quietly, careful that no one but Yoongi could hear him. After a brief glance towards the group, Yoongi gave Jimin a quick nod, his brows furrowed.

“They don’t seem like a very pleasant group. I just hope they won’t make things hard for Jungkook once he has to start hunting.” Jimin had to agree, after seeing how people had treated Jihyun, he feared for their behaviour towards Jungkook. Young alphas were usually very exhausting to deal with but a lot of hunters were cocky, proud and always ready to fight. Jimin was sure that the only reasons the hunters came to the ceremony, despite not being obligated to do so, were so they could flirt, eat, and get as much attention as possible.

“Jihyun will be there. He’ll take care of him”, Jimin reassured Yoongi and could sense how the alpha relaxed instantly.

“Jimin! Hello, dear!”

Mrs Kim suddenly stood in front of Jimin, blocking Yoongi from his view. Seokjin’s aunt was an elderly woman that was known for her indirect rude statements and remarks that always had a hint of judgement in them. Seokjin had avoided her as much as he could but the older woman always had a talent for surprising people when they least expected it.

“Hello, Mrs Kim”, Jimin greeted politely before stepping to the side, including Yoongi in the circle, “Mrs Kim, this is my friend Min Yoongi. Yoongi, this is Mrs Kim.” Yoongi bowed stiffly, his eyes wary.
“Ah, keeping the enemy close is always smart”, she snickered with raised brows, “I didn’t know the man that hurt your alpha in such a brutal way was a friend of yours!” Jimin sucked in a sharp breath, reminding himself that they were in a public place and that he had to be careful with his words. He didn’t dare to look at Yoongi’s expression, hoping the alpha wouldn’t feel hurt over how Mr Kim regarded him.

“It was part of the task he had to fulfil, it was not an actual fight between enemies, Mrs Kim. And yes, Yoongi is a good friend of mine.” The appalled look hidden under her strained smile satisfied Jimin more than he liked to admit and he wasn’t sure if he imagined it but he thought he could see a small smile on Yoongi’s lips.

“Well, it did look pretty real to me but whatever you say, dear! I should go, I have an omega waiting for me.” She eyed Yoongi once before she turned around, walking away from them. Jimin let his shoulders sack, shaking his head at her behaviour.

“I guess we have to expect a lot of these conversations, huh?”, Jimin told Yoongi with a silent apology in his eyes. The alpha looked oddly calm but Jimin wondered if he was just good at hiding his feelings.

“I expected something like that”, Yoongi shrugged before he glanced towards the hunters again, “But if being seen with me gets you into trouble with Sungwoon, I don’t mind if you pretend to not know me. I’m fine with being your secret friend as long as it means you don’t get into trouble.” Jimin cocked his head to the side and wondered if he was speaking to the same Min Yoongi that used to go mad whenever Jimin did anything for Sungwoon’s sake.

“When did you start to care about what Sungwoon thinks?”, Jimin asked, a teasing but still confused tone in his voice.

“When I started to care about you and how you are being treated.”

Jimin stared at Yoongi for a few moments, letting it sink in. Yoongi shrugged with a lazy smile on his face but the blush on his ears gave away that it weren’t just meaningless words to him. Jimin straightened his back, burying his hands into his pockets as he nodded slowly.

“So… you care about me?” Jimin tried to sound casual but he wasn’t sure if that was possible when millions of butterflies tickled inside his stomach.
“Now that’s a ridiculous question.” Yoongi rolled his eyes before he turned on his heel to walk to the front of the room. Jimin bit hard on his lower lip, trying to stop himself from smiling as he followed the alpha.

It wasn’t getting much fuller, to Jimin’s relief, and he suspected that most people simply didn’t care about the ceremony of a foreign alpha, even if it was technically obligatory to show up. Jimin was at the very front, Yoongi right next to him, when a gong chimed through the wooden walls. The murmur toned down when the pack alpha stepped to the front, his usual stern expression in place.

“Welcome, Ha Pack. Today, we celebrate the mating of two young members of your pack. If you are ready to bond for life, you may step in.”

Two doors, on the left and right, opened hesitantly and Jimin wished he could cheer for Taehyung as he stepped inside. Everyone in the room was humming the traditional mating song as Taehyung and Jungkook slowly walked to the pack alpha, both with ducked heads. Taehyung was dressed in several white robes, representing his innocence and pure beauty, and had a veil made of lace over his head. Jungkook wore deep red robes, the colour standing for the blood of former alphas that fought for the pack.

Jimin didn’t listen to the speech of the pack alpha, having heard it a thousand times before. He wanted to focus on Taehyung and Jungkook. Taehyung kept his head ducked and Jimin wished he would look up just once to see Jungkook stealing glances at him every few seconds. Jungkook looked nervous more than anything but it seemed as if his gaze always found his way to Taehyung, his dark round eyes flickering with something close to awe as he took in the sight of Taehyung.

“Jungkook can’t seem to take his eyes off of Tae”, Jimin chuckled quietly.

“Just because he was disappointed in his actions doesn’t mean he stopped loving him”, Yoongi whispered back and Jimin whipped his head towards him sharply.

“Love? They hardly know each other.” Yoongi hummed lowly, pursing his lips before he returned Jimin’s gaze.

“Would you call me a romantic if I said ‘when you know, you know’?”, he murmured, the corners of his lips curling upwards. Jimin looked at him for a moment before he turned back, eyes finding his
friends again. Jimin remembered all those times he told himself that he would learn to love Sungwoon, that he would just have to get to know him better. He remembered how Taehyung had looked the first time he laid eyes on Jungkook. *When you know, you know.*

“You may say your vows now”, the pack alpha announced and everyone from the pack except Jungkook, Taehyung, and the pack alpha kneeled down at once.

“Why do we have to kneel on the hard floor again?”, Yoongi hissed in a whisper. Jimin hoped the alpha didn’t have any wounds on his knee, he knew from experience that the pain from kneeling in this room could last for a few days.

“Alphas and omegas are supposed to be the purest and most innocent before their mating, which is also why they got cleaned spiritually before the ceremony”, Jimin explained quickly, “So once they have the word, we’re all supposed to pay respect to them by being lower, you know?” Yoongi grimaced but nodded, squirming in his position. Jimin had to hold back a giggle; he had seen Yoongi act like his severe injuries were merely scratches and yet the alpha seemed to be hurting from simply kneeling. He was glad that Yoongi trusted him enough to show him this side of him instead of pretending to be an untouchable alpha.

“Taehyung, I talked to a lot of people in my life but no one has listened to me like you did. Sometimes, I didn’t even need words for you to understand what I felt. You always made me feel comfortable and cared for and showed me that it is okay to be hurt sometimes. You let me be me and I hadn’t thanked you for that, so… thank you. You mean a lot to me and I will do everything I can to see you happy.” Jimin felt his heart swell as he looked at Jungkook, eyes on the ground and cheeks red. He knew Jungkook was still hurt but his words were honest and meaningful. Taehyung’s eyes were round and glassy as he pulled the veil back and Jimin instantly felt a lump in his throat. His best friend was getting mated and for some reason, Jimin only truly realised that now.

“Jungkook”, Taehyung said softly, his voice sounding shaky, “You just named all those things that I did but I wonder… do you know why? Why I do all these things? Because I love when you show me your true self. I love when you’re honest and free. I love when your eyes sparkle when you laugh or how happy you look when you tease me. You made me realise how easy it can be to be with someone. And I know that I want to be with you through thick and thin.” His voice started to crack and Taehyung took a deep breath before he continued. “You mean so much to me and I promise to never stop caring about you.”

Jimin let his tears stream down his face as he sniffed quietly into his hands. He could see Taehyung cry silently and Jungkook struggling to hold back his own tears back. He wished these two nothing but happiness and hoped that they would never have to suffer again. Taehyung and Jungkook were two of the most loving people he had ever met and they deserved the whole world. Jimin felt a light
touch against his left hand before he noticed that Yoongi’s pinky finger curled around his. Bringing their intertwined hands down, Yoongi let them rest in the tight space between them so that no one could see it. Jimin glanced towards the alpha and saw that he had his gaze fixed on his brother, eyes filled with tears. His heart clenched at the sight.

“I vow to be a good, loyal and honourable mate. I swear to stay by your side until my last breath and beyond. We will be one under God’s eye”, the pack alpha recited first, holding out his wrist. Taehyung and Jungkook touched the tattoo of the packs name as they both spoke after him:

“ I vow to be a good, loyal and honourable mate. I swear to stay by your side until my last breath and beyond. We will be one under God’s eye.”

Everyone was now allowed to stand up again and soft gasps of pain filled the room. Jimin clenched his teeth at the slight burn on his skin and used that moment to wipe away his tears with his free hand, the other one still linked with Yoongi’s.

After the pack alpha picked up a golden bowl full of scarlet goji berries, everyone in the pack started to clap their hands in a steady rhythm. Yoongi’s face fell when Jimin pulled his hand away to clap but he seemed to quickly pick up what he was supposed to do. The pack alpha started to loudly sing a traditional mating chant and everyone joined in while Taehyung and Jungkook both picked up a few berries. Jungkook then had to let his berries fall into Taehyung’s mouth, careful not to let one fall. After Taehyung fed Jungkook his handful of berries, everyone started to applaud and cheer. Jimin yelled as loud as he could and could almost feel his hands sting from how hard he clapped. But he didn’t care because both Taehyung and Jungkook had small smiles on their faces as they intertwined their hands.

The room was so full of clapping and cheering that Jimin didn’t even hear it at first. Only when the sound of applause died down abruptly did Jimin hear the high pitched screams. People were moving before he could realise what was going on, chaos erupting in the small room. And then Jimin saw it. Two wolves, larger than he had ever seen, attacking whomever they could reach. Jimin was rooted to the ground, watching one of the wolves bite into the arm of a man, deep red blood spilling everywhere. His gaze wandered through the chaos but Jungkook and Taehyung were already gone. Jimin wanted to look for his family when he felt a strong grip around his waist. Within the next second, Jimin was pulled through the crowd, his feet having trouble keeping up. He barely registered being outside as he ran where he was being let to, the scent of pines mixed with fear around him.

“Yoongi-”, Jimin started but was cut off from the alpha.

“Keep running!”
Jimin trusted Yoongi and ran as fast as he could, mind a blurry mess. He could see the back of the infirmary and wondered why they had taken a detour to the hut. As soon as they reached the door, Yoongi all but pulled him inside, locking the door behind them.

“What about Jungkook and Taehyung?”, Jimin hissed, moving to unlock the doors but Yoongi’s hand quickly held onto his, preventing him from turning the lock.

“They are at their hut, I watched them go with the head omega”, Yoongi growled back.

“At their… what? And what if anybody else needs to be safe?” Jimin tried to move the lock, feeling his blood boil but Yoongi’s grip was strong.

“If we open this, the wolves might come in. I need you to be safe.”

“They could hurt my family, Yoongi!” Jimin felt his voice crack as he shouted with anger, his whole body shaking.

“They just hurt people to scare the pack, they won’t actually kill anybody! They only want to kill one person and he’s standing right in front of you!”

Their harsh breaths were loud in the empty hallway as Jimin struggled to get a word out. His head was spinning, thoughts blurry as he let Yoongi’s words sink in. Upon not getting an answer, Yoongi continued, voice softer than before.

“I know the wolves. My old pack has fed them… ‘special’ food and trained these few wolves to fight. They are taller than usual wolves and way stronger, believe me. They are seeking revenge for something I did and I’m pretty sure they came to see if Jungkook and I are hiding here. They probably attacked a few other packs like that to look for us.”

“Is that-”, Jimin breathed as his eyes stung with tears, “Is that why you left? Did they want to train you like that too?” Yoongi shook his head with a sigh, his grip around Jimin’s hand loosening.

“They would have done it with me eventually but that’s not why I left.”
“And they want to hurt you?” Jimin’s gaze stayed locked with Yoongi’s as the seconds passed, Yoongi’s silence answer enough.

“Tell me, Yoongi”, Jimin told him sternly, heart breaking in his chest.

“Tell me!” Jimin yelled now, voice cracking with a sob. Yoongi’s palms ran up and down his arms but Jimin was too frustrated, too angry that something always had to be thrown in their way. Jimin was sick of these obstacles, he wanted the people he loved to be save.

“Jimin, they won’t hurt me. They only have a few of those wolves and we’ll have a strong pack here. Nothing will happen-”, Yoongi hushed but the sound of steps interrupted him. Seokjin and Sungwoon appeared in the hallway, faces confused.

“What’s going on here? Why are you back already?”, Seokjin asked with worry as he walked towards them, Sungwoon beside him.

“The pack got attacked. Many people were injured and once the threat is gone I will help to carry them here. We had to hide here until the wolves were gone”, Yoongi explained quietly, shamefully. Seokjin looked sick as Sungwoon asked for his parents.

“The pack alpha and head omega left immediately, they should be fine. I think I saw Hoseok run out with Namjoon as well, I guess they hid in the library.” Jimin wondered how Yoongi could have seen anybody but he was glad that his friends seemed fine. Pictures of his parents and brother flashed in his mind and Jimin prayed that they were safe.

“Okay… okay. Yeah. I’ll tell the other medics to be prepared for the people that come inside, I will go to the hut and check on the ones that cannot be transported. Let me get my stuff.” Seokjin ran off to one of the rooms, leaving Sungwoon, Yoongi and Jimin in the hall.

“This will be a long night”, Sungwoon stated, gaze hard. Jimin nodded, intending to stay awake for the whole night if he would have to.

“Sungwoon, it was my old pack that attacked”, Yoongi suddenly admitted, causing Jimin to suck in a sharp breath, “I know their strategies, I know their weak points. I can help.”

“Your pack?” Sungwoon’s eyes looked wild as they pierced through Yoongi, the air suddenly
“Yes, the Shin pack.” Sungwoon glanced towards Jimin before he nodded, jaw set.

“I’ll arrange a talk with my father”, the alpha gritted through his teeth before he took one step closer to Yoongi, “But if one member of this pack dies, I will make you responsible for this. So you better make sure to not cause any further damage with your ‘help’.”

The alphas stared each other down, bodies tense and eyes furious. But before the situation could escalate, someone knocked frantically on the door.

“Open the door! We have injured people here!”

In that moment, Seokjin came back with a large leather bag slung around his shoulder, other medics behind him. Yoongi quickly opened the door which was being thrown open immediately. Jimin scooted to the side to let two alphas in that were carrying an injured hunter, another omega woman carried her son on her back. The medics helped them immediately and before Jimin could stare at the bloody bodies further, Seokjin stepped into his view.

“It often looks worse than it is, believe me. Do you think you’ll be able to help me at the hut? You look pale.” Jimin swallowed thickly but nodded.

“I want to help.”

Seokjin held his gaze for a second, squinting his eyes as if he was trying to find the lie behind Jimin’s words. After a short moment, he sighed and walked out the door, waving Yoongi and Sungwoon over to follow him.

On the way to the cabin, more people passed them, all helping injured members of the pack. Some injuries looked worse than others and Jimin felt his stomach clench whenever he recognised anyone of the injured alphas and omegas. As Kihyun passed with a hurt omega in his arms, he informed Seokjin that children and elderly people had seemingly been protected and that the wolves had left as soon as some of the pack members started to shift, too. It appeared as if they hadn’t been there for a fight but rather to scare the pack or even warn it. Jimin felt nauseous, knowing it had to do with Yoongi.
The room looked not as terrifying as Jimin had expected. A few people were lying on the ground, someone close to them crouching beside them. Upon Seokjin’s arrival, they seemed to visibly relax and Seokjin wasted no time getting to the job. He ordered everyone that wasn’t injured to help in different ways and worked quickly. As soon as they were done, they walked to the infirmary again to help out there as well. Jimin focused on the task at hand and forced himself to not think about anything else until the people were tended to. Hoseok and Namjoon came back from the library at some point and Jimin’s heart broke, seeing Seokjin’s glassy eyes as he hugged them.

“Jimin?” Yoongi called as Jimin handed Heejin a glass of water, reassuring her that her sister would be fine. It was early in the morning already, the sky a pastel shade of purple. Jimin gave Heejin a warm smile before he stepped into the hallway where Yoongi waited for him. Jimin had barely seen him as Yoongi was one of the alphas ordered to carry people to their own huts as soon as they had been tended to.

“Are you alright?” Jimin scanned Yoongi’s body for any injuries, having seen too many hurt people in the past hours.

“No, I’m fine, don’t worry. Are you okay? You should sleep”, Yoongi sighed, his brows furrowing slightly.

“I will once this is done”, Jimin promised with a small smile, “What did you want to talk about?”

“Jihyun came by earlier to tell us your family is fine. Your mother stayed home because of a headache and your father insisted Jihyun to hide at home until it was safe outside again.” Jimin gasped in relief, letting his body fall back against wall behind him. A part of him worried about his mother’s headache but comparing to what could have happened to her, he was glad she had stayed at home.

“God, I’m so relieved.” Yoongi hummed in agreement, tired smile on his lips.

“Jihyun wanted to help here but I told him to get back and check in tomorrow, when we all will be sleeping”, Yoongi chuckled and for a moment, Jimin thought he saw something flicker in his eyes. Pursing his lips, Jimin decided to get straight to the point.

“He said something else, didn’t he?” Yoongi’s eyes widened instantly and Jimin knew then that he
was right.

“Um, why do you think that?”

“Gut feeling”, Jimin shrugged and got smug seeing Yoongi’s cheeks flush.

“He just asked me something… something confidential.” Jimin got curious now but he was also sleep deprived and not in the mood to push it.

“Yoongi?”, Jimin asked softly, quietly.

“Hm?”

“It’s not your fault”, he whispered, “All of this… it’s not your fault.”

Yoongi looked into his eyes for a long moment after that, his dark eyes full of pain. Jimin knew Yoongi felt guilty for the attack and he needed him to know that he didn’t do anything, that he wasn’t the one hurting all of these people. He reached out to grasp Yoongi’s hand, squeezing it lightly. Before he left to help the medics further, Jimin gave Yoongi a warm smile, resisting the urge to press a kiss to his forehead. Jimin continued to work with a slight tugging in his chest.

Chapter End Notes

Short disclaimer: It's not stated whether Jungkook is actually already in love or not, this scene was to show Yoongi's view on love! I know a lot of people disagree with the "When you know you know" phrase! Thank you for reading and feedback is always welcome <333
The first scream pierced through his ear, followed by a suffocating feeling that tore through his body like a bullet. Jungkook’s gaze roamed through the crowd, clapping and laughing and for one moment, he wondered if he had just imagined it. But then more and more cries shot through the air, filling the room within seconds. Jungkook’s grip around Taehyung’s hand tightened as his eyes fell on the large ash grey wolf, when he saw the familiar eyes as if it had just been days ago that he had been looking into them. Memories filled his mind, happy memories of playing in the meadow during summer days and chasing each other through the rain. The last time Jungkook had seen him, they had been friends.

His gaze caught Yoongi’s and Jungkook could see the dread in his brother’s eyes. They both knew who was attacking the pack. Jungkook had always known that their past with the Shin pack would catch up with them one day but it hadn’t prepared him for the current sight that caused his stomach to burn. Subconsciously, Jungkook saw the head omega and an alpha he didn’t recognise run towards Taehyung and him and before he knew it, he was outside, the man pulling them by their wrists into the dark of the forest.

“What’s going on?”, Taehyung asked, voice shaking.
“You are spiritually cleaned, we cannot allow you to get hurt”, the man answered sternly and continued to lead them further into the woods.

“What about the others? Where are you bringing us?” Jungkook held Taehyung’s hand even tighter as the omega’s voice shot up, filled with fear. Jungkook had the same questions but his words were stuck in his throat and the only thing he could do was hold on to Taehyung’s hand, seeking the feeling of comfort only Taehyung or Yoongi could usually give him. Jungkook’s alpha instinct told him to protect Taehyung while another part of him longed to be held and kept safe.

“We’re bringing you to your hut as it was the plan. Apparently, this has priority”, the head omega stated with a sour tone, her eyes not even glancing into their reaction.

“I know you don’t like to follow my orders but I’m just doing what the law tells me”, the man sighed, “They have to have their mating this night, this is all I know. As the second in command, I can’t just ignore the rules.”

Jungkook turned his head to the man and suddenly noticed that he had seen him before. The alpha never appeared to be of importance and by the way the head omega addressed him, she didn’t seem to look up to him either. Jungkook didn’t understand why he was the second in command, the man didn’t even seem comfortable in his position. He wondered why the head omega wasn’t the one to decide, it only made sense to him.

“The pack alpha wouldn’t approve of this. The pack is being attacked and we-”

“But he isn’t here, is he?”, the man interrupted her and Jungkook saw a look of frustration cross her face. He only now realised that the pack alpha hadn’t been anywhere to be seen as they left the room. Had he run away? Weren’t pack alphas supposed to defend their pack?

They continued to walk in silence and Jungkook noticed that their hut was pretty far away from the rest of the pack. Storage huts were usually a little further away for trading or in case the pack was getting robbed but Jungkook felt like it took them ages to get there. When it was finally in sight, Jungkook was relieved to see that the small hut looked, at least, stable. It didn’t have many windows but two floors and from what he could see from outside, it seemed to be in a good condition.

The head omega pulled out a key and opened the door before pressing it into Jungkook’s hand. Jungkook thought they would go inside together but that seemed not the case as the head omega and the other alpha took a few steps back.
“This is your only key for now, you’ll get a second one when we have one made. Any light switch is always to the left of the door and the cupboards are filled with blankets, sheets, pillows, plates, toilet- and kitchen necessities. Your belongings have been delivered to the bedroom. You are not to go upstairs, and you have two weeks before someone will check in on you. Your mating will be this night and you are expected to work as soon as you are ready to”, she said in stoic tone and turned to walk back without even waiting for an answer. Jungkook was taken aback as he stared at her, wondering if he should say something.

“Welcome to the pack”, she called bitterly while she walked away, the other man following her silently.

Welcome to the pack, Jungkook repeated in his head, key heavy in his palm.

“Should we…?”, Taehyung whispered nervously after a moment and Jungkook nodded, unsure what exactly he felt. He was overwhelmed, so much he could tell.

They warily walked through the door, hands still intertwined. Jungkook blindly reached for the light switch and soon a few light bulbs illuminated the narrow walls. They were met with minimal furniture and bare walls but the rooms seemed to be clean. It was hard to believe that this place would be their home now, everything about it rather austere.

“We should lock the door”, Taehyung suggested after they walked through the few rooms of the first floor. He didn’t voice it but Jungkook knew Taehyung wanted it because of the wolves from earlier. The wolves that had been attacking innocent people while they were being kept safe.

“Yeah.” Jungkook locked the door from inside, the clicking noise ripping through the silence.

“Jungkook”, Taehyung whispered, tears in his eyes, “What just happened? They- they didn’t even look like wolves!” Jungkook felt his heart ache seeing Taehyung like that, wishing he could embrace him and tell him that everything would be alright. But that would be nothing but a lie and Taehyung didn’t deserve to be lied to.

“They were from my old pack. One of them even used to be a close friend of mine… I don’t know what they are doing here but I don’t think this was the last attack.” Jungkook felt anxiety creep into
his bones, poisoning his body slowly. He felt nauseous, dizzy, scared and clammy as the shock from before wore off. Taehyung seemed to feel the same, as he simply shook his head in disbelief, looking paler than usual.

“Do you think the others are safe? Our families?”, Taehyung asked after a long moment, curling into himself.

“I don’t know. But from what I have seen, the attacks didn’t seem as harmful as they could have been. Maybe they just wanted to scare us.” Jungkook took a tentative step forward, still too far away from Taehyung that he would have liked to be. The omega nodded, lips still pressed into a thin line but his shoulders relaxing.

“I’m making some tea for us.”

Suddenly, Taehyung vanished into the small kitchen and Jungkook stared after him for a few seconds before he thought of following him. He only now realised how cold it was since the both of them were still only in their robes and a cup of tea sounded extremely good to him. Jungkook sat down at the small table in the living room and watched as Taehyung opened the different drawers of the cupboards, looking for his utensils.

“Did you lose your veil?” Jungkook noticed that Taehyung hadn’t worn his veil ever since they left the ceremony and was a little bit worried of getting in trouble for it. They had to return their clothing, after all.

“It flew off when we hurried outside and I was scared to go back”, Taehyung shrugged before he gasped, apparently having found was he was looking for, “I don’t think they can blame me, given the circumstances.” Taehyung pulled out two thick blankets and handed one to Jungkook, leaving the other one on the chair opposite of him. Jungkook put the key, that had been boring into his palm, onto the table and accepted the blanket gratefully, draping it over his shivering body.

“Yeah, we should change after the tea and take care that nothing happens to the robes, at least”, Jungkook sighed as he leaned back into the chair. It wasn’t comfortable but the all the stress from this day exhausted him enough to snuggle into the hard wood gladly. Taehyung hummed from the kitchen, brewing the tea already. The smell of herbs filled the air gradually and Jungkook found himself feeling more sleepy than he anticipated. He thought he could hear Taehyung hum a melody quietly but his consciousness was already drifting while his eyelids fought to stay open.

Jungkook must have fallen asleep because he woke up with a jolt at the sound of a low chuckle. Blinking tiredly, Jungkook took a moment to realise where he was before he noticed the mug of
steaming tea on the table. Taehyung sat in front of him, cocooned in a blanket, with his own mug in his hands. Jungkook stared at him for a while, too sleepy to do anything else.

“Drink”, Taehyung prompted gently, a tired smile on his lips and a fond look in his eyes. Jungkook sat up in his chair and held his hands around the mug, letting the warmth slip through his skin.

“I think we should talk... about everything.” Taehyung had his gaze on the tea, avoiding Jungkook’s eyes. Jungkook let him, sipping his drink quietly to let him continue. He wanted to hear what Taehyung had to say and felt ready to listen to his side now. He had been too furious for that the day before.

“After the fighting ceremony, a woman from our pack wanted to talk to me. She is originally from another pack and had to go through the same ceremony back then as you guys. She told me her story and how an alpha had helped her by mating her. They planned it all before and it somehow worked out for them. I don’t blame her for telling me, I know she wanted to help but once I was aware that I could keep you here, I suddenly had a responsibility, a say in what happens to you. I didn’t know what to do, I couldn’t even look into your eyes without feeling guilty. I don’t want to have that kind of power over you and I hate that I hurt you with it. I’m sorry.”

Jungkook took a deep breath, letting it sink in. It made sense and he wasn’t sure if he had reacted any different if he had been in Taehyung’s shoes. He was glad Taehyung understood why this hurt him and he knew the omega was completely honest with him.

“I understand why you did it. I guess I was too frustrated with the situation to even try to see this from your point of view”, Jungkook admitted and winced at the memory, “I shouldn’t have said what I said yesterday and you never disgusted me in any way. I guess I just wanted to hurt you and that was pretty messed up.” Taehyung grimaced at his words but gave him a smile nonetheless.

“Yeah, that hurt a lot. I feel like you get that from Yoongi, saying the things when you’re upset to hit the other one where it hurts the most. I know he did that in his fights with Jimin, even if he didn’t always mean it like that.” Jungkook pursed his lips and thought about that. He had never really noticed it before but he couldn’t deny that it was true.

“I want to work on that”, he decided, thinking back to his mating vows. He promised to do everything he could to see Taehyung happy and he wanted to keep that promise.
“You know”, Jungkook spoke up after they sipped their teas in silence for a while, “I wanted to court you. After the ceremony, I wanted to offer you your first courting gift, had already bought it and everything. I wanted to take things slow, to spend time with you and give you a ton of presents until we were ready for the next step.” It hurt to think about his plans and hopes for the two of them. Jungkook had imagined Taehyung’s surprised face when he would find his first courting gift and he dreamed about him accepting it with a wide smile on his lips.

“Oh, Jungkook, I didn’t know… What did you get me? We can pretend all this never happened and I will act surprised when you offer it to me! If you still want of course”, Taehyung said with a sheepish smile and Jungkook felt the ache in his chest lessen.

“It’s a bracelet; Seokjin helped me to get it. He and Yoongi were the only ones that knew. It won’t be the same to offer it to you now but I want you to have it anyway.” Jungkook was glad to see the smile on Taehyung’s face widen and thought that maybe he could still give Taehyung presents now and then and see him get excited. It wasn’t the same as courting but still close.

“Jungkook… Do you think we can get past this? Be like we used to be?” Taehyung’s joyful expression fell as he asked the questions and a hint of fear flickered in his eyes. Jungkook’s stomach turned at the realisation that their relationship would change forever this night but he hoped it didn’t show in his face.

“It won’t be like it used to be, I don’t think that’s possible. But that doesn’t mean we will be unhappy with it. I’m sure we can trust each other more and more with time.” Taehyung nodded, a thoughtful expression on his face.

“We should go to the bedroom… to change clothes and rest and… yeah”, the omega murmured and Jungkook swallowed thickly, not knowing how they would do this. He didn’t know if Taehyung expected him to sleep with him and the thought scared him. Jungkook wanted to get intimate with Taehyung but didn’t feel ready for it yet, especially given their situation. Plus, he had only done that two times before and he didn’t really feel confident about it.

They silently walked to the bedroom and got their belongings out from a cupboard inside. Taehyung picked up some things and excused himself to the bathroom, leaving Jungkook alone in the room. He changed out of his robes quickly and pulled on some loose pants and a warm sweater. But as he folded the robes to tuck them away safely, a note fell to the ground. Jungkook picked it up quickly.

“Left the medicine in one of your boots, read the instructions carefully! Don’t forget the ice and to lick the wound afterwards. Good luck, Kookie. - Jinnie”
Jungkook felt a rush of affection for Seokjin and let out a heavy breath. He hurried to his boots that have been delivered to the hut earlier and found a sachet in one of them. Two tiny syringes were inside and a container with liquid that he presumed to be the medicine. A note with clear instructions was also stored inside the sachet and Jungkook had never been more grateful for Seokjin.

“Whatcha’ got there?”

Jungkook jumped as he turned around, Taehyung standing behind him with curious eyes. Jungkook wasn’t sure if Taehyung wanted to do it this way as well and it made him feel nervous to talk about it.

“Um, Seokjin gave us this. It’s to numb the neck...” He didn’t need to say more as Taehyung gasped and snatched it from Jungkook’s hands.

“Oh my God! I thought we would have to do it like that, I was so scared of the pain! This will help so much, bless Jin!”, Taehyung chimed and sat down on the bed, reading the instructions. Jungkook looked at him for a moment, looked at his tan bare face, all traces of make up now washed away, and his loose clothes that looked way too cold for the weather. A warm feeling spread in his stomach upon seeing Taehyung like that, seeing him looking comfortable. Then he snapped out of his state and walked over to the omega, sitting down beside him.

“So...you’re not mad we don’t...?” he asked carefully, chewing on his lower lip afterwards. Taehyung’s head turned towards him, his brows furrowed.

“It wouldn’t feel right to do it now. Forced, kind of? I mean, did you want to?” Jungkook quickly shook his head, feeling a weight lift from his chest.

“No, no! I’m glad we do it this way.” Jungkook smiled and got a sad smile from Taehyung in return.

“I’m sorry we have to do it now. I know it’s a big step and I wished we wouldn’t have to do it like this”, Taehyung said quietly, eyes flickering between Jungkook’s.

“It’s okay, I know you wanted to help”, Jungkook reassured him and took his hand into his, “I’m glad it’s you.”
Jungkook looked down on Taehyung, feeling his heart hammer in his chest. Taehyung held a cloth wrapped around ice cubes against his neck, looking as anxious as he felt as well. Jungkook’s hand trembled slightly but he knew that in a few seconds, he needed to hold the syringe steadily.

“Do want to try to release the pheromones now?” Taehyung asked as he removed the cloth, exposing his bare skin. Jungkook couldn’t believe there would be a mating mark soon.

“I can’t keep them up that long so I’ll do it after I injected you with the medicine.” The pheromones he would release now weren’t the same as the ones he would have released during sex but it would help at least a little. The main difference was that Jungkook wasn’t able to control them now which meant that he would release a lot at once and just for a short amount of time. His body wasn’t prepared to mate in this state so they had to take what they could.

“Okay, I’m ready”, Taehyung informed him and closed his eyes. Jungkook gulped and bend over to get a better look at his neck. He did it exactly as told in the instructions and forced his nerves away to do his job right. Before he knew it, the medicine was inside and Jungkook pulled the needle out.

“Are you okay?”, he asked quickly, putting the needle away so they didn’t accidentally hurt each other on it.

“Yeah, it’s fine”, Taehyung nodded and held the cloth of ice to his neck again, “It’s spreading and it feels weird. Just do it quickly when I put my hand away again, okay?”

“Okay, I’ll release the pheromones now.” Jungkook shifted so that his knees were on either side of Taehyung’s hips but not actually touching him. He focused and released the pheromones, trying to keep an eye on Taehyung’s state. As soon as the omega’s eyelids seemed to get heavy, Jungkook stopped and pushed the cold cloth away.

He took a deep breath, telling himself to be quick. He lowered his head and let his lips hover over Taehyung’s neck for a second. He pressed his lips softly onto the cold skin, the kiss causing his emotions to well up inside of him. Apologizing internally for the pain, Jungkook let his instincts take over and bit into his neck, holding Taehyung’s jerking body down with his hands. He could taste the blood on his tongue and automatically released his pheromones again. Taehyung moaned out of pain when Jungkook pulled back and he quickly started to lick the wound. It was as if the wolf inside of him took over, feeling the extreme urge to heal the wound on Taehyung’s skin.
After a moment, Jungkook sat up and shifted away from Taehyung. The omega was calm as he blinked towards the ceiling before he chuckled breathlessly, the sound barely audible.

“Does it hurt much?”

“It hurts like hell”, Taehyung winced before he looked at Jungkook, something dazed in his gaze. “But it also feels amazing. It’s hard to explain but you will see in a moment.” Jungkook gulped, feeling a knot in his stomach.

“I- In a moment? Aren’t you too hurt to do it now?”

“No, we have to do it immediately after one another! Otherwise I’m bonded to you and you not to me yet and it will make everything really complicated and-” Taehyung started to talk faster and faster and Jungkook could already see the panic in his eyes. Realising that it was the effect of a one-sided bonding, Jungkook quickly agreed to doing it now. He hastily exchanged the melting ice with some new one while Taehyung prepared the second shot of medicine. Jungkook knew that it was hard for mated people to stay too long away from each other so he hurried back, not wanting to make Taehyung wait. He wondered if it would be uncomfortable for them to be glued together for the next weeks but there wasn’t much choice left. He hoped they could find a way to not sabotage their relationship with this.

“Okay, lay down”, Taehyung told him gently, a hint of nervousness in his voice. Jungkook obliged, his heartbeat loud in his ears and definitely faster than it usually was.

He cooled his neck for a while, the waiting worse now than it was before. After a few minutes, Jungkook pulled his hand back and gave Taehyung a quick nod. The sting of the needle was uncomfortable but manageable. Jungkook resisted the urge to flinch away, clenching his jaw to help with the pain. Taehyung’s hand was on the other side of his neck, stroking his skin softly, and Jungkook would lie if he said it didn’t soothe him a little.

“Done. Cool it for a few seconds and tell me when you’re ready.” Taehyung sounded less anxious about biting him than Jungkook did and he suspected it was because he already was bonded and knew what Jungkook had to expect. He also suspected that Taehyung’s instinctual urge to mate Jungkook as well played a part in it too.

Jungkook felt the numbness spread through his neck, the ice against his skin feeling less and less cold. He tilted his head to the left and right, trying to get used to the feeling. He knew he had to do it now and took a deep breath before he removed the ice.
“Okay. I’m ready”, he breathed, watching Taehyung climb on top of him.

“You sure?”, Taehyung asked with a small smile on his face. Jungkook looked into his dark eyes, feeling something warm fight through the knot in his stomach. He trusted Taehyung.

“Yes, I’m ready.”

“Dad, we learned about mating today in school...”

“Yes? Oh, well, it was about time they taught you about that stuff. You okay there, bud?.”

“Yeah, it’s just- I don’t know, isn’t it weird to be mated? To be bonded for life?”

“It can be if you don’t do it with the right person. But if you love your mate, it’s actually great.”

“Were you in love with mom when you mated?”

“Oh, definitely.”

“Are you still in love with her? You never hold hands or anything.”

“Ah, well, love is a funny thing, Guk. It changes and morphs into something less exciting but your relationship gets more depth, in a way. Your mother is my best friend and I love her very much.”

“Okay... how does it feel? The mating?”
“It feels like… finding the last piece of a puzzle. It feels complete and very, very strong. It’s like there is a part of your soul inside the other one and a part of them is with you. Like you are one. Their pain is your pain. This is why you need to be sure they are good people. If you mate with the wrong person… they might use this power to hurt you.”

“I see.”

“Promise me one thing, bud?”

“What?”

“Mate someone you love. Someone that makes you happy.”

“What if I think someone is right and mate them and then realise they aren’t the one years later?”

“When you mate and it feels like coming home… then you have nothing to worry about. Can you find that person?”

Jungkook’s blurry vision slowly started to focus as he stared into Taehyung’s eyes. They both had smiles on their lips and light blushes covering their cheeks. Jungkook felt so much, it was hard to even grasp it. I did it, Dad, Jungkook thought, I kept my promise.
Jimin woke up to the strong scent of burnt wood hanging in the air. He shifted around, not expecting to bump into something. Eyes fluttering open, Jimin suddenly remembered that Sungwoon had asked him to stay the night in his room in the infirmary. Jimin had been so tired from working the whole night and not having been able to sleep the night before that he had simply agreed. He had passed out as soon as he lied down and only now noticed how close Sungwoon was, sleeping soundly next to him. Jimin wasn’t sure why he felt guilty. He had been close to Sungwoon before, given that they had been courting for three years. But after everything that had happened, his progress and Yoongi, Jimin felt like sleeping in the same bed as Sungwoon was a step backwards.

Sungwoon looked almost innocent while he was sleeping, his alpha posture gone and sharp glares replaced with closed eyes. Jimin snorted, Sungwoon was just a boy like him. A boy too young to even understand his own actions and words, hiding between his parent’s power. Why was Jimin too scared to tell him he wanted to end the courtship? It would be good for the both of them to find a partner that loved them. Jimin already had someone in mind…
He quickly slipped out of bed, not wanting to think further about that. He couldn’t let himself hope, not when the chances of him ever ending up with someone that wasn’t Sungwoon were so slim. He walked over to the kitchen, smiling at the memory of getting Jungkook and Yoongi breakfast every morning. Opening the door sleepily, Jimin startled when he found Yoongi leaning against one of the counters. Bread-roll in one hand and coffee mug in the other, Yoongi stared at Jimin wide-eyed.

“Hi”, the alpha said, awkwardly straightening his hair with the back of his hand, despite still holding the bread roll.

“Morning”, Jimin chuckled and fixed himself a cup of coffee as well. Once he was finished, he leaned against the corner, right next to Yoongi who seemed to have finished his roll in one bite and sipped his tea with a relaxed smile on his face. It felt oddly domestic and Jimin wished he could spend every morning in this comfortable silence with Yoongi next to him.

Suddenly, the alpha stiffened and Jimin gave him a questioning look. Yoongi’s smile morphed into a strained expression, brows furrowed and lips pressed together. He returned Jimin’s gaze, something vulnerable in his dark eyes.

“You- Your scent”, Yoongi muttered and Jimin suddenly realised that he must have been drenched in Sungwoon’s smell. He quickly took a step back, leaving his cup on the counter to wave his hands to deny.

“Sungwoon has asked me to stay in his room and I was really tired but nothing happened! I mean, we just slept in the same bed but- but really, we just slept! Nothing happened!” Jimin felt the strong urge to explain it to Yoongi, to prevent him from thinking that anything intimate happened between Sungwoon and him. He knew he didn’t have to do it but he needed Yoongi to know.

“Jimin, it’s okay. You two are courting and it’s, I mean, it’s your life. You shouldn’t justify yourself. As long as he doesn’t force you or manipulate you to do anything, I won’t, you know...”, Yoongi stammered, gaze on the floor. But Jimin didn’t know what he meant. Yoongi could say that he didn’t care what they did or that he wouldn’t interfere which were already two completely different things. Or maybe he was saying he wouldn’t judge Jimin?

“I actually don’t know”, Jimin admitted and Yoongi’s eyes snapped to him, as if he’d been zoned out and only now realised where he was. Yoongi was usually very focused and seeing him like that caused Jimin’s heart to clench.

“Yeah, that’s fine. I don’t know what I’m saying, if I’m honest. I shouldn’t care what happens between you and Sungwoon.” Yoongi chuckled stiffly but Jimin could see the hurt in his eyes. Jimin
felt selfish but he drank it all in, stared at the pain flickering in his gaze and wished that it was for the same reason he was hurting. He wished that maybe, Yoongi felt the same towards him, that he was sick of Sungwoon standing between them. Jimin didn’t want Yoongi to hurt because of him but at the same time, a part of him wanted that he did. That Yoongi ached for him the same way Jimin ached for Yoongi. It had only been a pull at first but every time Jimin saw him, it only seemed to increase, to get stronger and harder to ignore. His chest was burning with something Jimin had never experienced before and he wondered if it was healthy.

Jimin’s feet walked towards Yoongi as if led by the pull in his chest. He longed to be closer to Yoongi and for some reason, he could sense that the alpha felt the same way. Jimin thought back to the day they had become friends, when Yoongi had tried to explain something to him. Jimin hadn’t understood it back then but now he knew what Yoongi had meant.

“Yoongi”, Jimin said softly, stopping just a few feet in front of him, “Remember when you told me you could feel-”

The door flew open and Jimin instinctively jumped back. Sungwoon stepped into the small kitchen, a tense expression on his face. His eyes were fixed on Yoongi and didn’t seem to leave him as he pulled Jimin close to him. Jimin breath hitched when Sungwoon’s nose was suddenly pressed against his neck, his scent engulfing him. Jimin knew Sungwoon scented him to provoke Yoongi and mark his territory and if he pulled back now, Sungwoon would have no mercy to blame Yoongi for it. Jimin avoided Yoongi’s gaze as he let Sungwoon scent him, hoping he would understand.

“Why were you not in bed this morning? I wanted to see your pretty face”, Sungwoon murmured into his ear, causing a dark shiver to run down Jimin’s spine.

“I was thirsty”, Jimin shrugged, slipping out of Sungwoon’s hold. Sungwoon hummed, turning Jimin towards him and wrapping his arms around his shoulders. From his peripheral vision, Jimin could see Yoongi standing stiffly next to them, his body tense.

“Why don’t you come back to my room, hm? We had a hard day yesterday, we could use a day to relax. Especially, since omegas aren’t used to working like that”, Sungwoon said with a smile on his face, ignoring the low growl from Yoongi. Jimin wanted to push him away but he knew he couldn’t let the situation escalate like that. He had to remind himself that unlike Sungwoon, Jimin’s mind was his strength. He never acted on impulse and he needed to use this skill to prevent a fight between any of them.

“I actually had plans. I wanted to see my parents.” It was indeed something he had planned for this day and Jimin had wanted to seek a talk with his parents ever since the ceremony.
“Your parents? I thought you weren’t on good terms”, Sungwoon argued, raising a brow. Jimin took a step backwards, expression turning sour. Sungwoon couldn’t truly blame him for wanting to visit his family after an attack, could he? The alpha didn’t know that Jimin had been informed about their well-being and it was natural Jimin wanted to see how they were doing.

“They are still my family, Sungwoon. I want to see if they are alright after what happened yesterday. Do you think I don’t care if they are injured or not?” Jimin looked into Sungwoon’s eyes, seeing the alpha struggle with finding a response. Sungwoon couldn’t blame Yoongi for saying what he did so Jimin felt confident shrugging Sungwoon’s hand away when he tried to touch him.

“I was just wondering, I didn’t object to you going”, Sungwoon stated in a tone that sounded forcefully calm, “In fact, I will even walk you to their hut.”

Jumin took a deep breath, trying to calm himself down. He felt humiliated that Yoongi had to see him with Sungwoon and the way Sungwoon talked to him. Yoongi didn’t know that Jimin not starting an argument was the safest thing to do and he hoped the alpha didn’t see him as weak for it. But he hoped Yoongi trusted him enough to not question his actions.

“Good.” Jimin noticed that if Sungwoon walked Jimin to his parent’s place, the alpha wouldn’t be alone in the room with Yoongi which was the best for three of them. He grabbed Sungwoon’s arm and led him out of the kitchen, giving Yoongi an apologizing look over his shoulder. Yoongi nodded shortly, letting his body fall back against the counter, shoulders sacking.

The walk to his old home was mostly quiet and Jimin wrapped his arms around his thick coat to avoid holding Sungwoon’s hand. He was nervous seeing his parents again, he always had been whenever they hadn’t been in contact for a while.

“We can make a stop at my hut and you can take a shower and change your clothes”, Sungwoon suggested as they reached one of the outer areas where higher class alphas usually built their huts.

“I feel comfortable with what I’m wearing”, Jimin shrugged. He just didn’t want to go to Sungwoon’s place now.

“But you worked the whole night and probably sweated a lot. It’s impolite to show up at your parent’s hut like that. Did you even brush your teeth or just rinsed your mouth with that mint
“Sungwoon, please. I just want to see if my parents are fine. They won’t care what I wear or how I smell. Besides, I will take a shower as soon as I’m back in the omega den.”

When no response came, Jimin released a breath, hoping this issue would be done now. They continued to walk in silence until Sungwoon spoke up again, his tone tense.

“Jimin, I need to ask something of you. You won’t like it but it will benefit the both of us if you won’t put up a fight for once.” Jimin clenched his teeth, already dreading whatever Sungwoon would say now.

“I need you to stay away from Min Yoongi.”

Jimin stopped in his tracks. He had feared that Sungwoon would say these words one day but hearing them felt like a slap to his face. He tried to ignore the white noise in his ears as he forced himself to look Sungwoon in the eyes.

“Why.” It wasn’t a question, Jimin knew the actual reason Sungwoon wanted it. But he wanted the alpha to say it out loud, to admit how ridiculous he was behaving. He wanted Sungwoon to know that he despised the idea.

“He’s not a good influence on you. Ever since he has been around you, you started to talk differently, like a stubborn pup. You snap at me and distance yourself. How you talked to Sunhee was just proving my point. You have never been this rude and selfish before and I’m sure he is behind this”, Sungwoon explained, his gaze harsh. Jimin felt heat rise to his cheeks as he fought against the tears in his eyes.

“Clearly, we haven’t seen eye to eye lately but that has nothing to do with Yoongi’s influence. He’s my friend and the brother of my best friend’s mate, it’s inevitable that I see him.” Trying to keep his voice steady, Jimin straightened his back to appear taller. He wasn’t sure if it would help or provoke Sungwoon but he hoped it would throw the alpha off.
“Even if it’s inevitable that you see him, your interactions can and should be reduced. He is the target of an attacking pack and if you are close to him, you automatically endanger your own life. Do you want that?”, Sungwoon growled, taking a step towards Jimin, “Or can you tell me a reason right now why this alpha should be worth risking your life for?”

Jimin held his gaze despite feeling his knees tremble. He couldn’t lose Yoongi, he didn’t want to lose him. It should matter what he wanted. He liked spending time with him and Sungwoon couldn’t force him to stay away. Jimin promised himself then and there to not give in. He would seek out Yoongi as soon as he could and look for a solution. He wouldn’t let Sungwoon keep him from Yoongi.

“Fine”, Jimin answered shortly before continuing to walk ahead, not spearing Sungwoon another glance.

“Bye”, Jimin called over his shoulder as he walked the last meters towards his old home. He didn’t want Sungwoon there with him and hoped the alpha would simply leave.

“Shouldn’t I come with you?” Jimin sighed and rolled his eyes.

“No, my brother will be there. I don’t want a fight between you two happening anytime soon so if you could please leave?” He didn’t want to hide his irritation but knew he also had to be careful. The situation was too risky with his family and friends involved and Jimin couldn’t let Sungwoon get angry when he still had the power to turn everyone in the pack against Yoongi or Jihyun.

“Okay, then I will go. I will visit Sunhee today, her mother asked for me, so you don’t need to come by later”, Sungwoon snapped and Jimin had to hold back a snort. It seemed oddly suspicious that Sunhee’s mother suddenly wanted to talk to him and that he apparently planned to stay until late. But Jimin was glad he wouldn’t have to cook for him and simply nodded.

“Have fun”, he murmured before finally knocking on the door.
“Jimin?”

Jihyun’s surprised frown quickly morphed into a smile as he stepped aside to let Jimin in. He seemed to still be in his pyjamas and Jimin hoped he hadn’t woken anybody up.

“I just wanted to drop by and check on you guys. Is the timing alright?” Jimin toed off his shoes and was immediately greeted with the scent of home. He took a deep breath, letting his eyes roam around the familiar walls. He had been here a few times over the past years but the weight of their tense relationship had always been hanging in the air. It seemed like this was the first time in three years that Jimin felt comfortable in this hut again.

“Yeah, sure! Dad and I just finished eating breakfast. I actually wanted to head over to the infirmary later, to help!”, Jihyun told him as they walked to the living room which Jimin didn’t expect to be empty.

“We can head over there together later! I want to check on the patients as well.” Jihyun stopped to turn around, squinting his eyes at Jimin.

“Nu-uh. No helping from you today. Your Yoongi told me to stop you in case you tried to help again, he said you were too stubborn to properly rest”, Jihyun recalled, crossing his arms in front of his chest. Jimin spluttered, cheeks flushing instantly.

“What do you mean with ‘my Yoongi’?” He wasn’t surprised to see Jihyun’s evil smirk and was pleasantly surprised that their past feud seemed already forgotten.

“Ah, I know things. A lot of things. I am the master of knowledge, basically-” Jihyun called after Jimin as the omega rolled his eyes and walked passed his brother with a fond and slightly embarrassed smile on his face.

Jimin made a bee-line for the kitchen, looking for his parents. He was met with the familiar sight of his father, washing the dishes while humming to himself. As Jimin knocked against the door-frame, he startled, nearly dropping the bowl in his hands.

“Oh, Jimin! What are you doing here?”, his father asked, drying his hands on a cloth. Jimin was glad to see a pleasant smile on his face, even though he couldn’t tell the difference between his polite and genuine smile anymore.
“Just wanted to check in on you guys. Because of the attack and everything.” Jimin watched as Jihyun snatched an apple from behind their father and sat down on the counter, ignoring their father’s disapproving glare. Jimin missed those little moments.

“Yeah, it’s horrible what happened. I’m glad we were here. I hope you were safe, as well?”

“Yeah, I left quickly, dad. Don’t worry about me!”, Jimin waved him off, secretly wishing that his father did worry about him, “Where is mom? I’m surprised to see you doing the dishes.” Jimin’s parents were rather traditional with the household roles. Omegas usually did the cooking and work at home and his mother took pride in handling the household. It had always given Jimin the idea that his future would look like that as well but he wasn’t so sure about that anymore. With Yoongi as a chef, Jimin supposed that he was the one doing the cooking while Jimin rested after an exhausting shift at the daycare. Jimin would, in exchange, clean the dishes and treat his mate with a nice massage and lots of -

Wait, Jimin stopped his train of thought. Did I just think about my future with Yoongi? He quickly shook his head, trying to focus on reality again. He almost missed the look Jihyun and their father exchanged before his father answered in a lower tone.

“She’s not feeling too well and I started helping her with the chores…”

Jimin felt his stomach twist and fill with dread. He had been having a weird feeling for some time now and this confirmed his suspicions.

“Is she okay? Is she sick? Why is she not feeling well?”, Jimin asked worriedly, gaze flickering between the other two.

“She’s not sick, don’t worry about that”, Jihyun reassured with a sigh, “I just think she has a lot on her mind.”

“What does that mean? Can you guys stop talking in riddles and tell me what’s going on?”, Jimin pressed further, glaring at his father who avoided meeting his eyes. After a deep sigh, the alpha finally talked.

“After you started to get courted by Sungwoon, we quickly lost touch with you and… your mother and I didn’t know how to handle that. We knew you weren’t comfortable with the situation but
intervening would have had a lot of consequences for us, given that his father is the pack alpha. We saw Jihyun suffer because of your courtship and wanted to be there for him while we knew our other son wasn’t feeling too well either. Your mother felt very conflicted at that time.”

Jimin’s breath came out sharply and his heart beat wildly in his chest. Did his father just say that they knew he didn’t love Sungwoon? It felt like a slap to his face and Jimin wondered how they could have ignored his situation if they had been aware of how horrible it was for him. He swallowed down the lump in his throat and motioned for his father to go on, trying his best to hold back his anger until his father finished explaining the situation. Jimin deserved answers.

“We tried to just give it some time, maybe Sungwoon would break up the courtship or you and Jihyun would make up. But then the head omega had a conversation with your mother and told her about you mating soon and your mother felt incredibly guilty. She thought it was our fault and -”


“Oh, we thought you knew. We were surprised you didn’t tell us but we haven’t been in contact much so...”, his father responded, looking less outraged than Jimin had wanted.

“There is no mating”, Jimin growled, blood boiling, “And even if there was, how did you not even think of talking to me about it? You knew I didn't love Sungwoon, you knew! So instead of talking to me, helping your son to escape from a forced mating, you suffer in silence about not helping me?”

“Your mother is feeling horrible, Jimin!”

“Stop making me feel guilty for something that wasn’t in my hand! It’s not my fault she felt guilty and it’s not my fault you decided to leave me alone throughout this whole mess! I’m glad you two were here for Jihyung but I needed you back then, dad. I needed you and mom to just be there for me, I don’t want to see you feel guilty for something you never even tried to make right.” Jimin was shaking, his face hot and tears stinging in his eyes. He was sick of feeling guilty, sick of suppressing his feelings, sick of not voicing what he thought.

“It’s not as easy as you make it to be!”, his father hissed, gaze harsh.

“Do you think it was easy for me?” Jimin laughed bitterly. He could hear his heartbeat loud in his ears.
“Your mother felt awful about the situation! All those years, she felt terrible!”

“Tell me, do you think it was easy for me? All those damn years, do you think they were all love and sunshine for me? I absolutely hate that she suffers but why did you two never even talk to me about it?”

The silence answered all his questions and Jimin felt his heart break behind his ribcage. Guilt didn’t mean that someone regretted their actions, just that they felt bad for them. Guilt didn’t mean someone cared. Guilt didn’t require love.

“Would you have acted differently if you had the chance to go back?”, Jimin asked quietly, gaze not leaving his father.

“I don’t know. I hate to see your mother suffer like that but there was little we could do.” Jimin appreciated his honesty, finally knowing what he had wanted to know all this time.

“You could have been there for me.”

Jimin left the hut rather quickly, letting the tears stream down his face. When Jihyun caught up to him, Jimin quickly reassured him that everything was still fine between them but he needed some time to think. He wished he could talk to Taehyung, could cry into his best friend’s shoulder. Jimin walked where his feet led him to, his blurry vision not allowing him to see where he was going. Everything hurt and Jimin just wanted to run away.

“Jimin?”

Jimin’s heart whipped up, eyes blinking a few times until he saw who stood before him. The scent of pines suddenly reached his senses and Jimin gasped as he ran into Yoongi’s arms.

“Hey, hey, what happened?”, Yoongi asked, instantly wrapping his arms around him, “How did you even find me here, I was just wandering around.”
“I just walked. I don’t know how I got to you but I’m so glad you’re here”, Jimin sniffed into his shoulder, tightening his hold around Yoongi’s frame.

Yoongi held Jimin until he calmed down and brushed his hand soothingly through his hair. He whispered that everything would be alright and that Jimin wasn’t alone, fixing Jimin’s heart without even knowing it. Jimin told him what happened, trusted Yoongi with his deepest wounds and let the alpha praise him on how well Jimin handled all of this. Yoongi managed to make Jimin feel strong instead of weak, to make him believe that he could handle all of this. They sat behind a hut, far away from anybody else and simply talked. And with every passing moment, Jimin fell a little bit more for the unusual alpha.
Seokjin sighed as he washed his hands in the small sink of the bathroom. He had treated patients since he had woken up and felt his muscles ache. He usually didn’t get exhausted easily but the attack had brought more injured pack members than there had ever been before. He looked up and saw his reflection in the dirty mirror, saw the dark circles under his eyes and his sweaty fringe sticking to his forehead. He craved a warm bath more than anything but people needed help and that had priority.

Going out of the bathroom, Seokjin let out a long yawn, rubbing his eyes that had already started to burn. He really needed some sleep.

“You should rest.”

Seokjin turned around to see Namjoon casually leaning against the wall, a tired smile on his face. The alpha had been helping as much as he could and Seokjin had been incredibly thankful.
“Tell that to yourself, mister. When was the last time you have seen your pillow?” Seokjin argued with a raised brow, reaching out to brush his hand through Namjoon’s messed up hair.

“I’ll sleep if you sleep, how does that sound?”, Namjoom murmured, grinning lazily at Seokjin. He took Seokjin’s hand from his hair and led it to his mouth, pressing a gentle kiss into his palm.

“That sounds amazing but is sadly not possible, love.” They intertwined their fingers slowly, feeling warm and comfortable despite the chaos waiting for them.

“Have you heard from Hoseok? House-visits can be stressful”, Seokjin asked, gaze still on their intertwined hands. Namjoon’s thumb was rubbing soft patterns into his skin and it caused his stomach to tickle a little.

“No, he’s been pretty busy. I’ll bring him some lunch and force him to rest a little.” Seokjin hummed and took a step back, preparing himself mentally for the next load of work.

“Give him cuddles for me, please?”, he pouted, missing his mate immensely. It had been way too long since they had been snuggling under their blanket, simply holding each other close.

“Will do, Jinnie”, Namjoon promised, leaning in to press a firm kiss onto Seokjin’s lips, “Don’t overwork yourself, okay?”

“No promises”, Seokjin chuckled with a stupid wide grin on his face. He watched as Namjoon shook his head fondly while he left the infirmary.

For a moment it was peacefully quiet and Seokjin let himself take a deep breath. Most people were eating or resting and the hallway was finally empty, no panicked alphas and omegas running from room to room. He visibly flinched when the main door suddenly swung open with a loud thud. Sungwoon walked over to him with a rigid posture and Seokjin stopped himself rolling his eyes. This kid really took the “being an alpha” act way too seriously.

“Did you see Min Yoongi?”, Sungwoon asked sternly.

“Oh, hello Sungwoon. I’m not sure if you’re aware but this is not an information shelter but an infirmary.” Seokjin smiled sweetly at the spoiled alpha, knowing the pack couldn’t afford to get rid of their best medic and head of the infirmary. Seokjin was pretty much untouchable and he wished
the same applied to his two lovers, otherwise he would have made their relationship public a long time ago.

“It is urgent. My father wishes to speak to Min Yoongi. Have you seen him or am I wasting my time here?”

“Ah, the pack alpha. Is he alright? I haven’t seen him yesterday.” Seokjin wasn’t actually surprised that the pack alpha had been the first person to run from the attack. He had always known that the whole the-pack-alpha-fights-for-his-pack saying was nothing more than an empty promise to make people feel safe but he personally didn’t blame the alpha for escaping the situation as quickly as possible. He would have run away with a high-pitched scream and his hands in the air the second an attack happened.

“He is very busy finding a solution to keep his pack safe”, Sungwoon answered through gritted teeth, frustration and maybe even shame in his tone. Seokjin decided he teased the boy enough and let out a short sigh, folding his arms over his chest.

“Why don’t I look for Yoongi and you rest, hm? Your wounds haven’t healed yet and you worked way too much yesterday.” He waited as Sungwoon seemed to think about it with a concentrated frown on his face.

“I’m sure he’s not with Jimin”, Seokjin added, giving Sungwoon a knowing look when his head whipped up.

“I know he’s not. Jimin is with his family. And he should know better than to waste his time with that alpha anyway”, Sungwoon scoffed before he continued reluctantly, “Fine. You can look for him. I’ll rest for a bit but I have to leave soon so don’t look for me. Just tell Min Yoongi my father wants to speak to him.”

“I’ll do as you command, your majesty”, Seokjin singsonged, bowing exaggeratedly. He laughed as Sungwoon hurried to his room and slammed the door shut, seeing this conversation as a little victory. *The kid deserved it*, Seokjin thought before he started working again.

It was a little while later that Seokjin had some free time and decided to look for Yoongi. He knew Yoongi was restless because of the attack of his former pack and his brother’s mating and hoped Yoongi was smart enough not to run through the forest. It was dangerous for him at that moment, even if another attack wouldn’t be expected so soon. Seokjin put his coat on before he stepped into
the cold and wondered when winter would finally be over. It seemed like ages to him that he had
seen the ground not covered in white but he partly blamed the events of the past month for that. It
hadn’t been long since Yoongi and Jungkook had been found and it somehow had turned all of their
lives upside down.

He walked through the pack for a while and got a little impatient. If Yoongi had ended up going into
the woods, Seokjin would be ready to rip his head off and send it to the Shin pack himself, even if he
was fairly sure Jimin would seek revenge for it. He chuckled, thinking about how many people
underestimated Jimin. Seokjin had been doubtful of Jimin at first too, had thought he was too weak
to ever be fit to be the head omega of the pack. But the more he got to know the younger, the more
he started to respect him. Jimin hid a lot of his feelings in order to keep the people around himself
safe and Seokjin was sure that once the volcano inside Jimin erupted, all hell would break loose.

A breeze brought a whiff of pines and jasmine flowers with it and Seokjin halted in his steps. He
sniffed, trying to figure out where it came from. His sense of smell had been trained for his job
because one’s scent could tell a lot about their health and that’s why Seokjin could easily smell
Yoongi’s and Jimin’s scents from a little further away. Following the trace, the alpha wondered why
Sungwoon was under the impression Jimin was with his family when he currently didn’t seem to be
with them. He knew the situation between Sungwoon, Jimin, and Yoongi was difficult but if Jimin
and Yoongi met secretly, things were probably worse than he had expected.

To his surprise, Seokjin was led to the old hut of an elderly couple of the pack. There had been a fire
once which destroyed a big part of it and the residents had moved to another hut. Seokjin had talked
to the head omega about fixing it and letting Yoongi or Jungkook and Taehyung live there but the
head omega only stated that they would have to fix it themselves if they wanted to move in.

“Yoongi, I won’t let him dictate how I live my life”, Seokjin suddenly heard Jimin’s voice murmur,
“He cannot stop me from seeing you.”

Seokjin suspected them to be at the back of the house and hid behind the corner. He didn’t want to
pry but somehow couldn’t bring himself to reveal his presence just yet.

“I don’t want you to get hurt because of me. I couldn’t- I could never be that selfish”, Yoongi said in
a low voice, hurt evident in his words.

“He can’t hurt me any more, don’t you see? I won’t let his words get to me. Sungwoon isn’t violent,
he doesn’t hurt me physically but emotionally. And I won’t let him any more. I am trying to get away
from him, just give me some time.”
A wave of pride rushed through Seokjin, the corners of his lips curling upwards. He knew Jimin would fight for his happiness one day, he just needed some time.

“I wish I could protect you from him. I wish I could just fight him—”

“Please don’t”, Jimin interrupted Yoongi urgently, “Promise me to never fight Sungwoon. This would only put you in danger and cause all other alphas from the pack to attack you. You can’t leave Jungkook and me here alone, okay? If I mean anything to you, please let me handle Sungwoon. Promise me, Yoongi.”

As an alpha, Seokjin understood Yoongi’s need to protect Jimin from Sungwoon. But considering the consequences it would bring, Seokjin had to agree with Jimin. It would put not only Yoongi himself in danger, but Jimin and his family too, as well as Jungkook and with him, inevitably Taehyung. Everyone associated with Yoongi would automatically suffer from it and Seokjin hoped Yoongi had enough self restraint to not start a fight with Sungwoon.

“You’re right. I trust you to handle this on your own”, Yoongi sighed and Seokjin could practically see Jimin’s wide smile at the words. He was glad Yoongi could see Jimin’s point and praised him internally.

“Thank you, that means a lot to me.”

Seokjin wondered if now was a good time to show himself. He wasn’t sure if Jimin and Yoongi were completely safe here and wouldn’t want a noisy pack member to listen in on them. A noisy pack member other than him, that is.

“Can I just-”, Yoongi suddenly spoke up again and Seokjin cursed himself for taking too long to think, “Can I maybe hold your hand? He won’t smell my scent on you when we hold hands and I just- I think- I mean -” His rambling was suddenly cut off and Seokjin wondered what happened. It was quiet for a moment and he felt a little guilty for being entertained by this.

“Your hand is so big. I can barely see my fingers”, Jimin chuckled quietly and Seokjin clutched his chest at the innocent sweetness of this moment. He really didn’t want to spoil the moment but if anybody were to find them holding hands it would have harsh consequences and Seokjin couldn’t be reckless about that. He heaved a sigh, grimaced at himself for having to ruin their hand-holding and quickly walked around the corner.
Jimin and Yoongi both jumped and quickly entangled their hands, deep blushes on both of their cheeks. Seokjin wondered how they hadn’t even noticed his scent lingering near but figured that they had probably been too focused on each other.

“The pack alpha wants to speak to you. I would hurry if I were you”, Seokjin informed Yoongi and suppressed a smile at the way the alpha was gaping at him.

“Uh, yeah. I’ll go then.” Yoongi quickly stood up from the small bench where he and Jimin had been sitting and walked away, but not before giving Seokjin a short, awkward nod. Seokjin watched him hurry away with a smile on his face before he sat down next to Jimin and leaned back against the wall of hut.

“How long have you been here?”, Jimin hesitantly asked and Seokjin almost cooed.

“A while. Didn’t want to ruin your moment but you two really should be careful. The pack has eyes everywhere.” He decided that honesty was the best policy, even if he could see the panic in Jimin’s eyes as the omega’s head whipped around.

“Oh my God, please don’t tell anyone. You must think I’m horrible and that I’m betraying Sungwoon, please don’t think that of me!”

“Hey, don’t worry”, Seokjin hushed him gently, “I am not judging you. I think everyone from our small group could see that there was some kind of chemistry between the both of you and we all know you aren’t happy with Sungwoon. It’s your life and your business. I will be honest, if you were in a courtship with anybody else, I would have advised you to be honest instead of hurting the other one further. But I know the situation with Sungwoon is more complicated than that.” Jimin swallowed thickly before he nodded, eyes glassy.

“It is. Please don’t tell Yoongi but the head omega even told my parents Sungwoon and I were going to mate soon. I didn’t know a thing about it”, Jimin whispered. Seokjin gasped, feeling his blood boil instantly.

“They cannot do that. This is not their decision to make, they cannot simply claim that you will mate. Jimin, please know that you don’t have to do it.”

“I won’t do it, don’t worry. I still officially have the ‘condition’ so I have a little time left to figure out
how to get rid of him. I’m thinking of getting him to fall for someone else.” The confidence in Jimin’s eyes calmed Seokjin down. He was glad the omega wouldn’t let Sungwoon mate him like that and was proud of him for trying to find a plan, even when his chances to succeed weren’t high.

“That’s good. But it could be difficult finding someone because every other omega knows that Sungwoon is courting you. You would have to trust them with the information that you don’t want Sungwoon any more without that omega telling anybody else. It’s very risky.”

“I know… If I approach someone, do you think I should be confident or shy? What would be better?”

“First confident, then shy”, Seokjin answered without missing a beat, “Be confident to gain their respect and show them that what you have to say is of importance. If you are softer afterwards, they will feel like they broke your hard shell and feel special that you trust them with their feelings.” Jimin’s eyes widened for a second before he slowly nodded, looking determined.

“But I do have a question, Jimin”, Seokjin added, furrowing his brows. It was technically none of his business but they were both his friends and he didn’t want anyone to get hurt.

“Why do you keep it a secret from Yoongi? Honesty is fundamental for a healthy relationship between two people and I think keeping this from him could be hurtful to him.” Jimin nibbled on his lower lip, looking conflicted. He sighed and leaned back against the wall, gaze up in the sky.

“It’s for his own good. I trust Yoongi with his temper but I don’t want to risk making the situation worse than it is. We both know Yoongi and Sungwoon only look for a reason to fight and I can’t let it happen. Besides, I can handle this without him.”

“Oh, I believe you”, Seokjin chuckled before he took a moment to consider Jimin’s words. He couldn’t deny that the tension was nearly explosive and that adding to it could be extremely dangerous. However, Seokjin was naturally a very honest person and knew that talking things out was the healthiest way of communicating. “I won’t tell you how to behave but please don’t bury yourself under white lies. Even if you do it for his benefit, don’t forget to keep things open and honest between you two. I think it would be a shame if the two of you were to grow apart because of Sungwoon.”

“I will. Thank you.”
Seokjin stretched his arms out in front of him, letting a low groan escape his lips at the ache in his muscles. He sat upright, rolling his stiff shoulders before he turned to Jimin with a smile on his face.

“Shall we go back?”

“I have one more thing to ask you”, Jimin stopped him, a worried frown on his face. His lip was caught between his teeth again and Seokjin had half the mind to scold him for this nervous habit.

“Okay...” Jimin suddenly turned his whole body so that he faced him and bend forward slightly. He looked dead serious and Seokjin questioned what could be the matter for the sudden change in mood. He instinctively bend forward too, knowing this would be important.

“I don’t know what it is or how to explain it but I sometimes feel a... pull in my chest. Like something is leading me on. And for some very weird and inexplicable reason I think it is connected to Yoongi. I have never felt it before I met him!” Seokjin pulled back a little, eyes wide. He had suspected something but he had never been sure if it was actually possible.

“Can you tell me more about it? When do you feel it and how does it connect to Yoongi exactly?”

“Sometimes it feels like my natural instinct, it’s very intuitive and feels very right, if that makes sense”, Jimin elaborated, laying his palm softly over his own chest, “It’s very strong when I am around Yoongi. I sometimes think I can feel his pain or sense his emotions. Taehyung has told me myths about soulmates and whatnot but that cannot be, right? Those were just tales, were they not?”

Seokjin closed his eyes and rubbed his temples, trying to remember what exactly he had read about it years back. He had done some research for an essay on instincts and animalistic tendencies they kept even in their human form and found it incredibly interesting. He had ended up not using it at all because there wasn’t much information to cover the topic but he still remembered some things.

“The concept of soulmates and being magically connected since birth is indeed a myth, yes. But it originated from something close to it, something that is rare but very possible. We call it soulbound and it comes from our hybrid ancestors. Now, I don’t remember everything but I have a book somewhere that has more information on this. Basically, when our bodies feel like they are in danger, they form a connection with another wolf. Our instincts are very sensitive to those bonds and I think it is even close to a mating bond.” Jimin gasped loudly and Seokjin quickly tried to reassure him.

“I don’t actually know if it is as final as a mating bond. It’s not something that keeps you two
together or forces you to want to be close, it’s rather just helping you sense the other one’s pain. I will do more research on this but it sounds plausible from what you just told me.” Seokjin made a mental note to go to the library later, he was sure there had to be further information about this. He was so lost in his own thoughts that he barely just noticed the helpless look on Jimin’s face.

“But… it just doesn’t make sense…”, the omega muttered under his breath and Seokjin felt bad for his friend, reaching out to rub his back soothingly.

“Maybe you felt so uncomfortable around Sungwoon that your body formed this bond to Yoongi, hm?” he suggested, trying to be as gentle as he could.

“But why Yoongi? There are so many alphas in the pack and it started before I even properly knew him.” Seokjin hummed at that, not entirely sure how it worked either. He didn’t even know if there was enough research done about it to explain the bonds.

“It could be that your instincts were a bit faster than you in judging Yoongi. There are a few things our bodies pick up that our minds don’t see at first.”

“Does that mean that I don’t actually like Yoongi? That it’s just this bond that makes me feel like that?” Jimin looked up at him with round eyes, causing Seokjin’s heart to melt. He gave the omega a warm smile.

“No, you do like him. As far as I can remember, those bonds can also be platonic and even between family members. It isn’t a romantic bond like a mating bond is. So, if you do like Yoongi more than a friend, it may be because he’s a big softie that cooks for his brother and writes cheesy poems while having the mouth of a bratty five year old. Plus, he cares and exceptionally so for you and Jungkook. I believe there isn’t a thing Yoongi wouldn’t sacrifice for the people he cares about and that is something you two share. You go the extra mile for the people you love.” A ghost of a smile sat on Jimin’s lips as he seemed to take Seokjin’s words in, considering what he said. After a moment of silence, Jimin nodded slightly before his smile turned wider.

“He does have the mouth of a bratty five year old, huh?”, Jimin laughed and Seokjin couldn’t help but to laugh with him.

It was already deep into the night when Seokjin did his last round before going off. His body craved
some rest and he wouldn’t help anyone if he was too tired to properly work. He knocked on the last room, mouth stretching into a yawn. When no response came back, Seokjin knocked again, this time a little louder. He was impatient and craved his bed. After waiting for another couple of minutes, Seokjin got worried and slowly opened the door. All patients should be in bed during this time and it was extremely odd to not give any response.

“Hello?”, he called into the room but it seemed to be empty. The scent of burnt wood lingered in the air but Sungwoon was nowhere to be seen. Seokjin stepped inside, looking into the bathroom but did also not find any sign of the alpha. Sungwoon was supposed to still be resting and leaving for the night usually implied something that did not involve resting.

Seokjin suddenly noticed another scent in the bathroom. He wasn’t sure what it was or if he knew that person well. Sniffing, he walked into the main room again, trying to find things that smelled like an unknown omega. It was very faint but it clung to certain clothes and objects and Seokjin couldn’t help but to pick up a few clothing items and smell them.

“Here you are.”

He jumped with a screech and whirled around, letting the sweater in his hands fall to the ground. Hoseok stared at him with a raised brow before he crouched down and examined Sungwoon’s sweater.

“I never knew you were into Sungwoon’s scent. Are you planning on adding a third alpha into our relationship, babe?”, the omega teased and Seokjin whined loudly, kicking him without any force.

“Believe me, Sungwoon would be the last person on earth I would want to be close to. I just tried to spy a little for our Jiminie.” Hoseok didn’t seem surprised as he stood up and led Seokjin out of the room.

“I think we need to trust Jimin to handle this without you sniffing Sungwoon’s clothes. I don’t want you getting into trouble”, Hoseok said in a scolding tone as he closed the door behind them.

“They can’t do anything to me, this place needs me- okay, don’t look at me like that, Jung Hoseok. I know you’re a good medic but you just don’t have the magic hands like I do.”

“Why do I sense a double meaning?”
“Because there is always a double meaning with me, baby.”

Hoseok huffed but couldn’t hide his smile as he grabbed Seokjin’s hand and dragged him outside. Seokjin let his mate pull him to the door, chuckling to himself.

“Are you in a hurry?”, he asked with an amused smile on his lips.

“Gotta show you what magic my hands can do”, Hoseok winked, causing Seokjin’s excitement to spike.

They somehow made it to their hut, hands all over each other. Seokjin was tired but also longed for this and he decided he could spare a little time before he rested. He knew Hoseok’s body like the back of his hand and even if it was exciting and new to experience being close to Namjoon, he also loved being just with Hoseok. Their love ran deep and no matter how much their work stood in the way, Seokjin and Hoseok always tried to find time for one another. Seokjin had worried at first, before he had known Namjoon, whether he would lose Hoseok to another alpha despite their mating. But hearing Hoseok whisper his name and feeling his urgent and yet gentle touch, made all of those past worries turn into dust. Their love didn’t change, if anything it just expanded and made room for another person.

The thought of Namjoon caused Seokjin’s heart to flutter and he let out a breathy moan, the name of the alpha escaping his lips. Hoseok and him had talked about that before and they both liked including Namjoon into their intimate moments, thinking about him even if he wasn’t there. So sometimes it happened that one of them would whimper his name or both of them moan it, imagining Namjoon there with them. Seokjin had to fight his inner alpha to hear Hoseok’s voice call another alpha at first but his own pleasure dominated the jealousy.

Seokjin felt all too much at once and let his eyes flutter shut afterwards. It didn’t take him long to be half asleep as he held Hoseok close, pressing his nose into his scent gland.

“I love you”, Seokjin sighed sleepily.

“I love you too, babe.”
Jimin wondered how Taehyung was doing. His and Jungkook’s mating must have been the night before so the two of them probably felt the full effect of their mating bond by now. Jimin wanted to know whether it was painful, if they managed to talk things out before or what their hut looked like. It hadn’t even been a full day but Jimin missed his best friend immensely. He also had to admit that he noticed Jungkook’s absence and it only pointed out how present he had been in Jimin’s life before.

Jimin lied in his bed, ordered by Seokjin to properly rest but his mind swirled with restless thoughts and worries, the word soulbound not wanting to leave his head. He wanted to find out more but didn’t want to rush Seokjin to get him the book the alpha had been talking about. In a way, Jimin felt excited about it. He and Yoongi shared something special, something extraordinary that no one could take away from them. However, Jimin couldn’t help but think it was also awfully tragic. He was doomed to be mated to Sungwoon while his feelings for Yoongi intensified. It only encouraged him more to go through with his plan to make Sungwoon leave him but he was aware of how risky it was.

However, Jimin had a gut feeling that he should find out more about Sunhee. He barely knew anything about her but the way she acted around Sungwoon was suspicious enough to look further
into their relationship. A spark of hope lit up in his chest, bringing a light buzz to his fingertips. Jimin knew he didn’t have much time left, he needed to hurry if he wanted to succeed.

Someone suddenly knocked on his door and Jimin tiredly sat up, hoping it wasn’t Sungwoon. He called them in and felt instantly better when Jihyun peeked in.

“Hey, were you sleeping? I can come back later”, Jihyun said timidly but Jimin quickly shook his head.

“Come in.” Jimin patted the spot on the edge of the bed and felt his heart break a little at how relieved Jihyun looked as he sat down. Jimin knew they only just made up and he didn’t want to worry Jihyun about breaking off the contact again.

“How’re you holding up?”, the alpha asked, scrunching his nose. Jimin could sense what Jihyun was talking about but he truly didn’t want to talk about it, trying desperately to stop his mind to overanalyse every interaction he has had with his parents over the past years.

“Oh, I’ll survive”, he shrugged, hoping they could leave it at that. He tried to change the topic. “I have the urge to do something but I don’t know what. Seokjin already said if he sees my face at the infirmary before tomorrow, he’ll feed me to the Shin pack as an omeglette.” They both snorted at that, knowing it was a very Kim Seokjin thing to say.

“I also can’t rest properly with how things are at the moment… can’t you go to the daycare? You probably have to start working there again soon anyway”, Jihyun suggested, raising his brows.

“No, most parents are keeping their kids at home today”, Jimin sighed, hating to think about how scared the pups must have been because of the attack, “Namjoon said everyone is waiting for a statement from a pack alpha and they’ll mostly all stay inside until then.”

“Oh. I see… How are things with Sungwoon?”

Jimin’s eyes widened at that, a thought suddenly entering his mind that he hadn’t considered before.

“Jihyun, do you know a Sunhee? She’s your age so you probably went to school together”, Jimin asked, questioning why he didn’t think about the link to Jihyun earlier. His brother averted his gaze, looking thoughtful.
“Mhh yeah, I went to school with her but we didn’t hang out with the same people. She’s a nice girl but her group of friends was all about status and they were very… proud. They thought we are the ‘greatest’ pack and they all idealized the pack alpha and his family.” Jimin had to admit he wasn’t surprised at all. There had always been at least one of those groups who had a superiority complex about the pack and felt unnecessarily proud about it. Jimin was glad that Jihyun stayed far away from them.

“It makes sense, considering I’ve seen her with Sungwoon recently. Do you know how to get any information about her?” Jihyun’s eyes widened comically but he nodded quickly afterwards.

“There’s this girl I’m friends with, she’s an alpha. She works with Sunhee in the main house, they both do the paperwork there and I could ask her if she knows anything… What are you planning exactly?” Jihyun furrowed his brows which only caused Jimin to grin wide.

“You know what? We’re going to ask her right now. You are officially helping me now to get rid of Sungwoon.”

Yoongi tried to keep his face neutral, suppressing all urges to clench his jaw or glare at the man in front of him. The pack alpha was currently holding a speech about how Yoongi was obligated to defend the Ha pack in case of another attack, even if it meant hurting the members of his former pack. It sounded all incredibly ironic to Yoongi, given that the pack alpha had been the first one to run away during the attack. But he didn’t want to start a fight or discussion so he kept his mouth shut and nodded at whatever the pack alpha had to say. There was another alpha next to the pack alpha who only ever agreed with him every few minutes but otherwise didn’t seem to add any input to this conversation. Yoongi wondered if the man was only there to intimidate Yoongi or if he was supposed to save the pack alpha in case Yoongi tried to harm him. Whatever it was, Yoongi thought the way they acted was ridiculous and he was ready to finally leave and get back to Jimin again.

Jimin. It was almost shocking how butterflies seemed to tickle Yoongi’s stomach as soon as the omega’s face popped up in his mind. His bright smile, his beautiful eyes, his soft voice, simply everything about him caused Yoongi to feel giddy and excited and warm. Yoongi would have been
scared of how drastically affected he was by Park Jimin but he simply felt too content in the omega’s presence to worry about that. Of course, Yoongi wasn’t naive about their situation. He knew Sungwoon was still in the picture, knew Jimin had a lot to figure out still and was definitely aware that there were other battles to win first. However, there were a few moments where all these obstacles just vanished into thin air, replaced by soft touches and rosy cheeks.

“Do you understand, Min Yoongi?”

Yoongi snapped out of his thoughts, blinking perplexedly at the pack alpha. The man had his hands intertwined on top of the wooden table between them, eyebrows deeply furrowed.

“Uh, yes, Sir. I completely understand.”

“Good”, the pack alpha sighed, “Now, tell me what you know about the attack strategies of the Shin pack.”

“They have strong fighters because they only focus on a few alphas and train them well. Not everyone learns how to fight which would be an advantage if we ever go on attack-”

“We won’t attack”, the pack alpha interrupted Yoongi, much to his surprise. It only made sense to at least consider it, if the Shin pack ends up attacking them over and over again.

“Why not? They could seriously harm people. Their wolves are way stronger than ours, in case you haven’t noticed.”

“I did notice how the wolves looked that hurt the majority of my pack”, the alpha hissed back, “But as you said earlier, they only wanted to scare us and see if you and your brother were here. They are out to only get two of the pack members and it would be more damaging if we attacked them and risked the lives of many more.” Yoongi gaped at the man, not sure he heard right. The pack alpha seemed to not even care what happened to the pack and only tried to save himself from fighting. He had known the man was a coward but this truly baffled him.

“As you wish… We should definitely get a good defence team then and make sure the hunters know how to stop the wolves from entering the pack. We could also trade with them, I know what the pack is lacking that we have plenty of”, Yoongi suggested, knowing the pack alpha from the Shin pack would do anything for certain trades.
“No, we can’t afford to give out free resources. We make good deals and our status shouldn’t be ruined for this. And the hunters have enough to do, they can’t learn even more.”

And that was when Yoongi realised that the pack alpha didn’t want to do anything. He didn’t care if the wolves killed him and Jungkook, he didn’t even care if they hurt his own pack, as long as he and his family were save. Yoongi wouldn’t be surprised if the pack alpha already made a deal with the Shin pack to leave him alone and not kill anybody else from the pack.

“I know one more thing”, Yoongi said slowly, hoping the pack alpha would take the bait, “I know that the Shin pack wants to expand their fighters, make an army for themselves to rob other packs. Me and Jungkook are excellent fighters, like our parents. They wanted to turn us into one of those fighter-wolves and that is why we ran away. If they catch us, they will most likely use us to attack this pack.” It was a lie but by the way the pack alpha’s frown seemed to morph into a shocked expression, Yoongi knew he succeeded.

“You swore loyalty to this pack, Min Yoongi.”

“I did but for as long as I am safe here. I cannot tell what will happen if the Shin pack catches me or my brother.”

“It won’t come to that”, the pack alpha answered a little too quickly, “I will think of something for a strategy.” Yoongi didn’t know for how long he could save himself with this lie but it seemed to have helped for now. He believed that the Ha pack will offer the Shin Pack something to at least keep them off for a while until the pack alpha knows more about the situation. This was good enough for now.

“Then we have discussed everything.”

The pack alpha motioned for Yoongi to leave but he suddenly remembered something he had wanted to ask. Yoongi was tired of running into Sungwoon in the infirmary and without Jungkook it all felt less like a home anyway. Yoongi needed some of his privacy again and the infirmary wasn’t fit to be a permanent home.

“There is one more thing I wanted to discuss, pack alpha. I’ve been sleeping in the infirmary ever since I arrived here and think it’s time to move. I am wasting the space someone that is actually hurt could use and I can’t live there forever anyway.” The alpha in front of him seemed to frown even deeply in response, mouth quirking into a grimace.
“Don’t you think we have more important matters to focus on?”, he argued but Yoongi didn’t let that stop him.

“There is a burned down hut a little east from here. I don’t know who it belonged to but I believe I could rebuild it. I just need the necessary resources and I can work on the hut whenever I am not working in the kitchens. I’m sure Seokjin would be glad if we wouldn’t occupy a room without proper reason and when I’m perfectly capable to work on it. Besides, I doubt the pack can trust me as a member when I’m still not living in my own home.” Yoongi internally patted his own shoulder, proud of himself for explaining this calmly. He could see the pack alpha’s thoughts spinning in his head as the silence stretched between them. Eventually, the alpha cleared his throat before he straightened his back.

“Fine. I’ll let a few alphas bring you the necessities within the next days but this is your responsibility. I’ll expect from you to not slack in your work because of this. You may leave now.”

“Thank you”, Yoongi answered quickly, glad to finally have his own space soon. He wondered if Jimin could come to visit him then without being scared that Sungwoon would suddenly appear and he couldn’t wait to have relaxed evenings by the fire with Namjoon, Hoseok or Seokjin. Taehyung and Jungkook could also always visit him and they could cook together and talk and laugh-

Yoongi realised he was still in the pack alpha’s office and quickly stood up and left. It was already dark outside, Yoongi noticed, as he stepped out into the cold. He wasn’t sure if he would be disturbing Jimin if he looked for him now but he had a lot on his mind after the meeting and wanted to talk about it. He walked towards the infirmary when he suddenly caught a whiff of Jimin’s scent from another direction. Following the trail, Yoongi was surprised to see Jimin and Jihyun crouching behind a fallen log. The two of them were in a deep discussion and didn’t seem to notice him as he slowly approached.

“What are you two doing?”

Both of their heads hastily snapped towards him, their eyes widening and lips parting in surprise. The brothers looked very similar, unlike Jungkook and him, and Yoongi found it oddly entertaining seeing both of them with the same startled expression on their faces.

“Yoongi!”, Jimin then gasped as he snapped out of his state. The omega was up in a second and wrapped his arms around Yoongi’s shoulders in a quick but tight hug. “How was it? I hope he wasn’t rude to you?”

“It was fine but I’ll tell you later. What were you two doing behind the log?” Jimin tried to look
nonchalant but Yoongi saw right through him. Jihyun warily stood up as well, busying himself with wiping the snow from his trousers. Something was definitely up and even though it was amusing at first, Yoongi slowly started to worry now.

“We’re just bonding. Got a lot to talk about”, Jimin shrugged and Yoongi felt his stomach turn; he didn’t like being lied to. Especially not by Jimin.

“I won’t force you to tell me but please don’t lie to me, Jimin.” The hurt must have shown in Yoongi’s eyes because Jimin seemed to practically melt under his gaze, his shoulders slacking and a defeated sigh escaping his lips.

“You are right, sorry. I promise I will tell you but not now. Jihyun and I are just… observing something.”

“Observing something?”, Yoongi repeated, praying Jimin and Jihyun wouldn’t get themselves into trouble.

“It’s about Sungwoon but that’s all I’m going to say”, Jimin said in a quieter tone, mirth in his eyes suddenly, “It could help me a lot… and us.”

Jimin looked at him with such intensity that Yoongi held his breath for a moment. If Jimin truly meant what Yoongi thought he meant, whatever Jimin was doing could possibly lift a huge weight from his shoulders. Despite his protective instinct, Yoongi decided to trust Jimin with this. The way the omega’s eyes sparkled was reason enough for that.

Jimin and Yoongi brought Jihyun home and decided to visit the burned down hut afterwards to talk privately. It was dark and cold but the both of them felt surprisingly comfortable sitting on an old couch, letting the moonlight shine on them through the window. Jimin was scared of any animals crawling around but Yoongi liked how this only caused Jimin to press into his side, almost snuggling into his shoulder.

“Are you sure it won’t be too much work to fix the hut? You’ll have to start working as a chef soon and it’s going to be stressful”, Jimin murmured, eyes wandering around the room. Yoongi knew that it wouldn’t be easy but he believed it would be worth it in the end.
“Just imagine this room coloured in a warm beige tone and large paintings on the walls, of the forest and lakes. There would be a fireplace right in front of us and we would be curled under a warm blanket. We wouldn’t sit on this old couch but a new, warm one and there would probably be the subtle smell of tea herbs in the air.” Yoongi could see it all before his eyes and he couldn’t help but to smile when Jimin hummed contently.

“That would be nice”, Jimin whispered, laying his head on Yoongi’s shoulder. It felt natural and good and Yoongi leaned further into Jimin as well. He wondered if they would often just stay like this once the hut was finished. He didn’t want to make things harder for Jimin but a part of him screamed to be selfish just this once. He wanted to be close to him, to not care about Sungwoon, to simply enjoy every second with him without having to worry. Yoongi hadn’t done anything for himself since he was a teenager and something inside of him longed to have this. To have this moment, the proximity, the scent of Jimin right there.

But Yoongi knew that if there was one person that didn’t deserve his selfishness, it was Jimin. Yoongi had pulled him through hell upon their first encounters, had hurt the omega over and over again with his words. And even if it did end up opening his eyes, as Yoongi had always wanted it to, he still didn’t treat Jimin as he deserved to be treated and Yoongi never wanted to cause Jimin any pain ever again. What if Sungwoon found out where Jimin was? What if Jimin started to regret lying to Sungwoon? What if the whole pack found out about the way Jimin and Yoongi felt about each other? Yoongi knew that Jimin would suffer, from Sungwoon’s actions, the pack’s judgement or his own self-destructive thoughts. And it would be his fault.

“I’m sorry”, he breathed, wanting to pull back but instinctively getting closer to Jimin.

“What for?”

When Yoongi didn’t answer, Jimin pulled back to look at him. His brows were pulled into a frown and his eyes filled with worry that made Yoongi feel even more guilty. He swallowed thickly, averting his gaze onto his lap.

“For not doing what’s best for you. It’s so risky being here with me and yet I didn’t even try to stop you. I ask you to hold my hand, I try to be as close to you as possible and I don’t even hide my anger towards Sungwoon. Anybody can see how inexplicably, stupidly and completely out of my mind crazy I am about you, Jimin. I don’t know what love is or how someone defines it but if I had to describe it right now the only thing I could think of would be you. So maybe I am in love, what do I know, but I definitely shouldn’t risk your happiness just because being with you makes me happy. Because it does, Jimin, it fucking does.”

Yoongi felt his heartbeat so loud in his ears, he didn’t even notice at first how Jimin gently cupped his cheeks. He turned Yoongi’s face towards him and leaned close, so close their noses were
touching softly. Jimin closed his eyes and Yoongi would do the same if he would be able to take his eyes off the omega. He was too beautiful, too warm, too Jimin to ever look away.

“Yoongi”, Jimin said quietly and Yoongi’s eyes fluttered close, despite Yoongi wanting to see, just simply giving in to the honey tone, “You are doing what’s best for me. You make me so, so happy. You helped me to finally break out of my illusion that I was content all along and made me see what it’s like to be respected, to be well treated and to be cared for. And I don’t care who sees how crazy you are about me because I want everyone to know. And hopefully, if everything goes to plan, I can soon show everyone how incredibly, inconceivably and absolutely happily in love I am with you. Because I don’t care what love actually is; to me, it is you.”

Happiness was a strange concept for Yoongi. How could something so wrong feel so right? How could something in the depth of chaos make him feel this good? He didn’t understand it but he knew that if happiness was a moment, it was this one. Sitting close to Jimin, foreheads touching and his hands warm on Yoongi's cheeks. He wasn’t sure what to expect from the future or even the next day but they would find out soon enough. For now, the only thing that mattered was holding Jimin as close as possible, careful not to scent him and hearing the steady beat of his heart.

Chapter End Notes

In case you think the "l-word" came too quickly, pls keep in mind that they aren't exposed to the standards from our society where you need to date for a while before saying it and whatnot :D They don't know what love exactly is (but who does, really? It's different for everybody) and to them, what they feel towards each other feels pretty much like love! <3
Familiar Eyes

Chapter Summary

...where Taehyung and Jungkook come back.

Chapter Notes

I am so sorry for updating so late :( I hope it won't happen again. Thank you all for your patience and support.

Special thanks to Rayne for beat reading <3

Oh, and if you want to, you can tell me what you would like to read in the next chapters! I have a plan of course but this story is slowly nearing the end and I want to know what kind of scenes you are looking forward to!

Enjoy :)

“Are you ready to face the pack again?”

Taehyung hummed, the sound muffled against Jungkook’s clothed chest. They were lying in their bed, feet tangled and blanket draped over them. Jungkook had his arms around him, their mixed scent lying pleasantly in the air, seeming familiar by now. The two of them spent a lot of evenings like that, lying in bed and cuddling each other, and even though Taehyung longed to go out again, he couldn’t imagine anything better than lying in Jungkook’s arms like that.

“I miss Jimin and my family. And going for a run in the woods, I really miss the fresh air. But I also want to stay with you, just like this. It makes me anxious to think about being separated from you”, Taehyung admitted and felt Jungkook’s hold around him tighten.
“Me too. God, me too. I don’t want to leave you but it will only be during work hours. We can still lay in bed like this every evening.” Jungkook nuzzled his nose into the crown of Taehyung’s hair, the gesture comforting for both of them. Taehyung let his eyes flutter close and tried to simply enjoy the proximity of his mate.

The past two weeks had been intense and more emotionally challenging than Taehyung had ever imagined. He and Jungkook had tried to slowly build the foundation of their relationship, made an effort to talk about everything on their mind and worked on their trust. But the effects of their mating made it hard to slow the process down; the constant need to be close to each other, to touch each other, to see the other was almost unbearable if it wasn’t so wonderful at the same time. Taehyung didn’t want to fight his instincts and purposely stay away from Jungkook so he tried to find compromises between respecting the alpha’s personal boundaries and giving in to the mating urges, like only holding his hand or resting his head on his lap. Jungkook did the same and always asked if Taehyung wanted to hug him or cuddle with him. It wasn’t easy but they both tried to do the best out of their situation.

One thing that had definitely brought them even closer was their first kiss. Even though they technically had their first kiss the night before the ceremony, Taehyung and Jungkook had wanted to wait for the perfect moment to have a second first-kiss. That moment had turned out to be exactly nine days after their mating, before the both of them went to bed. They had looked at each other, something lingering in the air that had been accompanying them since the day before. And somehow they had just moved towards each other, both knowing through their bond how much the other one was longing for it. It was all relatively innocent so far and even though Taehyung was ready to take the next step, he knew Jungkook wasn’t quite there yet and would patiently wait until they both wanted to.

“Are you scared to start hunting?”, Taehyung asked after a while, slightly pulling back to look at Jungkook. The alpha seemed to contemplate that for a moment before he answered.

“The hunting itself won’t be a problem. It’s more the group of hunters I’m uncomfortable with. I know Sungwoon and his group of friends aren’t too fond of me but Jihyun told me that some of the hunters aren’t that bad. I’ll try to stick to him.” A small, hopeful smile appeared on Jungkook’s face and Taehyung was glad his mate had something to look forward to. Hunting was his passion and Jungkook had probably missed it a lot.

“Maybe you can convince Jihyun to talk to Jimin again! Jimin doesn’t talk a lot about his family but I know they mean a lot to him. It all kind of fell apart when Sungwoon entered the picture”, Taehyung explained, frowning. He hated to not be able to talk to his best friend and simply prayed that Jimin was doing fine.

“I’ll keep it in mind”, Jungkook assured comfortingly and reached up to cup Taehyung’s cheek tenderly, “Don’t worry too much about him, okay? I am sure Jimin is alright. And he isn’t alone,
Seokjin, Namjoon and Hoseok are there with him. And Yoongi would rather die than to let Jimin be sad for even just a minute.” There was a flicker of mirth in Jungkook’s eyes that made Taehyung squint at him for a moment.

“What do you mean? Do you know something I don’t?” He raised his eyebrows teasingly, knowing Jungkook was horrible at keeping secrets. It took only around five seconds before Jungkook’s resolve crumbled and he sighed.

“Okay. So, I know my brother and I am almost completely sure he has the biggest crush on Jimin. He always looks at him when he scribbles in his notebook and doesn’t realise he is totally obvious. Plus, I can practically smell the tension between them.”

“Really?”, Taehyung gasped, eyes going wide, “I knew there was something between them but I can’t read Yoongi that well most of the time. Do you think something will happen between them? Or already has while we’re here?” Jungkook was quick to snort and shake his head.

“No way. Yoongi didn’t even have his first proper kiss yet and even if he had crushes, he never really acted on them or thought other things were more important. I feel like Yoongi is also scared since he doesn’t really know how to handle feelings like that… When he was a teenager he had to take care of me and he never had time to really deal with relationships, feelings, experiences.” There was a sad look in Jungkook’s eyes and Taehyung nuzzled his nose into his scent gland to soothe him. He knew Yoongi was the most important person in Jungkook’s life and that any pain his brother endured, hurt Jungkook just as much.

“It’s not that I feel guilty that he had to take care of me…”, Jungkook continued, leaning into Taehyung’s touch, “I just wish he could let someone take care of him as well. That he could just relax for a while and enjoy his time and be happy without having to deal with something. He deserves it, you know?”

“He does. I hope he will find that happiness”, Taehyung murmured and pressed a soft kiss on his mate’s lips. He didn’t want to upset Jungkook but Taehyung knew that if Yoongi truly did fall for Jimin, being happy wouldn’t be easy. Sungwoon was stubborn and prideful, to get him away from Jimin would take a lot more than just hoping things would sort themselves out on their own. Taehyung simply wished for the both of them that everything would work out, in the end.

Taehyung had a hard time falling asleep that night. He felt as if he had just closed his eyes when someone was already knocking on the doors again. He carefully slipped out of the bed, careful not to
wake Jungkook up, to pad over to the door. He hoped it wasn’t the same alpha that had come to check up on them two days ago, he had been far too judgemental for Taehyung’s liking. Trying his best to keep his eyes from falling close again, he opened the door and was met with Jisoo, an alpha that worked with Taehyung at the cleaning service. She had her dark hair fixed into a tight ponytail and wore a simple but pretty dress under her thick fur coat, looking the same as she always did for work. Taehyung hadn’t understood why she would dress up for cleaning at first but Jisoo had once explained that it made her feel more confident in what she was doing and less looked down on, and Taehyung had never questioned it since.

“Why aren’t you ready? We need to clean up the school before the first lesson starts, did no one tell you?” Jisoo looked as if all blood had run from her face which was exactly how Taehyung was feeling at the moment too.

“I knew I had to start working today but they never told me when I’d have to be ready! Shit, how much time do I have?”

“Of course, they didn’t”, Jisoo scoffed, clenching her jaw. “They don’t even realise how stressful our job is and how hard it is to finish everything up in time… Just hurry and come to the school, I’ll start by myself.” Taehyung could understand Jisoo’s anger, the cleaning service was never truly taken seriously. They were expected to clean up every public hut in a short amount of time and were harshly scolded when they missed a spot, even if they were understaffed most of the time. But Taehyung had somehow accepted it, tired of trying to fight against the treatment they endured. He gave Jisoo an apologetic smile.

“Thanks, you’re the best. I will hurry!”

His sleepy state completely vanished as Taehyung hastily ran to the bathroom to wash up. The hectic mood dimmed his hunger but Taehyung forced himself to eat some of the leftover food from the day before, knowing he wouldn’t be able to properly eat until noon. He used to wake up extra early on workdays to eat a proper breakfast but he didn’t want to let Jisoo wait for too long. He chose the most comfortable clothes he could find and brushed his hands through his hair quickly, hoping he looked decent enough to go outside.

He was about to leave the hut when a sharp pain ripped through his body. Taehyung froze, trying to calm his breathing. His heart ached but not like he was physically hurt. His stomach turned and a shiver ran down his spine, stopping him from leaving through the door. Jungkook, Taehyung thought, feeling the painful side of the mating bond for the first time. He slowly walked back and hovered over the sleeping form of his mate. He looked too peaceful to be woken up.
“I’ll be back soon, I promise”, Taehyung whispered before giving Jungkook a gentle kiss to his temple. Taehyung almost sprinted out of the hut then, knowing he would never be able to leave if he didn’t do it now.

Jisoo was sweeping the floor of the room for first graders when Taehyung entered, apologizing over and over again for being late. But Jisoo simply waved him off and told him to start on the windows. They held small talk while working and Taehyung told Jisoo about the time with Jungkook and what he missed while being away from the pack. They weren’t close friends but Taehyung had always trusted Jisoo and liked her.

Most of the time, they talked to keep their mind from going crazy, the stress too pressuring to handle sometimes. Most of them didn’t choose this job but since it had to be done, the pack alpha selected a few young omegas every few years who were obligated to pursue this job. Jisoo was the only alpha that worked at the cleaning service, not being skilled enough to be one of the hunters. She had trouble with her smelling sense, something essential for hunting and was released from the job after a few weeks of training. They had been lacking on cleaning workers during that time so the pack alpha had decided that she had to take this job, not caring about the bullying and harassment she had to face from other alphas for working a job “only good for omegas”. Taehyung had felt her pain, he himself had cried for days when he realised he would never be able to teach children art as he had always wanted to.

They had just finished cleaning the school and were on their way to the canteen when Taehyung spotted Jimin in front of the main entrance, seemingly waiting for him. When their eyes met, both omegas immediately started running towards each other before they greeted each other with a tight embrace.

“I missed you so much, Tae”, Jimin sighed when they pulled back. Taehyung felt like crying being finally reunited with his best friend but he swallowed down the lump in his throat.

“God, Jimin, I was so worried. I didn’t know if you or my family were hurt by the attackers, Jungkook said they were from his old pack and I was so scared something happened and also with Sungwoon and I wasn’t here with you—”

“Breathe, breathe”, Jimin interrupted him, shaking his shoulders slightly, “Don’t worry, we’re all alright. Your father hurt his leg slightly and your mother got a few scratches but they both are fine. Same for Yoongi, Seokjin, Hoseok, Namjoon and me. And don’t worry about Sungwoon, I’m actually working on that.” Taehyung cocked his head to the side, curious about Jimin’s mischievous grin. He quickly turned around and noticed that Jisoo had already left. He grimaced, feeling guilty.
“I don’t have much time but give me the short version!”

“First of all, Yoongi and I are... well, we are close. We both confessed our feelings and have been meeting each other secretly whenever Sungwoon leaves for the night. But nothing happened yet, we just talk and, well, hold hands or cuddle a tiny bit.” Taehyung gasped loudly, eyes going wide. He had never imagined this happening and couldn’t wait to hear every single detail about it. His best friend had the slightest blush over his cheeks and a smile that was so fond, Taehyung felt his heart melt away. He was still in shock but so, so happy for Jimin.

“And I have a plan for Sungwoon! Jihyun and I have been working on something- Oh, by the way, we made up!”

Taehyung wondered how much exactly could happen in two weeks. He hadn’t expected so many changes and he felt a little overwhelmed as Jimin went on about his plan. Taehyung vaguely registered something about another omega and a secret crush on Sungwoon but he had trouble listening properly because his body began to ache for Jungkook. It was as if his distressed state triggered his mating bond and the sudden distance between Jungkook and him burned under his skin.

“Hey, are you okay?”

Taehyung snapped out of his thoughts and saw a worried look on Jimin’s face. He felt bad for not listening properly, he wanted to be there for him, but it was hard to concentrate when his body was screaming for his mate.

“I- I’m sorry, I can’t let Jisoo wait. We’re talking later, okay?” He pressed a quick kiss to Jimin’s forehead. “I’m proud of you, Jiminie.”

- 

Jungkook was woken up by a strange feeling in his stomach. He tossed and turned, feeling that something was wrong. He extended his arm and tried to feel where exactly Taehyung was lying.
“Tae?”, Jungkook called sleepily when he noticed he was indeed alone in bed. That happened sometimes since Tae was a light sleeper and got up earlier than him on some days but Jungkook had hoped they could cuddle in bed for a while before they had to go outside for the first time in two weeks.

“Tae? Where are you?”

When no response came, Jungkook started to feel anxious and sat up with a huff. He opened his eyes and squinted against the burn of the harsh light. How long had he been sleeping for?

He scrambled out of the bed, lips jutting into a pout. Feeling a little lost, Jungkook walked from room to room while calling his mate’s name as if he would jump out from behind a corner as soon as he heard his name. Jungkook felt his chest ache as he realised Taehyung was probably already at work. He wished he would have been awake to see him go and wish him good luck instead of waking up to an empty bed. Suddenly, Jungkook felt rejected and lonely, his body shivering at the coldness of the room.

Jungkook didn’t want to be alone in their hut so he quickly washed up and left to get breakfast. Mated alphas and omegas could choose whether they ate in their hut or with the others and even though Jungkook was scared to face the pack alone, he didn’t want to be isolated. The canteens were fairly empty which relieved the alpha as he looked for any familiar faces. Jihyun sat on a table further back with two other guys that Jungkook thought were also hunters. He wasn’t sure if they wanted him to sit with them but Jihyun had offered him before to always hang out with him and Jungkook wanted to make some friends that hunted with him. He got himself a bowl full of meat and vegetables and tried to get rid of all the worries and fears in his head before he approached the table.

“Hey”, Jungkook greeted quietly, his voice suddenly stuck in his throat. But Jihyun seemed to have heard him as he turned around, eyes lighting up as he recognised Jungkook.

“Kookie, you’re back!”, the alpha greeted enthusiastically as he scooted over to let Jungkook sit beside him, “Come sit with us, this is Baekhyun and this Jongin, they both are hunters too. Guys, this is our newbie Jungkook.” Jungkook waved shyly but felt more comfortable when the two guys smiled warmly at him.

“Ah, we’ve heard a lot about you! Nice to finally meet you”, the guy with a warm brown hair-colour and full lips said, and Jungkook hoped they heard mostly good things.
“Yes, Jongin, Jihyun and I have been desperately waiting for some hunters that won’t be one of Sungwoon’s worshippers”, the other guy – Baekhyun? - snorted, brushing his hand through this light grey hair. He looked nearly ethereal with his doll-like facial features and Jungkook felt slightly intimidated. He knew most of the hunters were confident and handsome, with trained bodies and charming personalities which weren’t things Jungkook associated with himself. Sure, his body was trained and Taehyung had called him beautiful more than once but Jungkook still didn’t see himself as the picture perfect alpha hunter.

“Don’t forget Joohyun, she holds the record of rolling her eyes eight times during one of Sungwoon’s speeches”, Jihyun piped in and turned to Jungkook, “Joohyun is another alpha that hunts. She is better trained than us so she has to go to different regions which is why we don’t see her that often. But she’s really cool.” Jungkook tried to memorise all the names as he chewed on his food.

“Wait, so you and Joohyun are fine? Even though you’re competing for the same omega?”, Jongin teased, causing Jihyun to choke on his stew.

“First of all, Yerin recently hinted that she liked me”, Jihyun argued, the tip of his ears growing red. “And secondly, it would be nice if you didn’t mention my helpless crush in front of the mate of my brother’s best friend. Tae can’t keep a secret even if his life depended on it.”

“Hey! Tae can keep secrets!”, Jungkook said louder than intended, defending his mate without second thought. Jongin and Baekhyun both started laughing at Jihyun’s dumbfounded face.

“Besides… I won’t tell him about your crush, don’t worry”, Jungkook added with raised brows, even though he knew he would most likely be telling Taehyung later.

The conversation went on smoothly, with everyone teasing each other about their crushes and telling Jungkook anecdotes of their past. He was the only one mated amongst them but they didn’t seem to judge him for it. Jungkook almost forgot about the pain in his chest that craved for Taehyung as he laughed with his new friends.

“Okay, we should go. Sungwoon will probably want to discuss who trains our freshling Jungoo”, Baekhyun claimed as he stood up and stretched.
“I haven’t agreed to this nickname”, Jungkook whined but the smile on his face betrayed him. They all went to leave their dishes at one table when Jungkook suddenly remembered that Yoongi was probably not far away.

“Wait, do I have time to go to the kitchens quick? My brother is working there.”

“Ah, so that’s why the food suddenly tastes good”, Jongin murmured before pointing towards a door at the back, “The kitchens are there, but be quick. We can tell Sungwoon to wait up a bit.”

Not wasting a second, Jungkook bolted towards the door and swung it open energetically. Some people that worked in the kitchen stopped what they were doing and stared at him but Jungkook simply ignored them as he walked further into the kitchens. And then he saw him. Yoongi, wearing a white uniform and a cook’s hat, was cutting some vegetables, talking to a younger omega beside him. Not wanting to startle his brother while he had a knife in his hand, Jungkook slowly approached the two, letting his scent reveal him.

“If you cut it like that, you risk hurting yourself. Try to hold it like this-” Yoongi suddenly cut his sentence off, sniffling the air. The alpha left the knife on the counter before he turned around slowly. Jungkook had expected Yoongi to smile or hug him but he had never thought his brother’s eyes would fill with tears as soon as he laid eyes on him.

“Kookie, you’re back”, Yoongi sniffed as Jungkook hurried to him to hug him tightly. Yoongi’s hugs were the best even if the brothers didn’t embrace each other often.

“It’s just been two weeks, Yooyoo”, Jungkook countered, acting as if there wasn’t a lump in his throat as well.

“And you’re still a brat as I see”, Yoongi scoffed, ruffling Jungkook’s hair fondly. “How are you and Tae?” Jungkook checked to see that the other omega had already left before he answered quietly.

“We’re good. More than good. We’re working on our relationship and I want to give Tae his first courting gift later actually.” Jungkook smiled brightly, the thought of his mate finally getting a courting gift exciting him.

“Ahh, right, I still have it in my bag! I’ll drop by later and give it to you, I want to see your hut anyway.”
“How are you? How are things with… you know, the others?” Jungkook asked vaguely, not wanting to say Jimin or Sungwoon’s name out loud here. Yoongi had a soft smile on his face but there was something almost sad in his eyes.

“I’ll have a lot to tell you later, bud. But… not here”, Yoongi answered lowly before he cleared his throat, “I really like working again though, I missed cooking. There isn’t too much we can do since it’s still winter but we try our best.”

“Anything you cook is great, Yoongi. Okay, I gotta’ go now. I don’t want to be late at my first meeting with the hunters.” They quickly bid each other goodbye and Jungkook left the kitchens with a lot of questions on his mind.

Jungkook realised he wasn’t exactly sure where the hunters usually met up when he was already deep inside the forest, not knowing where to go. He wanted to turn into his wolf form but wasn’t sure if he would find his clothes later on if he left them here. He walked for a while, trying his best to find any familiar scents but he hasn’t noticed anything yet. After a while, Jungkook suddenly caught a whiff of Jihyun’s scent not too far away. He quickly walked further into the direction and thought he could make out a hut further back. Jungkook jogged towards the hut, relieved he had finally found it when another scent cut into the air sharply. Jungkook barely had time to recognise the smell when a weight fell onto him, bringing Jungkook to the ground forcefully. He groaned in pain but quickly rammed his elbow backwards, hearing a whimper from a wolf. Jungkook turned around and fought to push the wolf from him but the animal was way bigger than him, the weight heavy on his ribs. Jungkook kneed the wolf in his stomach with force and threw him off his body with all the strength he had. He just had time to stand up when the ash grey wolf jumped at him, pinning him against a tree. Sharp, white teeth were moving to attack him but Jungkook was frozen, his body in shock as he simply stared. But then the wolf shut his jaw, his wild eyes boring into Jungkook’s. Time seemed to stand still as Jungkook stared back at him with wide eyes, heart beating loud and fast and sweat dripping from his neck. And he recognised him. Just like at the mating ceremony, Jungkook recognised him.

“Mingyu”, Jungkook breathed, his whole body trembling, “Mingyu, I know it’s you.”

Before he knew it, the wolf suddenly disappeared from his vision, running away into depth the forest. Jungkook could only hear white noise as he breathed harshly, holding onto the tree behind him to not fall down. He felt dizzy and nauseous, gasping for air while his knees buckled.

“Jungkook? I thought I smelled you, did you get lost?”
Jungkook’s head whipped around to see Jihyun approach him, a worried look on his face. Jungkook wasn’t sure how long he had been there but somehow he ended up sitting at the roots of the tree, legs pulled in.

“Yeah. I got lost”, Jungkook muttered, a little disoriented.

“Hey, Jungkook, are you sure you are alright? I can smell another alpha on you.” Jihyun crouched down beside him, sounding panicked as his eyes roamed Jungkook’s body, probably looking for injuries.

“I -”, Jungkook started to say before he choked on a sob, his face tensing up as tears started to roll down his cheeks. He still felt the shock from being attacked, still hasn’t recovered from the fear of seeing the jaw of the gigantic wolf right in front of his eyes and still couldn’t absorb that it had been one of his closest friends from his old pack. Jungkook felt betrayed, violated and wanted nothing more than to just cry into his arms.

Jihyun rubbed his back reassuringly and murmured that Jungkook was safe now. It was hard to feel safe after what happened but Jungkook let Jihyun lead them to the hunter’s hut. He barely registered being wrapped in a blanket and led to a bed, his thoughts running crazy. Jungkook heard Jongin say he would get Taehyung and Yoongi while Jihyun stayed behind to keep an eye on him. And only after the adrenaline rapidly died down, Jungkook was able to fall asleep.
“I’m off a little earlier today, I’m meeting my father to discuss something.”

Jimin took the last bite of his dish, raising a brow at Sungwoon. The alpha had been in a weird mood all day, fidgeting and nervous as he hurried through dinner.

“Did anything happen?”, Jimin asked, for once actually curious. He’d been having an odd gut feeling for most of the day but had just shrugged it off.

“I’m not sure. Some hunters said the new alpha got attacked by his old pack but he doesn’t have any injuries or bruises. Seems shaken up though, I saw him when I came back from the hunt.” Jimin’s
stomach tightened as he gaped at Sungwoon, instantly worried for his close friend.

“Jungkook? Is he alright? Did the medics look at him?” Jimin wanted to shake Sungwoon as the alpha calmly finished his wine before answering. Sungwoon knew that Jimin cared for Jungkook like a brother, Jimin was irritated that he hadn’t said something sooner.

“Yeah, Seokjin came over to the hut but there’s nothing”, Sungwoon answered while getting up and putting on his coat, “Kind of suspicious, if you ask me, given that most people of this pack suffered from extreme injuries after the last attack.”

“Excuse me?” Jimin followed him to the door, feeling his blood boil. “Are you suggesting Jungkook lied? Based on what grounds, exactly? That he was lucky enough not to get his head ripped off?” Jimin’s jaw clenched when Sungwoon groaned and rolled his eyes. His friend was hurt and shocked and probably traumatised and Jimin hated how he couldn’t run to Jungkook instantly to check up on him. By now, he was probably at his own hut already.

“Of course, you have to start an argument. Am I not allowed to have an opinion anymore or what?” Sungwoon snapped back, opening the door.

“Am I?”, Jimin returned the question, even though he already knew the answer. For a moment, Sungwoon stayed still, back turned towards Jimin. It felt like hours passed before he slowly turned around, gaze unreadable.

“Of course you are. I always let you voice your opinion.” Jimin swallowed down a scoff, hating how Sungwoon spoke as if Jimin should be thankful for being able to talk about his opinions. The fact that Jimin indeed had been thankful for it for the past years made this statement even worse.

“Well, my opinion is that Jungkook has no motive to lie about an attack and that he doesn’t deserve to be judged so quickly.”

“Okay”, Sungwoon shrugged, looking like a stubborn child as he averted Jimin’s gaze, “I’m off then. Don’t wait up.”

Once the door was closed, Jimin felt like he could properly breathe again. He knew the situation between him and Sungwoon couldn’t stay like this for much longer. He would have to take action soon.
The once burnt down hut looked much better than it did a few weeks ago, even if it still was far from being finished. Jimin knew Yoongi was hard-working and he was proud of him for spending time on the hut when he wasn’t working in the kitchens. Jimin stepped inside, walking to the furthest room in the back where he and Yoongi usually met up. As expected, Yoongi was curled up in a blanket, sitting on the mattress that Seokjin contributed from the infirmary and was writing into his notebook. Once Jimin stepped inside, Yoongi looked up, a soft smile finding his face immediately.

“Hey, munchkin”, Jimin greeted softly, a fond smile playing on his lips.

“You’re early today”, Yoongi stated, laying his notebook away. Jimin crawled into the blanket with an exhausted sigh and snuggled to his side. The alpha wrapped an arm around him, his scent making Jimin hum contentedly.

“Sungwoon went to his father to talk about Jungkook. He told me what happened, how is he?” Jimin pulled away slightly and saw Yoongi’s worried expression.

“Jungkook didn’t talk much, he only wanted to inhale Tae’s scent. I will try to talk to him tomorrow, I hope we will find out more then. He wanted to give Taehyung his first courting gift today and was really excited, I hate that this happened.” Jimin furrowed his brows at that, nuzzling his face into Yoongi’s chest again.

“Courting gift? But they’re already mated.” He felt the vibrations of Yoongi’s chuckle on his cheek and only pressed closer to the alpha, soaking in his proximity.

“They never had the chance to court properly so Jungkook decided to do it now. It’s almost cute.”

“It’s very cute”, Jimin corrected, sitting up, “Hmm... to be courted by someone I like... that sounds nice.” He heaved a sigh, pouting at Yoongi dejectedly. Judging by the fond smile and how he shook his head, Yoongi got the hint. He sat up as well and reached up to touch the tip of Jimin’s nose, watching as the omega scrunched his nose.

“You’re getting needier by the second, you big baby”, Yoongi grumbled but pulled Jimin closer until he sat on his lap.
“First of all, you demand way more cuddles which means that you are just as needy as I am! And secondly… please? I hate Sungwoon’s courting gifts, they stink.” Jimin grimaced, hated how Sungwoon’s gifts were all things to show off, to wear outside to let everyone knew that he was being courted by someone with a high status. Jimin knew that Yoongi’s would be more intimate, subtle and personal. Yoongi huffed a laugh and reached out to take Jimin’s hands in his. Jimin intertwined their fingers, millions of butterflies tickling his stomach.

“You know I want to”, Yoongi said quietly, looking intensely into Jimin’s eyes, “But it would be too risky. It also wouldn’t feel… right. Not that it doesn’t feel right to be with you but Sungwoon and you are still- I mean-”

“I know what you mean”, Jimin quickly interrupted, seeing how Yoongi struggled with saying it out loud. The closer they got, the harder it was for Yoongi to even see Sungwoon, let alone talk about his courtship to Jimin. Jimin leaned in and rubbed their noses together, he knew it soothed the alpha.

“I’m sorry, angel”, Yoongi breathed and Jimin smiled at the nickname, eyes fluttering close.

“I don’t need gifts. Being here with you means so much more to me, Yoongi.”

Yoongi hummed lowly, letting Jimin’s hands cup his cheeks gently. Jimin wanted to be closer to him, to close the short distance between them, to finally taste Yoongi’s soft lips on his own. With each passing day, Jimin longed for it, craved it like a starved man. He never dared to ask for a kiss before but his heart was beating out of his chest and Jimin thought if he didn’t ask now, he may never do it. He leaned closer into Yoongi’s space, lips barely touching when Jimin began to whisper.

“Can I kiss you?”

“Jimin-”

“Please.”

But Yoongi pulled back, eyes glassy, looking pained. Jimin felt a knot in his stomach, his heart sinking as he blinked his eyes open. He knew it shouldn’t hurt him but he felt rejected and embarrassed and Yoongi’s struggling expression caused another wave of guilt to follow up.

“I’m sorr-”
“No, Jimin, you don’t understand”, Yoongi cut in, voice rough, “I want to, I really want to. I can’t. Not when you still smell like him, when you wear his coat, when he scented you just hours ago. I’m sorry.”

Jimin swallows thickly, face heating up. He never even realised how it was for Yoongi to smell Sungwoon on him, how hard it must have been for him when Jimin hugged him close. Jimin tried to pull back further but Yoongi held onto his hands almost desperately.

“Why did you never tell me?” Jimin wasn’t upset that Yoongi didn’t want to kiss him, he understood the alpha. He was just angry at himself for never noticing Yoongi’s struggle and wanted to understand how it came to that. Yoongi opened and closed his mouth for a few seconds before seemed to find the right words.

“I just- I knew how much you were suffering with the situation. It’s all so horrible for you to not be able to leave him and I see how much it affects you. What I feel is not even comparable to that.” Jimin felt his heart clench at Yoongi’s words and squeezed his hands tightly, their gazes not leaving each other.

“I appreciate that you care so much for me. But Yoongi, I care about what you feel too. Please don’t hurt in silence because you don’t think your pain is ‘not comparable’ to what I go through. I want to know when you feel sad, when something bothers you, when there is something on your mind. We love each other and that comes with a lot of feelings and emotions and Seokjin and Hoseok once told me that it’s healthy to talk about everything. So, please don’t think your feelings don’t matter because they do. To me, they matter a lot.” Jimin hoped Yoongi knew he was sincere. He felt tears stinging in his eyes, something about this conversation tugging at his emotions. He loved Yoongi so much and he was glad that they could talk like this, honest and vulnerable. Yoongi gave him a shy smile.

“I guess I am new at this stuff. Feelings and love and all that”, he admitted and Jimin chuckled wetly, caressing the rough skin on Yoongi’s hands.

“I think we never really stop learning”, Jimin muttered, biting his lower lip absent-mindedly, “I’m sorry for not noticing how you feel and pushing you to… you know, kiss me.”

“I didn’t know if you were aware but I kind of didn’t have my fist kiss yet”, Yoongi said, blushing. Jimin’s eyes widened at that, he truly hadn’t thought about that.

“It just never really happened. Either they didn’t want to or I didn’t want to, the timing wasn’t right
or… I don’t know, I guess at some point I just had other priorities and couldn’t bother with all that. But if there is one person I want to have my first kiss with, it’s you. I don’t care that I sound like an awkward pup right now, I do want it to be you. When the time is right.” Yoongi had an utterly fond look in his eyes and Jimin felt himself melting away. He breathed Yoongi’s scent in, lips curling into a dopey smile.

“Okay. Once the time is right.”

And Jimin knew then that it was time. He had to get rid of Sungwoon once and for all.

Jimin suddenly felt extremely nervous as he paced through the empty room in the infirmary, Jihyun boring holes into him as his gaze followed him. Hoseok had organised the room, not knowing what it was for yet but trusting them to do use it for something good. Little did Hoseok know what exactly Jimin was about to do.

“We have been planning this for weeks, Jimin, don’t worry”, Jihyun sighed, despite looking distressed himself.

“But we don’t know for sure if it’s going to work out! So much could go wrong!” Jimin whined and let himself fall onto the bed next to where Jihyun was sitting. His racing heartbeat didn’t help him calm down and he felt like running away and simply forgetting about this whole plan.

“We didn’t get all this information for the past weeks for nothing. Just think about it that way: If this succeeds, you could be together with Yoongi. You could court and mate and show everyone how grossly in love you two are.” Jimin hit his brother lightly but couldn’t help from grinning stupidly at the thought.

“Even if I do love the idea of being courted by Yoongi, I’m not only doing this for him”, Jimin admitted quietly, sitting up, “I want to be free of Sungwoon. I don’t want to be courted by him, I don’t want to be his omega. I want to be Jimin. I don’t think Sungwoon is born evil but the way he views the world is so… different from the way I see it. We aren’t good for each other and I hope he will see that.” He looked at Jihyun who gaped at him, silence filling the room. Jimin gave Jihyun time to process his words, letting him absorb what Jimin revealed about his feelings towards Sungwoon.
“So… you don’t hate him? Even after everything he did?”, Jihyun asked, brows furrowing.

“I’m not sure, if I’m honest. It’s hard to hate someone when they have been all you had for the past years, even if they didn’t treat you right. I am mad at him and frustrated about the situation, yes. But I don’t wish for him to suffer, I think.” It was all a very confusing situation. Jimin didn’t know what he was supposed to feel or not feel. His friends all hated Sungwoon and didn’t care if he hated them but it wasn’t that easy for Jimin. He had a history with him, whether he wanted to forget it or not. No matter how rational Jimin was, distancing himself emotionally from the situation wasn’t something that could happen over night.

“You ready? It won’t be much longer...”

“As ready as I can be, I guess… And you’ll be here with Yoongi and everyone?” Jimin worried his bottom lip, scared of this plan of the plan. Jihyun had suggested he would wait with everyone in the infirmary in case the plan didn’t work and Jimin needed to be kept safe. He also gave Jihyun the responsibility to fill all their friends in, knowing they couldn’t interfere anymore now.

“Yeah, I think I’ll go over there now, I told Hoseok to lead them all to the room at the end of the hallway. I’m scared to tell them, they will all be mad.” Jihyun grimaced as he stood up. Suddenly, Jimin felt his nerves go wild.

“Oh God, I can’t believe this is happening”, he muttered, fanning himself. Jihyun pulled him into a quick hug before he held Jimin’s shoulders and gave Jimin a stern look.

“You can do this. You deserve this. Just… do it for yourself, Jimin.”

After Jihyun left, Jimin sat back down on the bed, trying to calm down. The silence was unbearable, causing Jimin to feel even more nervous. If this went wrong, Jimin could be punished by either never being allowed to leave Sungwoon or by being exiled from the pack and left to die. Jimin knew Yoongi would follow him and leave the pack without a second thought but what would happen to Jungkook and Taehyung then? And Jihyun? He couldn’t mess this up.

There was a soft knock on the door, causing Jimin to jump up. He quickly got into role, forced himself to wear a poker face and straightened his back. He needed to be powerful, confident and
intimidating now. The door opened and Sunhee entered the room warily, note in her hand. She looked as if she dressed up and Jimin didn’t need to guess where she was headed too after their little conversation.

“Hello? Someone left this note on my desk, telling me to meet someone here?”, Sunhee said, sounding unsure but not nervous. Jimin swallowed, hoping his voice wouldn’t waver.

“Yes, please close the door behind you. What I want to say doesn’t concern anyone else.”

Sunhee raised her brow at that but did as she was told. When she turned back to Jimin, her expression looked grave, her lips pressed into a thin line-

“What do you want to talk to me about?”, she asked in a light tone that didn’t match the earnest look in her eyes. Jimin wet his lips swiftly before he decided to go straight to the point.

“I know about your crush on Sungwoon.” He decided there was no point asking her if it was true since she would only deny it and he knew it was true. Sunhee opened her mouth to say something but Jimin was quick to add to his words, “Please don’t waste both your and my time to deny it. I know how often you met him, how many nights you two spent together in the office you work in so that nobody sees you, how you baked him food so he would taste your scent in it and how you dreamed of being together with him for years. I also know how you always leave a scented cloth somewhere in his things so that he subconsciously always thinks about you.” Yes, Jimin did his research and seeing Sunhee’s shocked expression made it all worth it. Jimin would have hoped she would have the decency to look ashamed but instead she raised her head.

“You spied on me? To prove what, how jealous you are of me and Sungwoon? You shouldn’t have allowed him to sleep with other omegas then, I didn’t do anything wrong”, she defended herself to which Jimin chuckled breathlessly.

“Jealous? I wouldn’t say that. I don’t think having an obsession over Sungwoon is in any way admirable but I am not here to judge that. This isn’t a conversation to scold you, Sunhee.”

“What is the purpose of it then? Do you want to humiliate me? Make me feel ashamed for my feelings or actions? Because I am not. I won’t apologize for my feelings”, Sunhee snapped at him and Jimin wanted to roll his eyes. He didn’t even make his point yet.

“I came to talk to you about the future. Do you want a courtship with Sungwoon? Do you want to
mate him?”, Jimin questioned, taking one step towards her, “Because if you do, say so to my face. I
don’t want an alpha that is in a relationship with another omega, I would rather have him court you
than to be the fool that has an alpha with a mistress.” Sunhee’s lips parted in surprise as she gaped at
Jimin, letting his words sink in. Jimin hoped she would take the bait, hoped she wouldn’t question
his intentions further.

“So- You want Sungwoon to court me? Even though he has been courting you for years?”

“Yes”, Jimin answered without missing a beat, “A lot of people already noticed that you two have
some kind of relationship towards each other. I am a respectable omega with a good status, I don’t
want to be the betrayed omega, waiting desperately for his alpha to come home.” He knew the
arguments about status and rumours were both points Sunhee could understand and empathise with.
By the way her shoulders seemed to lose the tension and her eyes showed more vulnerability, Jimin
suspected that it worked.

“I see… but there is one thing I don’t understand. Don’t you love him? You could fight for him and
forbid me to see him. Sungwoon wants to stay together with you, it would be easier to get rid of me.
Why do you let go of him so easily?” Jimin gulped, not having expected this question. Sunhee was
smarter than he had thought, not immediately jumping at the opportunity. Jimin could play a game
that could end up with fatal consequences for her and Sunhee was obviously aware of that. He took
a deep breath and decided to show a more vulnerable side of him, just like Seokjin had advised him.
He had to be careful not to let too much slip.

“Sunhee… there is no point fighting when his heart already made a choice. He wants to stay together
with me, yes. But we don’t share what you and him have. We weren’t meant to be. And I think if
you actively try to show him your qualities as the perfect omega mate of his dreams, it will make him
see what he actually wants. I want him to be happy and if that means letting him go… I will need to
do that.” Jimin was proud of himself, he liked talking to Sunhee without the tension in the room and
felt like she actually believed him now. He could see how her resolve crumbled, her eyes practically
sparkling when Jimin talked about “meant to be”. His voice even cracked at this point because he
had to think of him and Yoongi but it caused Sunhee to look at him with an almost pitiful expression.

“Okay… okay. I agree with you, we shouldn’t stand between true love. And I wasn’t sure if I should
do it but now I know I have to”, Sunhee said quietly, almost conspiring. She took a step forward to
him and Jimin had an odd feeling settling in his gut.

“What do you mean? What do you plan on doing?”

Sunhee reached into the pocket of her cardigan and pulled out a small white container with some
kind of liquid in it. Jimin squinted, trying to recognise what it was until it dawned on him, a gasp
escaping his lips.
“Please, don’t tell me this is-”

“Fecundatium”, Sunhee confirmed Jimin’s fear, nodding shortly, “My heat is about to start.” Jimin suddenly noticed the strong scent of heat in the air and wondered why he didn’t realise it sooner. Fecundatium was a strong medicament that had been used back in the days so that omegas could enhance their fertility. But because omegas then tended to get more children than they could feed, the medicament was barely prescribed anymore. Only when an omega struggled to get fertilized did they consume the liquid. If Sunhee was in heat and drank fecundatium, her chances of getting pregnant were extremely high. Jimin felt all blood leave his face. He thought Sunhee could maybe convince Sungwoon to court her, he didn’t want the girl to be bound to him for the rest of her life because of a thoughtless plan.

“Where did you get this? Does a medic know you have this?”, Jimin hissed, reaching out to grab the container but Sunhee pulled her hand away.

“I have some connections. It’s not dangerous to my health and I know I want to be with Sungwoon and he wants to be with me. You said it yourself, we are meant to be.” Jimin regretted his words now, regretted that he strengthened her in going through with this.

“We’re talking about a baby, Sunhee, a living being. A pup isn’t meant to be a way to force someone to court you, whether Sungwoon has feelings for you or not. You don’t know what he’s like in a relationship yet-”

“I do know how he is in a relationship!”, Sunhee interrupted him, raising her voice, “I’ve spent a lot of time with him and he is everything I want in an alpha. Once he knows we’ll have a child together, he will court and mate me because he knows he has a responsibility. I’m not a pup, Jimin, I want this. I want to settle down, get mated, have children. With Sungwoon.”

Jimin exhaled roughly, feeling his head spin. Sunhee’s reasoning reminded him of Sungwoon’s speeches about how alphas and omegas were supposed to act. Jimin didn’t know what to say, he couldn’t change Sunhee’s whole mindset just like that. He struggled to find arguments, grasping for anything he could find.

“But- I mean– Don’t you want him to choose you because he wants to? Not because he has to?”, Jimin stuttered, eyes wide. Sunhee laughed bitterly, stepping back.

“I’m not stupid, I know he would never choose me even if he loves me. You know you two don’t
love each other but why are you courting? It’s all a matter of status, of responsibility, of expectations and pressure. This here will be no different, except that Sungwoon and I really do have feelings for each other. He won’t be happy with you but he has a chance of being happy with me.”

Jimin felt his heart pound, not knowing what to do. He didn’t know if it was irresponsible to let Sunhee go through with it but her arguments made sense. Jimin didn’t know what to believe, what was right or wrong and what he was supposed to do. Sunhee was so young, too young. She was about to leave when Jimin ran past her to grab the handle of the door before she could. Sunhee’s head whipped around, her eyes desperate.

“Why are you stopping me? I thought you wanted me to be with him?”

“I do”, Jimin sighed because he wanted to, he really wanted to, “But I need you to know that this isn’t something you can simply run away from if it doesn’t work out. You’re so young and if Sungwoon rejects you, you’ll be on your own. It’s a risky plan.”

“Let me explain this to you differently, Jimin. I can see you don’t love Sungwoon. I thought you did but I realised through this conversation that you two are very different. You think like one of those people who don’t believe in the responsibilities of alphas and omegas. You think Sungwoon will just leave you like that, just because of his feelings for me. But Sungwoon is like me. He would never leave his omega because it’s his responsibility as a good alpha. He needs a good reason”, Sunhee explained quietly.

“You want to get rid of him, right? Is that what this is all about?”, she continued, “Well, this is your chance. Make both of us happy. You know this is your only shot. If you don’t let me go now, you will have to stay with Sungwoon forever. You will have to mate him, have to have his pups. I want to do this, I made this decision. All you have to do is let me go. You’ll be free from Sungwoon. Make him, me and yourself happy.”

Jimin’s hand slipped from the handle, mind in a haze. He had to free himself from Sungwoon’s fangs. Was this the right way? Was he about to make a huge mistake? Jimin watched Sunhee go, giving him one last nod. Jimin stood there, staring into the void for God knows how long. At some point, his legs began to move on their own, walking into the direction of the room where the others were waiting. Jimin felt like he only woke up from his haze when he opened the door, his friends and brother immediately standing up.

“How did it go? I can’t believe you did that, Jimin!”, Seokjin asked him, stepping forward.

“Jimin, you look pale. What’s going on?” Taehyung walked over to him and rubbed his back
soothingly, causing a lump to form in Jimin’s throat.

“She- she’s on his way to him. She has fecundatium.”

“What?”, Hoseok and Namjoon exclaimed at the same time. Jimin opened and closed his mouth, mind still a mess.

“She will get pregnant. She will have Sungwoon’s child because it’s the only way.” Jimin stopped when he heard a low growl from Yoongi, his scent turning sour. When he looked up to him, Yoongi’s eyes were almost wild, his breathing heavy.

“You… you will let a young girl get pregnant by this bastard?”

“I tried to stop her-”, Jimin started to say but Yoongi continued to speak, looking angrier than Jimin had ever seen him.

“What if he rejects her? No one will take an unmated omega with a child, she will get bullied out of the pack, lose her job and her family will throw her out! Do you realise what you did? Fuck, Jimin, do you realise you just let a young girl ruin her life?” Jimin shrieked away at Yoongi’s tone. He didn’t understand what was happening, why Yoongi was so mad.

“Yoongi, please”, Jungkook murmured, “I know this subject is still painful-”

“Fuck off, Jungkook”, Yoongi yelled, his face growing red of rage. Jungkook visibly flinched, Taehyung told Yoongi to back off and Seokjin and Namjoon instantly moved between the brothers. Jimin felt his heart hammer in his chest. This wasn’t the Yoongi he knew, Yoongi never screamed. He never even raised his voice, he was a kind, gentle person.

“Yoongi”, Jimin called and he hated how his voice broke, how tears filled his eyes. Yoongi’s jaw was clenched as he stared at the ground, hands balled into fists.

“How could you let this happen Jimin? How could you send an omega into the same position you were in? How could you let her do this? How-”
“He would have mated me, Yoongi”, Jimin answered with a sob, heart aching as Yoongi’s head whipped up to look at him, “His mother told my mother the mating ceremony was already planned. I didn’t have time, I just- I know it’s all wrong, I know it. I didn’t know what to do, it’s so overwhelming and thinking of mating Sungwoon makes me panic and I- I just- I let her go.”

“Oh, Jimin”, Taehyung gasped, eyes filling with worry. Jimin’s gaze stayed stuck on Yoongi who seemed frozen, completely in shock. Everyone seemed to be overwhelmed, unsure how to react.

And then Yoongi bolted out of the room, the door shutting with a loud thump. Jimin felt his heart break into a million pieces and it hurt. Yoongi never hurt him like that, this wasn’t how Yoongi was.

“What’s his problem?”, Jiyhun scoffed angrily but Jungkook was quick to step forward.

“No, please, don’t judge Yoongi. It’s- it’s hard to explain. Jimin, please talk to him, he needs it. Please trust me on this, Yoongi has a reason he reacts like that, not that it is justified. I know he feels sorry, this is probably killing him right now.” Jungkook looked at Jimin with a pleading gaze and Jimin wanted to believe him. He knew there was something Yoongi had never told him and he knew Jungkook wouldn’t have defended him if he wasn’t aware of what was going on. He felt hurt but confused more than anything and wanted to know why Yoongi had reacted like that.

“I’ll find him”, Jimin promised before he left the room quickly, he knew where Yoongi ran off to.

Jimin ran to the hut, letting his feet carry him through the snow. His instincts told him to find Yoongi as quickly as possible, only urging him to move faster. He swung the door open to the furthest room in the back, to their room. But this time, Yoongi was lying on the mattress. He was curled up in one of the corners, face hidden behind his knees, whimpering quietly. The room was dark but Jimin could see Yoongi’s frame shaking with little sobs, his hands trembling around his legs. Jimin sat down beside him and pulled him to his chest, his heart aching at the sight. Yoongi’s hands gripped tightly onto Jimin’s sweater as Jimin wrapped his arms around the alpha, simply holding him while he cried.

“I’m so sorry”, Yoongi whimpered against Jimin’s chest, pressing himself even closer to the omega, “I’m sorry I snapped at you and- and Jungkook.”

“I won’t say it’s okay because it’s not. But I know you had a reason for reacting like that… What happened?” Jimin tried to be gentle despite feeling overwhelmed himself. He let one of his hands brush through Yoongi’s hair slowly, listening to how Yoongi’s breathing calmed down. The alpha nodded and pulled back a little to look at Jimin.
“It’s hard to talk about it… but I want you to know”, Yoongi said hoarsely before burying his face in Jimin’s neck and inhaling his scent. Jimin hold him tightly.

“Take your time, munchkin. I’ll wait.” And he did. He wasn’t sure how long they sat there before Yoongi started to speak, his voice rough. He continued to hide his face in Jimin’s neck, more vulnerable than Jimin had ever seen him before.

“Her name was Eunju. We grew up together and she was my best friend. No matter what happened, if we fought, if we had problems at home, if we were lovesick… we knew we always had one another. It wasn’t that easy when we grew up to be teenagers because suddenly I was an alpha and she an omega. People expected us to either fall in love or part our ways but Eunju was like a sister to me, she meant the world to me. And then my parents died and… she- her family, they took us in. Jungkook was just 10 and he needed guidance and I didn’t know what to do. I was heartbroken but I couldn’t cry, couldn’t even realise what happened because I suddenly needed to take responsibility. Without Eunju I would have never gotten through that time, she was always there for me, always had my back and… God, I loved her so much. She was my family.”

Yoongi took a deep breath when his voice began to shake. He needed a moment and Jimin didn’t push him, continuing to brush through his hair softly.

“When she was seventeen, she had a crush on this alpha, Ahnjong. He was the pack alpha’s first son and he just- he was like Sungwoon. He was proud, arrogant and blinded by his power. He always talked down to her but somehow managed to wrap her around his finger and made her believe she should be grateful he gave her attention. No matter how often I told her that she deserved better, Eunju believed that he was different inside, that she could change him. We often fought because of him until I decided to stop trying and let her make her own mistakes. I just wanted to protect her but she pushed me away for… for him.

“They started to meet each other secretly. No one but me knew and I couldn’t even stop her because she looked so happy whenever she met him. I mean, she was crazy about him and apparently they hit it off so I ignored my gut and tried to feel happy for her. But… fuck.” Yoongi took another deep breath, clinging onto Jimin tightly.

“She told me she was pregnant. Eunju, my sister, my best friend, was suddenly pregnant and she wasn’t even sad or terrified. She seemed… excited when she told me. Anxious, but she was happy. And I had such a bad feeling but I trusted her when she told me it would be alright, I trusted her. But this… God, he didn’t even talk to her. He simply ignored her, acted like they never even knew each other. She told me he was scared and that he just needed time but this fucking coward never came around. He – He started to court someone else. Some omega from with a better status, a better job. His name was Donghyung.”
The name sounded familiar to Jimin. He suddenly remembered Jungkook telling Yoongi a few days after they met to not see Jimin as Donghyung. The name had been a big question mark in Jimin’s mind ever since then.

“Donghyung wasn’t a bad kid. I thought if I talked to him, explained to him what was going on, maybe he wouldn’t let Ahnjong court him. But he refused to believe me. He looked right into my face and told me that Eunju was lying, that an alpha like Ahnjong would never do that. He also said that it would be a scandal to end the courtship now because people would talk and whatnot. And I knew then that Donghyung didn’t care about Eunju and how she suffered. He only cared about his status.”

“When you first met me”, Jimin asked in a whisper, “You thought I was like him, right? Was that why you were so angry at me?” Yoongi raised his head and looked into Jimin’s eyes, his own filled with tears and regret.

“I was so wrong about you, but yes. Sungwoon was so similar to Ahnjong that when I met you and the way you let yourself be treated by an alpha, I just saw Donghyung in front of me. But then you had these moments sometimes where you were so different again and it confused me, made me frustrated. There was a Jimin that I was attracted to and a Jimin that reminded me of someone I despised.” Jimin swallowed and nodded, finally connecting the dots between a lot of past moments. He squeezed Yoongi’s hands and let him continue, their foreheads resting against each other.

“Eunju wasn’t herself anymore. She saw the two together, saw Donghyung wear Ahnjong’s courting gifts, saw them be the perfect couple without her in the picture. Her bump showed relatively early and he was so scared. Jimin, she was so scared of what her family would think and how the others would judge her. She told me how she felt like she was ruining the picture, how she felt like a mistake. It sucked the life out of her. Unmated omegas with children don’t have a life in packs like this, it’s like they aren’t allowed to be happy, since they are sinful, stupid, not good enough. And she… she couldn’t handle to face that. She didn’t deserve this.”

And when Yoongi continued to speak, he let his tears roll down his cheek.

“She couldn’t do it anymore. She took her life… This sweet girl, round cheeks, short hair, the kindest smile I have ever seen on someone, she just- was gone. I didn’t believe it at first. I couldn’t. After my parents- and then her. It felt so surreal, so incredibly gross. I was so angry and if it wasn’t for Jungkook I would have- I don’t know, honestly. But I did go to that asshole’s hut. I told him I would rip his head off. When I saw that he was just… there, sitting with his omega and his family while she was gone. It just triggered something in me. I jumped at him, even though I was alone and they outnumbered me but I didn’t care in that moment. I threatened to hurt them all, if that was what it took to finally get that stupid smile off their faces. God, he didn’t even come to the funeral. And I
fought each one of these alphas from his circle and more people came and I don’t know how many people I ended up hurting. I wasn’t thinking straight, I was in pure agony.”

Jimin felt Yoongi’s pain, felt the deep ache the alpha carried with him. Jimin cried with Yoongi and for Eunju, the poor girl that deserved so much better.

“They threatened to hurt Jungkook if I didn’t stop terrorising the pack. Jungkook… he is my weak point, always will be. I couldn’t let anything happen to him. I just packed two bags, stuffed in everything necessary and told Jungkook to always stay behind me. And then we ran.”

“Sunhee reminded you of Eunju… you were scared the same thing would happen to her, right?”, Jimin asked, softly cupping Yoongi’s cheeks as his face crumbled, lips trembling.

“It was just too similar. She has a crush on Sungwoon, they met secretly, she gets pregnant- I just- it was just too much.” Jimin hushed him, caressing his skin with his thumbs.

“I promise you, Yoongi, I will never let that happen. I will try to fix this.”

“It hurts. It hurts that she’s gone. I wish you could meet her, I wish I could tell her that I found someone I love”, Yoongi cried. Jimin took him into his arms.

Yoongi cried for a long time, even after Jimin led him to the mattress and draped the blanket over his shivering body. He held him in his arms and whispered how much he loved him. And Yoongi needed to hear it, asking Jimin to repeat it over and over and over again. And Jimin finally understood Yoongi, understood so many things he didn’t before. He only loved him more.
Countdown

Chapter Summary

...where it nears the finale.

Chapter Notes

Hello everyone. First of all, I'm sorry I didn't upload last week, I was going through some personal stuff and then got sick which is why I couldn't start writing up until a few days ago. (I don't know how I managed to actually write the longest chapter yet though :D) Sadly, I also cannot promise that the last chapter will be out next Saturday because I have exams and a term paper to write at the moment as well, I'm very sorry :(

BUT onto other things: As you can see, I planned the next chapter to be the ending of Carry Me Home (don't cry don't cry don't cry). That way, it wouldn't have an epilogue but still room for a sequel. I still need to decide whether I leave it like that or if I should write an epilogue and therefore not choose to leave room for a sequel. (There will be a happy ending either way but the epilogue would be a "a few years later" chapter) Feel free to tell me your opinions on this!! Also, are there still things you would like to see or do you have open questions you would like to have answered? I could work them into the last chapter if they fit :)

For this chapter, I will give trigger warnings for mention of violence (no personal experience of a character) and degrading insults.

Special thanks to Rayne for beta reading <3 and to all of you for the amazing support. Every form of feedback is welcome, you can also message me on twitter (@jinslostlines) or CuriousCat (@jinsbabies)

ENJOY

Five days later

Taehyung rinsed the last plate of his stack, letting the water wash off all remains of their dinner. Jungkook whistled an unknown melody next him while he dried off the dishes, taking the plate from Taehyung’s hand as he was finished. It was comfortable like this, both of them lost in their own
thoughts while still spending their time together. Taehyung wrapped his arms around his mate’s waist, hugging him close to his chest. It was odd to think that he had been living most of his life without knowing Jungkook’s scent when it is now the most important and familiar perfume to him. Nobody smelled like home as Jungkook did; no scent could ever match this particular one.

“You had fun today?”, Jungkook asked as he turned around, fingers tracing invisible lines from Taehyung’s arms to his shoulders.

“I loved it! I am so glad Jimin and Yoongi finally got to see our little home.” Taehyung smiled brightly at the alpha, feeling all grown up to show his friends his own hut. Jungkook chuckled and nodded, a proud look in his eyes.

“I love when it’s just us two but I really enjoyed having them here. It makes me happy to see Yoongi have fun like that. He laughed a lot today.” Jungkook’s gaze was far away, something almost nostalgic in his tone. Taehyung knew that Jungkook got like this sometimes, that he got lost in memories from his childhood, from a time where he was happy and carefree. He waited until Jungkook sighed, their eyes meeting again.

“He did look very happy today. He and Jimin love each other a lot, it’s impossible not to see it.” He thought back to the gazes between the two, the fond smiles when they stared at one another and the way the world seemed at peace when Jimin and Yoongi held each other close. It was so calm and easy despite their love being new, Taehyung couldn’t get enough seeing it.

“Yeah, they made it truly impossible not to see it”, Jungkook answered with a scrunch of his nose, “I’m happy for Yoongi but seeing my brother this gone for someone was a little gross.” Taehyung snickered but hit Jungkook lightly, glad that his own siblings were too young for love.

“My mom and dad always kiss each other in front of me and my siblings for several seconds, that’s gross. Jimin and Yoongi were actually cute.” He shuddered at the memory, earning a sweet kiss from his mate.

“You’re right, they behaved most of the time. I’m just glad they have each other. Yoongi has been through a lot and I can see how Jimin cares for him and treats him well.” Taehyung was about to agree and add that he was glad his best friend found someone that would steal the moon for him when he remembered something he had wanted to ask Jungkook once they were alone.

“Kookie, what did you and Yoongi talk about when you went to our bedroom? You both seemed so secretive and you looked nervous”, he asked, frowning as Jungkook’s eyes widened. They never had any secrets and Taehyung couldn’t think of anything Jungkook wouldn’t tell him.
“Oh, that?”, Jungkook said in a high tone, cheeks reddening. “That was nothing. We just. We talked. Like brothers do. Yeah, we didn’t prepare anything or like… We talked.”

Taehyung raised a brow, but he got the hint and let it go. Jungkook would tell him when he was ready, and Taehyung trusted him. He gave the alpha a long kiss, letting Jungkook pull him in for another one when he pulled back. The two of them had a hard time parting once they starting kissing slowly and intimately but Taehyung’s heat would come up in a few days which meant he had to be even more careful. He pushed Jungkook away slightly, dazed look in his eyes while is heart beat rapidly in his chest.

“I really need to control myself better before my heat starts”, Taehyung laughs breathlessly and walks a few steps backwards.

“Maybe you don’t have to”, Jungkook murmured but quickly shock his head when Taehyung stopped in his tracks. “Wash up, I’ll clean the rest of the kitchen.”

Taehyung thanked him and hurried to the bathroom. He took his time while washing up, going over the whole evening in his head. The four of them truly had a good time and Taehyung wondered if it would have been even better with the others present as well. He could imagine hosting a weekly get-together where all seven of them just relaxed, ate and had fun. Taehyung wanted to ask Jungkook what he thought about the idea, giddy as he stepped outside the bathroom in his robe. He swung the door open to the bedroom when he stopped in his tracks, noticing something different. Something was laying on top of the bed, something small. At first, he thought it was an animal but as he stepped closer, he could see that it was something completely different.

On his bed lay a gemstone bracelet, each tiny gemstone looking like a shiny white pearl. Between two of the stones was a fine silver piece with the initials KT and JJ engraved in it. Taehyung heard his heartbeat loud in his ears as he hugged the bracelet to his chest, feeling so warm and happy that he almost couldn’t bare it.

“Do you like it?”

Taehyung whipped around to see Jungkook smile shyly at him, his red fringe falling into his eyes and his dimple showing on one side of his face. Taehyung loved him. He loved him so much that he was almost scared to feel so much for one person. But it was Jungkook and Jungkook was the sweetest, kindest, most caring person there was. Taehyung pulled him into a hug and held him tightly.
“Does that mean you accept my courting gift?”, Jungkook whispered before pressing a kiss to his scent gland.

“Yes”, Taehyung chuckled, closing his eyes and simply enjoying this moment. They stayed like this for a while, no rush to do anything else besides hugging each other close.

“Tae?”, Jungkook muttered quietly as he looked into his eyes again, “This is not just me offering to court you… This is also an offer to spend your heat with you.” Taehyung gasped slightly, fingers gripping the fabric of Jungkook’s sweater.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes, I’m completely sure. I thought about it a lot and I want this”, Jungkook answered without an ounce of hesitation in his voice. When Taehyung continued to stare at him though, his smile turned nervous.

“But we don’t have to of course! Only if you want to as well”, the alpha assured quickly, causing Taehyung to snap out of his surprised state. He quickly shook his head, wide boxy grin on his lips.

“You have no idea how happy I am, Jungkook.”

And it was true. Even if there was something tingling in the back of his mind, telling him that something was still about to come, Taehyung felt incredibly safe and happy. He kissed Jungkook again and nothing but him mattered in that moment.

- 

Seokjin leaned his head to the side, wincing at the sound of his joints cracking. He had been reading book after book and didn’t manage to find all that much comparatively. He was relieved to have found some information at least and was sure Jimin would appreciate it.

“Brought you some coffee”, Namjoon said as he stepped inside the room, putting the cup on the
table before sitting down next to Seokjin.

“I can’t believe you are already back, I didn’t even hear you. Where is Hoseok?”, Seokjin laid his head in Namjoon’s lap and grabbed his wrist to lead it to his hair. Namjoon always had the perfect amount of pressure when massaging his scalp and Seokjin made sure to have the alpha brush through his hair as often as possible.

“Hoseok’s at the infirmary, he needed to check on a patient before coming. How is the research going?” Seokjin felt a little bad to have told Namjoon and Hoseok about what he was researching but he was horrible at keeping secrets. Not because he was a bad liar – he was actually an excellent one – but rather because he hated to keep things from the people he loved. When he had admitted to Jimin that Namjoon and Hoseok knew, however, Jimin didn’t seem to be upset and that eased his guilt a little.

“I found a few things but not as much as I had hoped. You keep a hell lot of books in the library though, I found information in different books and different genres. It helped explain the big picture.” His gaze roamed around the room which Namjoon called the “comfortable corner” in his library. It was perfect to work in, the decoration not too distracting but also not too bleak.

“Yeah, I think you kind of have to puzzle the fictional stories and the facts together and see what could make sense to be true”, Namjoon hummed, “Wanna’ tell me what you got so far?” Seokjin grabbed his notebook from the table before he sat up straight next to Namjoon.

“Okay so, wolves used to be a lot bigger, like a lot bigger but because they always fought, they had to learn how to hide over time. Through evolution we then changed our overall height.”

“What does this have to do with soulbounds?”, Namjoon asked confused, fixing his glasses.

“You see, because of their height they were also very dangerous”, Seokjin explained, “A wound by a trained wolf now can be serious, but it was way worse back then. In addition, the level of control was very weak. From what I’ve read, people just changed into their wolf forms as soon as they got angry. So, a lot of fights ended with severe injuries.”

“That’s horrible. I mean, everyone fights or gets angry sometimes, they must have hurt everyone close to them all the time”, Namjoon gasped, shaking his head slowly. Seokjin agreed and didn’t tell Namjoon about some of terrifying stories he had read. Some fictional work had very graphic descriptions about these incidents and how people struggled with the fact that every little argument could end up deadly.
“It was especially bad after a mating because you could feel your mate’s rage. Often, both alpha and omega ended up in their wolf forms and fought heavily. This ruined loving relationships as well as ones that were never about love in the first place. Families suffered from it too.”

“And that’s where the soulbound comes into play?”, Namjoon asked, now very interested in the topic.

“Exactly”, Seokjin answered as his eyes scanned through his notes again, “When one person was in deep pain because of someone close to them or when they were in a very... suffocating situation, their instincts would carry them towards someone completely different than the person causing them pain. A lot of soulbounds were between omegas, actually, because alphas back then had a harder time controlling their inner wolf than omegas did, and they sought comfort in each other. Sometimes, these bounds ended up with those affected having romantic feelings toward each other but often it created deep and trusting friendships.”

“And what exactly are those bounds? Are they like a mating?”

“They are similar but not the same. People have described it as a form of emotional understanding and feeling the other one’s pain because of empathy and not a physical marking bond. When Hoseok is angry at me, for example, I feel his pain because we are mated, whether I understand it or not. When Jimin saw Yoongi getting beat up by Sungwoon, he didn’t feel the same pain Yoongi did through their bond, it actually just hurt him seeing Yoongi get hurt.” Seokjin was aware of how confusing that sounded so he gave Namjoon a moment to try to grasp what he was saying.

“So, Jimin’s pain was caused by empathy and emotional baggage. When he saw Yoongi in pain, he felt so bad for him that he could feel his pain?”, Namjoon tried to summarise and Seokjin had to chuckle at his adorable confused face.

“Kind of, yeah. It’s like feeling for someone you love just that your body and instincts react more strongly towards the other person. The walls between two soulbound people are simply more transparent. It is your body’s way of calling for help and making sure someone knows how you feel.” Suddenly, Namjoon’s face darkened at his words, mouth forming into a hard line.

“Do you think… if Jimin formed a bound with Yoongi…”, Namjoon almost growled, jaw clenched. Seokjin took his hands into his own and took a deep breath, already having thought about this. He locked his gaze with Namjoon’s and spoke quietly but confidently.
“Look. It can be possible that there are things about Sungwoon that Jimin didn’t tell us but we shouldn’t jump to conclusions. For all we know, the bound could also be formed from Yoongi’s side who also needed someone to understand him. I will talk to Jimin about this. If you ask me, I suspect Sungwoon to have pushed Jimin mentally and emotionally. I’ve known him since we were kids and he has a way of handling things that aren’t exactly healthy for a courtship. But we will see and act appropriately.” He squeezed Namjoon’s hands and saw the alpha’s shoulders slacken down. Before he could say anything though, the door swung open and Hoseok stepped inside, wearing a big smile on his face.

“Ah, there are my favourite alphas!”

Both Namjoon and Seokjin held their arms open and Hoseok didn’t waste a second to run into their embrace. The three of them shifted on the couch until all of them were comfortable lying down, their feet a tangled mess. Hoseok kissed Seokjin’s cheek and Namjoon’s nose before he snuggled into Seokjin’s chest. Namjoon buried his face into the alpha’s neck and caressed Hoseok’s cheek with the hand that didn’t wasn’t resting under Seokjin’s sweater.

“I love having my loves in my arms”, Seokjin sighed, feeling better than he had after reading all those cruel stories.

“I love having both your lips on me”, Hoseok commented which earned him a slight smack from Namjoon.

“Do you have to make everything dirty?”

“I didn’t mean it dirty, it’s not my fault if your horny brain interpreted it as a sexual comment.”

“You are a terrible liar, honey.”

“And how do you expect me to not have dirty thoughts when you look at me like that, Joonie?”

Seokjin laughed at that, closing his eyes and simply listening to his lovers’ bickering. They continued to argue back and forth for a while before they somehow ended up kissing. Seokjin giggled and wondered how they always managed to end up in the same situation, not that he would ever complain.
The sun had almost set when Seokjin stretched, still lying on the couch with only now considerably less clothes on and two very naked sleeping men on either side of him. He would love to go back to sleeping as well but he remembered that he had to inform the head omega that they needed some new loads of some important medicaments which sadly couldn’t wait for the next day. Namjoon’s and Hoseok’s hands were intertwined on top of his stomach and he felt his heart break a little when he had to pull them apart to stand up.

“Where ‘e you goin’?”, Hoseok murmured sleepily, not bothering to open his eyes.

“Head Omega, still need to tell her the list of things we need.”

“Mhh’kay”, his mate grumbled before shifting on the bed to cuddle Namjoon. “Don’t take too long and come cuddle some more after.” Seokjin snorted as he put on his clothes, knowing he would definitely hurry to come back to them as soon as possible.

Seokjin made his way inside the Main Hut, list of medicaments clutched in his hand. He had been here several times before which is why he skipped waiting at the front desk and immediately made his way towards the room of the Head Omega. He was about to knock when he heard voices inside and hesitated.

“How can you be so reckless? Someone could get hurt!”

Seokjin stepped back upon hearing the head omega’s voice. She sounded frustrated and hurt, her tone not angry but almost resigned.

“What happens to the pack is my responsibility and therefore my decision. It is not for you to decide what we will or will not do, head omega”, the pack alpha responded, sounding almost bored in contrast to her reaction.

“I know but they have now officially warned us! If we do nothing and the attack comes, how will you keep the pack safe? Or will you just run away again?”
Seokjin heard the scraping of a chair on the floor and held his breath. He should leave.

“Listen, woman. Whether I run or not is none of your business. I am the pack alpha, I do whatever I want. And if this pack wants to attack us to finally get rid of this boy that beat up our son, then they are very welcome to do so!” the pack alpha growled, followed by a long moment of silence. Seokjin could feel his blood run cold, fingers trembling slightly.

“You are risking the life of innocent people because of your pride”, the head omega stated quietly after a while, “You do realise that they could hurt Sungwoon as well?”

That’s when it got too much for Seokjin. He turned around and quickly ran away, not wanting to get caught. His head spun, more and more questions coming up. Seokjin wasn’t sure if he should talk to someone, if he even understood right. He went to the infirmary, leaving a note that the next one to work should inform the head omega of the list. He didn’t want to talk to her again. He wasn’t sure if he could trust her or the pack alpha anymore. But he knew that he would soon find out.

Two weeks later

“So… have you heard anything from Sunhee?”

Yoongi held his breath, not sure if he wanted to know the answer. He knew that a medic could detect a pregnancy two to three weeks after the omega slept with an alpha which meant that Sunhee could find out if she was pregnant any day now. He felt Jimin’s arms around his waist tighten and it soothed him a little. His back was pressed against Jimin’s chest, the omega’s nose nestled in his neck. It was nice to have Jimin hold him but Yoongi wished Sungwoon’s scent wouldn’t linger around them when they lay together like that.

“I saw her earlier, she has a feeling she might be pregnant but will ask the medics in the next few days”, Jimin answered quietly. Yoongi took a deep breath, nodding slightly.

“Okay. We will see then.”
Jimin kissed the sensitive skin at the back of his neck, slowly, softly. He didn’t need to say anything because Yoongi understood. They would get through this together, they wouldn’t let anything happen to Sunhee.

Yoongi had started to talk to Jimin more about his past. About Eunju, his family, memories that were close to his heart and memories that he wished to forget. They talked a lot, finding out new things about each other with every passing day. Jimin only got more beautiful, kinder and stronger in Yoongi’s eyes and he looked forward to finding out even more about him.

“Do you think Seokjin is behaving differently lately?” Jimin suddenly asked.

“He does seem a little stressed. But I feel like it’s the general atmosphere in the pack, it’s like everyone feels that something is going to happen.” Yoongi felt Jimin stiffen behind him. He didn’t want to scare Jimin, but he also didn’t want to lie. It was almost like a heavy fog lay in the air, reminding everyone that they weren’t safe. That something could happen at any second.

“What do you think will happen?” Jimin’s voice was quiet, almost a whisper, and the fear evident in his tone. Yoongi turned around in his hold and reached up to caress Jimin’s cheek gently. The omega didn’t want to look at him but Yoongi didn’t push him to.

“I can’t tell what they are planning to do but I don’t think they have given up already. Especially since our pack is no threat because we’re not taking any actions”, Yoongi said slowly, honestly, wanting Jimin to be aware of the situation, “But you know what? I fought them once and I can fight them again. Back then I was completely alone but I know I’m not now. This pack is strong, you know that.” Jimin did look up at that, eyes glassy. He took a deep breath before he nodded, eyes flickering over Yoongi’s face.

“Don’t worry, angel”, Yoongi whispered and leaned forward to kiss the tip of his nose. Jimin scrunched his nose with a small smile on his face, causing Yoongi to do it over and over again until they both giggled breathlessly.

They both somehow got lost in each other’s eyes, something that happened often at one point during their secret meet-ups. Jimin’s fingers slipped under Yoongi’s shirt, tracing circles into his warm skin while he shifted even closer, leaving almost no space between them. Yoongi could feel his heartbeat loud in his ears and was sure his cheeks were tinted pink.

“Will you kiss me once Sungwoon and I are separated? Once you can scent me and replace his perfume on my skin with yours?”
“Yes”, Yoongi answered without missing a beat, “I will kiss you as long and as much as you let me.” Jimin’s lips curled into a smile, his soft fingers still on Yoongi’s skin.

“Do you promise?” Jimin asked, eyes still slightly unsure. Yoongi looked back at him and hoped he looked as confident as he felt about this.

“I promise.”

- 

Hoseok’s stomach growled. He knew he should have eaten more this morning, but his two lovers had already caused him to be late for work. Now, he regretted having nothing more than an apple and a coffee for breakfast. He hoped he could sneak in a little break after the next patient, maybe ask someone to get him one of Yoongi’s famous baked goods from the kitchens. Hoseok whined simply thinking about the cream-filled honey buns Yoongi always made, hearing his stomach growl again.

“Busy day?” Haseul, one of the newer medics, asked. More and more alphas and omegas wanted to work as a medic which was highly appreciated by Hoseok. He remembered a huge lack of medical expects a few years back which made every workday extremely stressful. Especially now, that the situation was this tense with the possibility of another attack happening at any time, it was relieving to know how many people in the pack would be able to help hurt members.

“Ah, just hungry. I didn’t really have time to eat this morning”, he explained and grimaced regretfully. Haseul chuckled at that as she brushed a hair strand behind her ear.

“I can take your next patient, if you want. You should eat”, she offered, causing Hoseok’s eyes to lighten up.

“Really? Wait, who would be my next patient?”
“Oh, Lee Sunhee. She came in earlier, I sent her to room 4 to wait.” Hoseok froze, holding his breath for a moment. He knew why Sunhee was here, knew that the results of this could change Jimin’s life forever. He swallowed thickly before giving Haseul a reassuring smile, hoping his shift in mood wasn’t too obvious.

“Sunhee probably comes for a follow-up appointment, I gave her some medicine last time, so, uh, it’s probably better if I go! But thank you anyway.”

Before Haseul could say anything, Hoseok hurried to room 4, ignoring when his stomach growled again. He found Sunhee sitting on the hospital bed, looking nervous. Something in her scent slightly changed but it was too faint to tell if it was an indicator for a pregnancy.

“Hello”, Hoseok greeted, approaching her. Sunhee looked up and jumped a little before she relaxed again.

“Hello.”

“So, why are you here today? Any pain or other discomfort?” Sunhee huffed at that, raising her brow.

“I think you know why I’m here. I can see the way you and the rest of Jimin’s friends are looking at me. It’s always a mixture of worry, nervousness and a little bit of judgement.”

Hoseok released a breath, cheeks blushing slightly at having gotten caught. He gave her an apologetic smile but was little glad that they could get straight to the point.

“I’m sorry if we ever made you uncomfortable. But I want you to know that if you need to talk to someone about this or if things don’t go to plan, that we will be here for you. We will find a solution, okay?” He expected her to scoff or make a dismissive remark but Sunhee sighed instead, a sad smile on her lips.

“Thank you. I know I was confident in this working out but now that I’m sitting here, I’m scared. I just hope he doesn’t reject me”, she admits. Hoseok sat down next to her, not wanting to speak down to her. He didn’t want to give her false hope, but a little faith never hurt.

“Sungwoon is a responsible alpha, I know that he is a good leader of the hunters and will do his best
to be a good pack alpha one day. Do I agree with his viewpoints? No. Do I support the traditional obligations for alphas and omegas? I don’t. But I don’t think he will reject you.” Sunhee took a deep breath and nodded.

“Okay, then let’s find out if I’m pregnant.”

*Three weeks later*

Jungkook was a good hunter but he knew the others would expect a lot from him as the newest one. He felt bad that he had to take some time off from hunting last week because of Taehyung’s heat but he hoped to make it up by coming in extra early and offer Sungwoon to do some extra work. He wanted the others to respect him, to see that he was passionate about it.

He walked into the forest and noticed that it looked greener here than before. Winter would be ending soon, he could feel it, and he looked forward to Spring. Jungkook had a strange déjà-vu as he got closer to the hunter’s hut and got instantly alert when he heard a noise from the bushes. He turned around, trying to sense whether someone else was close. Another rustle set his nerves on edge as the adrenaline in his body spiked and his posture got ready for a fight.

“Show yourself!”, Jungkook called, hating how his senses got weaker in his human form.

It only took a few seconds before a figure emerged from a bush, a young man. Jungkook’s breath hitched as he recognized who it was, the familiar scent venomous now. Jungkook’s mood shifted to anger in an instant.

“What are you doing here, Mingyu?” he hissed, the pain from their last encounter still fresh in his memory.

“I want to talk”, Mingyu sighed, stopping a few feet in front of him, “Please, Jungkook.”

Jungkook shivered as he saw the alpha so close, saw his dark eyes and grey hair and saw a person he used to trust and cherish. Was this truly the same person that attacked him? That attacked his pack?
“How could you do that?”, he asked and hated how weak he sounded. Mingyu took a deep breath, avoiding his gaze.

“You’re the enemies now. Yoongi fought almost every alpha in the pack, they all see him as a huge danger...” Mingyu shrugged helplessly, causing Jungkook to clench his jaw.

“But he left! He won’t attack anyone from the pack again, he’s starting a new life here! I don’t understand why you are still trying to hunt us down.” Mingyu shifted from one foot to another, clearly uncomfortable. But Jungkook wanted answers, he couldn’t just let it go.

“Listen, when someone insults and attacks the pack alpha’s family, they can’t just expect to get away with it by escaping. It’s all about defending honour and whatnot. I don’t agree with it, but they ordered me to do it-”

“And you do everything the pack alpha tells you?”, Jungkook interrupted him with a scoff, “Even if it means attacking me?”

“What was I supposed to do, Jungkook? We have to follow the orders and – and I couldn’t do it, okay? I was supposed to hurt you last time, but I couldn’t. You were my best friend...” Mingyu’s voice began to crack and he ducked his head, looking so vulnerable that Jungkook’s heart ached. But it was too late, he couldn’t trust him any longer.

“Why are you here? To tell me you could have killed me but didn’t? Do you want me to thank you?”

“I’m here to warn you. They won’t stop to try to catch you and Yoongi. Our pack alpha tries to make deals with your pack alpha, deals that will make it easier to catch you two. You need to leave as soon as possible, believe me, you need to run.”

Jungkook felt his breath getting knocked out of his lungs, a knot in his stomach tightening painfully. He could see that Mingyu was honest and he knew what it meant. He wasn’t safe in the place he called home now, a place he learned to love.

“I’m sorry”, Mingyu added but it didn’t comfort Jungkook. He knew Mingyu would fight against them, that he had done everything he could already.
“Thank you for telling me.” Mingyu nodded before he walked back a few steps backwards, his gaze still on Jungkook.

“I see you found someone”, he called, motioning to his own neck which was still bare of a mating mark, “I hope he treats you well. I always liked you, you know?”

Jungkook nodded, he did know. He could have loved Mingyu, if things had gone differently, if they hadn’t escaped the pack. But Jungkook had Taehyung now and he loved him more than he could have ever imagined.

“Goodbye, Mingyu.”

He watched him walk away with a heavy feeling in his stomach, unsure of what the future held. But he was sure they would find a way to get through this, they always did.

Jimin tapped his fingers on the surface of the table, getting impatient. Sungwoon was late which meant that Jimin would have to let Yoongi wait and he hated that thought. Of course, they both knew that meeting like that had its risks and it could always happen that one of them couldn’t make it to meet the other but Jimin still felt bad.

The door opened then and Jimin was surprised to see Sungwoon looking very pale. His gaze was disoriented, and his walk unsteady as he approached the table.

“Did something happen? I have some food ready, I just have to heat it up-”

“We need to talk.”

Sungwoon’s voice was rough and his gaze serious as it locked with Jimin’s. For a few seconds, the
room was eerily quiet and Jimin became more nervous with each passing second that none of them talked.

“Sunhee, the omega I have been seeing to... to help with my needs, has told me something today”, Sungwoon started and Jimin could feel his heartbeat picking up, “Apparently, there was an incident. When she and I... when we met... something happened.”

Jimin tried to control his breathing as Sungwoon stammered on, wishing for nothing more than for him to finally say it.

“Sunhee is pregnant. A medic has confirmed it already.” Sungwoon’s voice shook slightly and Jimin saw that his knuckles turned white with how forceful he curled his hands into fists.

“Oh”, Jimin breathed, feeling hazy. “I see.”

“I know this is a shock now, but I need to decide what happens next. I obviously can’t leave you-”

“What?” Jimin felt his stomach turn, a cold shiver running down his spine. Sungwoon furrowed his brows and wet his lips, looking at Jimin as if his statement was the most natural thing he ever said.

“I won’t leave you, Jimin. We’ve been courting for years, we’re planning to mate soon, it’s all planned out”, he stated in a sober way. Jimin blinked rapidly, desperate not to cry.

“But- but this was before Sunhee got pregnant. You can’t just abandon her and the baby, you can’t do that.” Jimin tried not to raise his voice but he couldn’t help it, he couldn’t help feeling scared for Sunhee, for himself and for Yoongi.

“I won’t abandon the baby, I’m a good alpha”, Sungwoon answered, jaw clenched, “We would say that you wanted a baby now and Sunhee helped us. The baby would be raised by us, but we would have to mate as soon as possible to-”

“No.”

Sungwoon stopped talking, his mouth snapping shut. Jimin felt his blood boil as he hardened his
gaze on Sungwoon, straightening his back.

“I will not take Sunhee’s child away from her. I won’t ever do that”, Jimin said in a quiet but determined tone. He didn’t look away when Sungwoon’s eyes bored into his.

“And what are you suggesting we do? Sunhee can’t be an unmated omega with a child, my father wouldn’t approve and it’s not in my interest to have her suffer”, Sungwoon responded and Jimin was glad that they were at least on the same page concerning this option.

“I suggest that you mate her. You can say you fell in love with her while we were courting, it happens. You two like each other, anybody can see that.” Jimin’s knees began to shake under the table but he hoped Sungwoon could see nothing of his fear. The alpha’s expression morphed into one of outrage, his shoulders tensing up.

“You want me to mate Sunhee? Do you not even care about our courtship?”, he spat and Jimin actually had to snort at that. Did Sungwoon really think Jimin was content in their relationship? Couldn’t he see how Jimin never even smiled around him?

“Sungwoon, be honest. Are you happy? We fight all the time, we don’t see eye to eye on anything, we only try to get through dinner before you escape to Sunhee. You spend more time with her than with me and not because of sex but because you two actually enjoy spending time together. I’m not making you happy and to be completely honest, I am not happy either.” Jimin felt too much at once. He felt proud, dreadful, scared and brave at the same time. He saw the shock on Sungwoon’s face and wondered how Sungwoon could not see this earlier. Did he truly lie to himself up to the point where he didn’t even realise how he felt?

“You want to end our courtship?”, Sungwoon hissed, rage in his eyes.

“Yes.” Jimin had never been so sure of anything.

“I don’t believe you. You have always been happy, you have never said anything else!” Sungwoon’s hand slammed on the table, the sound of the thump echoing through the walls. Jimin flinched before he slammed his own palm onto the table, using even more strength than Sungwoon did.

“How? How was I supposed to say something? You threatened me with your power, you mentioned how you could ruin my future over and over and over again! I couldn’t say anything, I
fucking couldn’t!”, Jimin shouted, eyes stinging with tears. His lips trembled and his body shook with anger but Jimin’s eyes stayed on Sungwoon, not looking away for a millisecond.

“I don’t- I don’t believe you.”

Jimin released a breath, wanting to cry and scream and throw something. He couldn’t believe Sungwoon was so far from reality that he didn’t want to see the truth. He ran his hands over his face, tired and exhausted.

“Sungwoon. This must stop. Sunhee is pregnant with your child. There is no chance that I will take the child away from her. I know you like her, and she likes you too. Mating her is the only thing that makes sense. I will tell everyone that you simply fell out of love, it happens. You will still be pack alpha, will still be respected, will be the father of your child.” Jimin took a deep breath before he continued. “You can fight this. But I’m so, so tired. We aren’t right for each other, I’m sorry, but you know we aren’t. You and Sunhee could be happy together. Please, Sungwoon.”

Sungwoon opened and closed his mouth for a moment, looking distressed. Jimin thought he could see tears in his eyes and for the first time, helplessness.

“Does that mean- When I mate Sunhee… will you go to Min Yoongi?”

Jimin stared. He couldn’t believe that Sungwoon’s pride and jealousy was the one thing that made him hold onto Jimin. Sungwoon would be together with Jimin, would even mate him, only for Yoongi to not have him. And Jimin never felt more disgusted. He stood up and slowly walked over to Sungwoon, dragging each step. He stopped when he stood right in front of him, laid one hand on his shoulder and looked right into Sungwoon’s eyes when he spoke again.

“You keep saying that you are a good alpha. Prove it. Do the right thing for you, Sunhee and for me. This, between us, is over. Of course, you can choose to ruin my future, to hurt Yoongi, to do anything in your power to never let me be happy. But then I ask you: Is that what a good pack alpha does? Go to Sunhee. Fix this. Otherwise I have no idea how you can call yourself a good alpha.”

Sungwoon slowly stood up, his gaze unreadable. He turned around got his coat, put it on without looking at Jimin. Only when he was ready to go outside did he face Jimin again, gaze hard.

“You know what? You’re a piece of shit. You lie and you lie and I’m over it. Go to your Yoongi, see if I care, you probably fucked him already anyway. I will mate Sunhee because she is a good
omega and she won’t lie or fuck another alpha. So, go to hell. Goodbye.”

And with that, Sungwoon left. He walked away, out of Jimin’s life. And Jimin laughed. It was only a huff at first, a chuckle. But Jimin started to laugh more and more and he cried because he was done. He was done with Sungwoon, he was finally free. Jimin didn’t remember the last time he felt so free. He laughed and cried, ran his hand through his hair and paced through Sungwoon’s hut. And he thanked his grandmother, thanked her for telling him even as a child that he was Jimin first and omega second. He wasn’t Sungwoon’s omega anymore. Jimin was Jimin.

“Sungwoon and Sunhee will mate in two days, right? I hope my new dress is ready then, it’s a deep blue colour and-”

“Excuse me, but this is a library”, Namjoon announced, giving the young omega and alpha a scolding look, “Either you are quiet inside, or you talk outside.”

The pups exchanged a look before they packed their things and hurried away. Namjoon sighed, a little sad that gossip was apparently more important than books, but he also couldn’t blame them for talking about the biggest event in the pack since the attack. Everyone woke up to an invitation to Sunhee’s and Sungwoon’s mating and word going around that Sungwoon and Jimin ended their courtship. Seokjin, Namjoon and Hoseok had tried to talk to Jimin to ask him what exactly had happened but Jimin was nowhere to be found. Namjoon worried for him but Yoongi had disappeared as well so he guessed they were together. He understood if they wanted to spend time together now and convinced Seokjin not to go to Yoongi’s hut to look for them.

The mating of the pack alpha was a big deal for the pack and what everybody talked about, most people excited for the next celebration. It seemed as if most people didn’t even question what exactly happened with or to Jimin and Namjoon had to admit that it was a disappointing realisation. Then again, Jimin and Sungwoon hadn’t been seen together as a happy couple in a long time so he could understand why not many people seemed surprised.

Namjoon was about to rearrange some books when he heard a loud gong from outside. The sound
appeared repeatedly, indicating some sort of alarm. Namjoon had never heard it before and felt confused, dread creeping up his spine. He reluctantly left the safety of his books and walked outside, not before making sure no one else was still in the library. Following the gong, Namjoon already saw a crowd of people gathering, most of them with looks of fear and worry in their faces. He looked for one of his friends, but he didn’t see anyone, the place getting more and more crowded and people starting to panic. He didn’t know how long he waited, the loud sound of the alarm vibrating through his body until the pack alpha spoke up.

“Ha Pack, I have gathered you all together for an announcement.”

Namjoon saw Hoseok and Seokjin further away, whispering to each other. When they noticed him, they both waved happily and Namjoon couldn’t help but to smile seeing the two people he loved and their adorable antics.

“I am deeply agonized to tell you that the Shin pack has threatened to attack us again. And I have decided that our pack needs to take action now. We cannot let them get to us, our kids, our elders.”

Namjoon’s smile fell from his face, blood running cold. He swallowed thickly, waiting for the pack alpha’s next words.

“We will attack. Every alpha that is unmated by next week will fight for our pack. We will take the offensive and defend our honour. Unmated alphas, the future of this pack will lay in your hands!”

In that moment, Namjoon’s world stopped.
Carry Me Home

Chapter Summary

...where one journey comes to an end. And another one begins.

Chapter Notes

Hello everyone...let's do this one more time, shall we?

I planned to tell you to listen to "The hardest part" by Roy Kim the second time Jimin's POV starts...but because I just found out about some alligations concerning him and I understand that some people wouldn't want to listen to him, you guys could maybe listen to another quiet, sad song that comes to your mind (there are also some lullaby playlists on youtube)

(there will be a long text at the end of this chapter)

PLEASE ENJOY <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Yoongi was worried. He hadn’t heard from Jimin since the day before and it was past the time that Jimin usually showed up. Ever since Hoseok had told the group that Sunhee was indeed pregnant, a dreadful feeling had settled in Yoongi’s gut, nagging and pulling at his nerves. Yoongi wasn’t scared of Sungwoon. He wasn’t scared of getting hit by him, of his threats, of his power. Sungwoon could get Yoongi banned from this pack, for all he cared. But it wasn’t only him and Jungkook anymore. Jimin had become a part of Yoongi’s life and a significant part at that. If Sungwoon was to hurt Jimin, humiliate him or ban him, Yoongi couldn’t recover easily from it. The guilt that it was his fault would eat him up alive, the pain upon seeing Jimin getting hurt something that Yoongi imagined unbearable.

He jumped up from where he was sitting on the old mattress, unable to stay still. Sunhee’s plan was foolish and completely unpredictable. Yoongi didn’t know how he could check up on Jimin, if there was any way to make sure he was alright. Pacing through the room, he wondered if it was too late to go to Seokjin’s hut, since the alpha always knew what to do. Yoongi had half the mind to put on his coat and go to Sungwoon’s hut himself to see what happened, when he heard someone entering the hut. The steps were quick and loud, as if someone was running towards the room he was in. Yoongi prepared for a fight, his instinct kicking in, when suddenly the door was swung open by Jimin, the
omega out of breath and a tear-stained face.

“What happened-”

“He’s gone.” A smile formed on Jimin’s face, his voice sounding wet. “Sungwoon will mate Sunhee, he’s gone. I’m not his omega anymore.”

And just within a few seconds, Yoongi felt a weight lift from his shoulders, his knees buckling and causing him to fall. He could feel his throat burning and eyes stinging as he held back his tears and tried to grasp Jimin’s words. Sungwoon would not mate Jimin. Jimin was not trapped in Sungwoon’s claws anymore.

“Youngi”, Jimin said breathlessly as he made his way towards the alpha. Jimin helped him get up before he buried his face in his neck, scenting him until Yoongi could only smell Jimin’s jasmine scent on him. Yoongi closed his eyes with a sigh, basking in the feeling of finally carrying Jimin’s scent on him, finally being able to hold him without any restraint.

Once Jimin was done, Yoongi gently cupped the omega’s chin and tilted it so that his neck was exposed. He gulped, the scent of burnt wood still clinging to his skin. Yoongi took a deep breath before he let the tip of his nose trace circles into Jimin’s scent gland, leaving invisible marks of his touch. He kissed his neck and nibbled on the warm skin, feeling nothing but pure bliss upon seeing the content expression on Jimin’s face whenever he looked up. Yoongi believed he had never seen Jimin this happy and despite his swollen red eyes and red nose, he thought that Jimin had never been any more beautiful than in this moment. His smile was radiant and Yoongi longed to kiss his lips in a way that it almost pained him.

“Jimin… Can I? Please?”, Yoongi asked, glancing towards his rosy lips nervously. He didn’t want to go too fast and wasn’t sure if Jimin felt too overwhelmed still.

“Please”, was all Jimin answered however and Yoongi could feel his heart beat out of his chest.

He leaned forward to close the distance between them, feeling Jimin’s soft lips against his own. Yoongi could feel butterflies tickling in his stomach and heat shooting to his face but he was convinced that his first kiss was absolutely perfect. Yoongi didn’t know what to do or how to move so he let Jimin take the lead and followed his gentle movements. Jimin’s hands gripped his shirt tightly while his own held steadily onto Jimin’s waist. They exchanged soft kisses, lips shyly dancing around each other, exploring and discovering the beauty of finally being this intimate.
Yoongi could feel the anticipation inside his body building up as their kisses got faster and more intense. He was a little scared and unsure what to do but he trusted Jimin. It was as if they couldn’t stop, both craving to be as close to the other as possible. Even while Jimin led them to the mattress, Yoongi kept on kissing Jimin’s lips, his cheeks, his neck. Sometimes they would kiss sweetly and giggle, then the next moment their kisses became passionate and intense. It was as if Jimin and Yoongi discovered each other from a completely different side, finally free to be as close as they both wanted to for such a long time. Yoongi didn’t know for how long they continued like that, holding each other without a care in the world. At some point, Jimin told him exactly what happened between him and Sungwoon and afterwards calmed Yoongi down by scenting him again. They didn’t know when the night had become morning and the dark of the night had vanished, but it all didn’t matter. Yoongi was simply happy.

Jimin wasn’t sure when they fell asleep but by the time he woke up, the room was illuminated by the broad daylight from outside and his hand numb from where it lay under Yoongi’s torso. He stretched his whole body, a wide grin on his face as he recalled everything that happened ever since he entered the hut. Jimin could feel Yoongi’s lips still on his skin and sighed at the pleasant tickling in his stomach.

Next to him, Yoongi groaned slightly as he shifted with his eyes still closed and lips jutted into a pout. Jimin chuckled and reached out to softly run his index finger along the alpha’s flushed cheeks.

“Good morning, munchkin”, he whispered before pecking Yoongi’s nose, laughing when Yoongi scrunched it afterwards. He wanted to wake up like this every day.

“Mornin’”, Yoongi yawned, stretching slowly. His arms somehow ended wrapped around Jimin, but the omega didn’t complain, snuggling closer to Yoongi instead.

“I’m so happy.” Those words sounded like a beautiful melody to Jimin’s ears and he couldn’t help but to bury his nose into Yoongi’s scent gland again, loving the scent of pines mixed with his own in the air.

“I can’t believe I can finally be with my soulmate”. Jimin sighed. He could feel Yoongi chuckle and pulled back a little to give him a questioning look. “What’s funny?”
“I didn’t think you believed in soulmates. It’s cute.” Yoongi shrugged and gave Jimin a quick peck to his lips.

“Oh, I never told you, did I?”, Jimin suddenly realised and sat up, receiving an odd look from Yoongi who sat up as well. Seokjin had explained the whole history of soulbounds to Jimin just a few days ago and he had completely forgotten to tell Yoongi about it.

“Well, you remember how you once tried to tell me you could feel my pain? I also noticed that my instincts always led me to you and some other hints had led me to believe that something was going on. I talked to Seokjin and he suspected that we are soulbound. He did some research and it really does make sense”, Jimin explained quickly, hoping Yoongi would receive the news well. To his surprise, Yoongi simply gaped at him.

“Soulbound means that-”, Jimin started to clarify but Yoongi interrupted him, looking still slightly shaken.

“I know, I mean, we learned this in school. It was just one class but- but I know the basics. Wow. I mean. Wow”, the alpha stammered before his eyes widened, “Who do you think created the bond? Is it because of Sungwoon or did I create it after I ran from my old pack?” Jimin considered that for a moment and hummed. There was no way of finding it out but a part of him believed it was the both of them that needed someone to hold on to.

“I’m not sure”, he shrugged and tried to give Yoongi a reassuring smile.

“Does that mean… Wait, what does that mean for us?” Yoongi looked oddly concerned and not happy at all about this revelation.

“What do you mean?”

“Well… Do you think you only like me because of the bond? And now that Sungwoon is with someone else, does that mean the soulbound will vanish?”, Yoongi’s bottom lip was jutted out with a heavy, almost anxious frown on his face. Jimin’s heart ached seeing Yoongi like that and he quickly reached out to cup his cheeks.

“I don’t care about the bond, Yoongi. I didn’t fall in love with you because I could understand what you feel or because my instincts led me towards you. I fell in love with you because you are honest, caring, sweet, funny, and the bravest person I know. You are the one that opened my eyes when I
was afraid to see. You helped me become proud of myself and you love me like no one else did before. Even if this bond vanishes, I will still love you for those things.” Jimin ended this little speech with a long kiss to Yoongi’s lips, knowing that Yoongi needed to know just how much he loved him.

A loud gong suddenly caused both of them to flinch. Jimin pulled back and gave Yoongi a questioning look but the alpha seemed just as lost as he was. The sound continued, chiming over and over again. Jimin didn’t know what was going on but his stomach clenched uncomfortably.

“Should we go out? It seems to be some kind of alarm”, he asked but Yoongi shook his head.

“I don’t think it’s smart to face Sungwoon and the pack alpha smelling like each other just the morning after you two ended the courtship. If we’re under attack I think we would be safer if we hid here, nobody would enter a half burnt down hut.” Jimin nodded and stood up, looking for a place to hide.

“How about your closet? Nothing’s in there yet, right?”, Jimin suggested as he opened the old closet. There was barely enough room for two, but they could fit.

“Yeah, that’s good”, Yoongi agreed as he quickly pulled out a small bottle of scented alcohol and splashed it onto the bed. “It won’t help much because I’m still in the room but at least the room won’t reek of me. The Shin pack knows my scent very well by now.”

They both hurried inside the cupboard and closed the door, staying as quiet as they could. They both had their arms wrapped around each other and Jimin only noticed now how loud his heartbeat was in his ears. Yoongi’s soothing motions of tracing circles on his skin didn’t help much to calm him down, the silence that surrounded the hut almost suffocating.

“I don’t think it’s an attack”, Yoongi whispered after a while, breaking the unbearable silence, “We would have heard screams and howls. It can’t be an attack.”

“But what was that gong then? Why would the pack alpha possibly assemble the whole pack together?”
Namjoon tried to focus. He was breathing, in and out. In and out. His vision switched between blurry and clear while his heart beat loudly in his ears. In and out. His molars hurt from clenching his jaw. He could see people empty the place, none of them with smiles on their faces. In and out. Namjoon couldn’t hyperventilate. Not here, not now. He felt dizzy and a little bit nauseous, but it wasn’t too bad yet. He could calm himself down if he simply breathed. In… and out.

“We won’t let this happen, Namjoon, we won’t.”

Namjoon was grabbed by his hand and led towards some huts. He could feel a hand on his back and another one on his shoulder.

“How are you planning on boycotting this, Jin? How are we supposed to stop this?”

Namjoon swallowed but it felt dry and hurt his throat. He could feel his hand being squeezed tightly.

“I don’t know but we can’t let him fight! Do you want him to get killed out there, Hoseok?”

“Of course not! Do you even hear what you’re saying?”

Namjoon shook his head and tried to compose himself again. He could see Seokjin to his right, eyes red and glassy, not fitting to the tense expression on his face. Hoseok was next to him on the other side, brows furrowed, and lips pressed together. He could see the mating marks on both their necks, on the spot where his neck was still completely free. They would be safe. At least, they would be safe.

They walked towards the burnt down hut of Yoongi, and Namjoon suddenly noticed that Taehyung and Jungkook were right behind them, faces pale and worried. He realised that not only he but Yoongi would be affected too. Maybe he and Jimin could mate. Maybe he could somehow get out of this.

“Yoongi? Jimin? Are you hear?”, Seokjin called as they entered the hut. There was some noise from further back before they all heard Yoongi’s voice echoing through the walls.
“We’re here! Come to the bedroom!”

Everyone silently walked towards the room, the tension heavy in the air. Jimin and Yoongi were both sitting on a mattress in the corner of the room, one of Yoongi’s arms wrapped around Jimin’s shoulder, the other one softly stroking his knee. Namjoon hoped they would mate.

“What happened? Why was there an alarm?”, Jimin asked as soon as everyone was inside.

“The pack alpha announced this bullshit plan of his”, Seokjin answered through gritted teeth as he closed the window and the curtains and locked the door. “I don’t want anyone to see that we’re discussing something here. Even if nobody should be out here, I honestly don’t trust this pack anymore.”

“What do you mean with plan?”, Yoongi’s hold around Jimin tightened and Namjoon felt the sudden urge to sit down. He walked towards the wall next to the mattress and slid down, giving his burning legs a rest. Hoseok was by his side in seconds and Jungkook crawled towards Yoongi where he rested his head on his brother’s shoulders. He had tears in his eyes and his hands clung to Yoongi’s shirt. Taehyung and Seokjin stayed in the middle of the room, postures rigid and deep frowns on their faces. There was a moment of silence in which everyone seemed to zone out, lost in their thoughts.

“The pack alpha will send every alpha to attack the Shin pack who isn’t mated by the end of this week”, Seokjin said in a sober tone, ripping the band-aid off quickly.

“What?”, Jimin’s eyes were wide, angry. His whole face visibly flushed, the fury in his expression almost shocking to Namjoon who had never seen this side of Jimin. “What about Sungwoon? Isn’t he an unmated alpha?”

“The invitations are already out, he and Sunhee will be mated by the end of the week”, Hoseok answered with a scoff.

“Might explain how that happened?”, Taehyung suddenly piped in, “You two were in a courtship just yesterday.” Jimin’s shoulders deflated as he rubbed his hands over his face exhaustedly.

“Sunhee told him she was pregnant, and I somehow convinced him to mate her. Shit. He was really angry when he left yesterday, I wouldn’t be surprised if he had a say in this.”
“It’s not your fault, Jimin, I’m pretty sure the pack alpha would just have let them attack the whole pack otherwise. You probably saved all the omegas, mated alphas, and children in this pack”. Yoongi sighed, nibbling on lower lip nervously.

“We need to do something”, Seokjin announced before he turned to Namjoon, eyes hard, “And before anybody even thinks of simply accepting this and sacrificing himself, don’t. I won’t accept it and it’s not even open for discussion.” Namjoon felt a rush of affection for Seokjin, giving him a tired but fond smile that indicated his surrender on that matter.

“If Yoongi goes, I would go as well”, Jungkook sniffed, to which Yoongi immediately shook his head.

“No way. They will just use you to hurt me, it’s best if at least one of us stays far away from them. And think of Taehyung, will you just leave him here? Without his mate?” Jungkook’s gaze shifted to Taehyung who looked like he was about to cry. He immediately sighed and nodded, probably realising that this was not an option.

“We need to make sure that none of us go”, Seokjin stated, “First, Yoongi. Can you and Jimin mate before the end of this week?” Namjoon and Hoseok both gasped at Seokjin’s proposal but Jimin didn’t seem deterred.

“Yes, I can mate Yoongi as soon as possible”, the omega said in a confident tone but Yoongi quickly spoke up.

“No, this is not going to happen. Beside the point that the head omega won’t arrange a mating ceremony that quick for us anyway because she and her family want you to suffer and me to go because I’m the reason for this fight in the first place, I wouldn’t mate you just yet. Even though I would be ready, you just got out of a toxic courtship. I don’t want you to bind yourself to me on impulse and regret it for the rest of your life because you were never free. Our courtship should be slow and without pressure, just like you deserved to have had the first time you were courted. I want you to be sure before you mate me.”

“This is not about impulse, this is about saving you”, Jungkook spoke up, sounding frustrated, “Believe me, I want Jimin to have the best experience too, but do you really think he will be happier if you die the second the Shin pack even smells you?” Namjoon felt his stomach turn at Jungkook’s words and was glad that Hoseok took his hand in his own, grounding him.

“Jungkook...”, Hoseok called softly.
“I know it sounds brutal but we have to face the truth! What I’m saying is exactly what is going to happen if we don’t do anything!”

“Jungkook, I know you’re scared for me but I can’t let Jimin sacrifice his whole life for me”, Yoongi argued, sounding calmer than before.

“Why are you two deciding what Jimin does anyway? Stop talking over him and let him decide!” It was Taehyung that suddenly got all eyes on him. The omega had his arms crossed as he looked at Jimin intensely waiting for him to voice his opinion.

“I’m sorry, I just didn’t want to put him in this situation”, Yoongi groaned before turning to Jimin, “I don’t want to talk over you but it’s like asking someone to either sacrifice their own life or the life of the person they love and it’s a cruel ultimatum.” Jimin looked conflicted, avoiding all eye contact.

“Well, what do you say, Jimin? Do you want to mate Yoongi? You love him, right?”, Jungkook pressed, eyes so desperate it hurt Namjoon to even look. Jimin took a deep breath before he looked up, his own eyes glassy now.

“I do… but Yoongi is right, I don’t want to mate now. I know that I want to mate Yoongi one day but I’m not ready yet. But if it means I can save Yoon-”

“No, no but”, Yoongi interrupted quietly, “You don’t want to mate. Everyone needs to accept that. We made enough sacrifices to survive here already, I couldn’t live knowing the person I love mated me despite their will.”

“Tae and I did it and we’re happy”, Jungkook tried, gaze boring into the mattress. Yoongi turned to completely face his brother now held him gently by the back of his head.

“I know but we don’t know if it will always somehow work like that. Jimin has been close to an alpha he didn’t feel comfortable with for three years, I don’t know how his body will react if he just mates another alpha now. There is a reason we usually court beforehand, a mating is very sensitive to one’s feelings and instincts. And like I said, the chances of the head omega organising a mating ceremony now are very low.” Yoongi explained it to Jungkook quietly, speaking in a voice that was saved for only his brother in moments like that. Namjoon realised once again the gravity of this situation, that his whole life would change within one week.
“What do we do then?”, Seokjin asked before he exhaustedly walked over to Hoseok and Namjoon and laid down on both their laps.

“We could run.” Taehyung and Jungkook exchanged a look before the omega continued to speak. “There are some packs a little further away that the Shin pack has already ‘visited’ to see if Jungkook and Yoongi are there. If we run together, the pain of leaving the pack won’t hurt as much because we are still in a smaller form of a pack. Jungkook and Yoongi are strong enough to leave a pack again by now and we could easily hunt, save our bearings and fight any kind of attackers on the way.”

“How do you know all that? Did you think of running away beforehand?”, Jimin asked, looking as confused as Namjoon felt in that moment.

“I talked to Mingyu recently and he told me to run before the pack attacks”, Jungkook admitted.

“What? Why did you talk to him? Why didn’t you say anything? Did he hurt you?” Yoongi seemed to be the only one to know who Mingyu was, the other ones staring at Jungkook in silence.

“Who is Mingyu?”, Jimin wanted to know.

“He was my best friend in the Shin pack”, Jungkook explained, “And also one of the big wolfs that attacked the pack at our mating ceremony and the one I saw later when I was alone in the forest. But this time I talked to him in his human form and he warned me about other attacks coming and said that we should run away as soon as possible. I did some research after that, but I haven’t looked much into it yet.”

“Wait, wait, wait- You’re telling me the wolf that attacked this pack used to be your best friend? And we’re supposed to trust his word?” Seokjin sat up again, raising his voice.

“We don’t need to trust him to know it’s not safe to stay here”, Taehyung responded, “Running is the only option we have.”

“Everyone”, Namjoon spoke up for the first time since everything happened, his voice sounding hoarse, “Why don’t we all try to find out more about this? See if we can find out what packs are good with trades, treat the people right and have a good pack alpha that would keep us safe. We all need a night to think about this, realise what and who we would leave behind if we were to run and if we are willing to make that sacrifice. Yoongi and I will find some solution somehow but right
now, we’re all too overwhelmed to make thought-out decisions. Let’s try to calm down for now, okay?”

- 

Jungkook’s fingers hurt from all the writing but he tried to ignore the light stinging in order to finish his notes. He had asked a few of the hunters if they knew about the trades of the other pack and found out which pack bore which resources. So far, the packs in the north seemed to always be fully stocked on nutrition, smaller packs focusing on single foods. The packs in the east didn’t seem well off since they had a lot of wool that didn’t trade well under wolves. West and East were estranged which meant danger in case one of the packs attacked. However, there apparently hadn’t been any recent incidents which meant that the pack alphas were capable of handling situations like that well.

He also heard different stories about traditions and how the pack members were treated in each pack. He immediately crossed out the more traditional ones and looked for packs with lesser alphas or more tolerating rules. There were a few smaller packs that seemed to treat the pack members well and were open to new wolves entering the pack and Jungkook made sure to write down every single one of them, even the ones further away.

“I’m going to bed.”

Jungkook hummed absent-mindedly as he continued to write, brows furrowed, and lips pursed. He wasn’t sure how late it was but the sun was down and the nightly silence already settled outside. He was so focused that he jumped a little when he felt a touch on his shoulder before he recognised Taehyung’s scent. Relaxing immediately, Jungkook leaned back against his mate’s stomach and closed his eyes. Taehyung softly massaged his shoulders, using just enough pressure to make Jungkook release a pleased sigh.

“Come to bed with me, hm? You need rest”, Taehyung said quietly.

“Can’t”, Jungkook murmured back with his eyes still closed, “I need to finish the notes and show them to the others tomorrow.” He heard Taehyung sigh, the motions on his shoulders stopping.
“Jungkook... We haven’t decided if we’ll run yet. Namjoon said that everyone should think about whether we even want to consider this option.” Jungkook tensed. He turned in his seat to face his mate, trying to control his emotions.

“This is the safest option, you said so yourself earlier. We have to run.”

“It’s still not an easy choice to make”, Taehyung responded in a harsher tone, surprising Jungkook. “We all have family here, have friends, siblings and parents. I grew up here, this is my home. I know this pack isn’t the best but have you considered that Jimin just started talking to his brother again? That Namjoon and his mother are incredibly close, that Seokjin looks up to his brother and Hoseok’s sister means the world to him?”

Jungkook was taken aback by that, not having considered this point. His family was Yoongi and he could never leave him like that which is why he planned to run away. He didn’t realise what the others would have to leave behind, too focused on saving his own brother.

“And what about you? Do you want to run?” Jungkook didn’t want to ask, too scared of what the answer might be. But he needed to know. They were mated now, together in whatever they had to face. He needed to know that Taehyung was on board too.

“I run if you run, Jungkook”, Taehyung responded with a breathless chuckle, his eyes sad, “I will run because you’re my mate and I love you. Because you need your brother and he needs you too. Because my best friend and all the people that somehow became like a family to me will run and I couldn’t let them go alone. But it’s not going to be easy. I love my parents and my siblings. Even though I hate my job, I hate the pack alpha and the way this pack treats omegas, it’s still... my home. And leaving will hurt. It will hurt so badly.” His voice cracked with a sob and Jungkook was on his feet in seconds, pulling Taehyung into a hug. He knew Taehyung didn’t have to agree with the plan, he could have tried to convince Jungkook to let the others run on their own. Instead, he reasoned with Jungkook, knew that Jungkook needed his brother and wanted to support his friends.

“I sometimes think I don’t deserve you”, Jungkook admitted, brushing through his mate’s hair. “I love you.”
Hoseok gave Mrs Choi the medicine with what he hoped was a convincing smile. He crouched down and shook the hand of her daughter, making the five-year-old promise that she would always take her medicine. It seemed the room was shaking slightly as he stood up, exhaustion blurring his vision after every harsh movement he made. A short wave, words of good luck and final nod before the mother and daughter walked out, leaving Hoseok alone in the hallway to release a breath.

He walked to the desk at the front where one of the medics always tried to stay in case of someone coming in because of an emergency. Seokjin sat there, aggressively writing something down and scowling down into the book where they kept the records of all patients. Hoseok leaned against the desk, looking at his mate for a few moments before he decided to speak up.

“If you hold the pen any tighter, it will break.”

“See if I care”, Seokjin grunted in response, “This new medic filled in everything wrong, I have to redo the records of half of his patients. God, I hate working with idiots.” Hoseok frowned at Seokjin’s use of words but decided not to comment on it. Instead, he reached out to hold Seokjin’s hand and stops him from writing. When the alpha looks up with a question on his face, Hoseok raised his brows, knowing Seokjin wanted to vent about something completely different.

“Talk to me, love.” Hoseok held Seokjin’s gaze until Seokjin released a frustrated sigh, tears shooting to his eyes immediately.

“I have to do so much here. I have the responsibility to have the infirmary up and going, to make sure we have all medicines and balms, I work in the new medics and correct their mistakes. Do you know how many times someone has come to me to ask me to look at a patient? They are counting on me here.” Seokjin swallowed thickly, shaking his head. There was something desperate in his eyes, something Hoseok rarely saw on his mate.

“What you’re saying is, you don’t know if you can afford to leave. You don’t want to run”, Hoseok concluded, squeezing Seokjin’s head reassuringly. They hadn’t talked about Taehyung and Jungkook’s plan yet, both too lost in their own thoughts after they got home. Namjoon had told them he needed to be alone for the night which didn’t make things easier, both Hoseok and Seokjin not wanting Namjoon to distance himself from them because of the situation. The both of them had laid in bed afterwards, wrapped around each other but gazes far away, thinking about their future. Hoseok had wondered if Seokjin would be willing to leave the infirmary.

“I want to run if that means keeping Namjoon save. But what happens to the people here? What if the Shin pack attacks again and they will be short on two medics? What if more will run and we won’t have enough people here to tend to the hurt members? I can’t just blindly run, trying to forget the life I had before that.”
“That’s true”, Hoseok agreed, his mind spinning. He wasn’t sure what to think. He loved Namjoon, they both did, but giving up their life in the pack was a big step. A step, they had to either choose or deny without enough time to think all this through.

“What do you think about the plan?”, Seokjin asked, looking as if he hoped Hoseok would have the perfect answer to erase all his worries.

“I thought a lot about my sister and parents. I know they should be safe here, with her being an omega and my parents being mated, but never seeing them again? Never? I don’t know what to think.”

“Maybe we could write letters. Or visit our families somehow. You only tear your bond with the pack when you’re separated from the pack alpha for several hours”, Seokjin suggested, shrugging slightly. Hoseok considered that with a hum.

“It would be risky though, if anybody from the Shin pack would see us, they could follow us to see where Yoongi and Jungkook are or something. Letters could work… It’s not the same but… you know”, Hoseok exhaled deeply, shoulders slumping.

“But Namjoon”, Seokjin finished the thought, a knowing look in his eyes.

“But Namjoon.”

It seemed they both had subconsciously made up their minds already, the love for Namjoon overweighting the other arguments.

“So, I’m too late already?”

Hoseok and Seokjin turned around the see Namjoon behind them, hair a mess and dark circles under his eyes. He looked exhausted, more so than them and Hoseok couldn’t blame him. Namjoon silently walked over to them and leaned his head onto Hoseok’s shoulder.

“It’s the only option. We will somehow make it work, make sure the new medics are trained enough, find a way to see our families. We can find solutions”, Hoseok said quietly, rubbing Namjoon’s back
“You two are mated. You are safe. I don’t want you to leave your life behind because of me, you two have each other already.” Namjoon sounded almost resigned, as if he had made his peace with the fact that they would part.

“Get that thought out of your mind right now, Namjoon”, Seokjin scolded, “We are three now. We promised each other that to us, we all are mated, whether you have the mating mark or not. We won’t break that promise now. We love you, you big idiot.”

Namjoon seemed to smile a little at that and Hoseok felt his heart swell. Seokjin pulled the alpha into his lip to kiss him and held him tightly. Hoseok was happy to see his alphas like that and carded his hand through Namjoon’s hair as they kissed, not feeling like kissing but rather just looking at the two loves of his life. He was lost in their soft but urgent kisses, mind still exhausted and stressed and didn’t even hear the door open behind him.

“What the fuck.”

They all jumped and turned around to see three hunters in the doorway, all from Sungwoon’s closer circle of friends. Hoseok instantly stepped forward, hoping to hide the alphas behind the desk.

“What can I help you with? Is it urgent?”, he could hear his own voice waver, could feel his heartbeat race as he saw the young alphas’ gazes zooming in on the two people behind him.

“Absolutely disgusting”, one of them snarled, “One omega and two alphas? What kind of slut are you?”

“One isn’t enough apparently.”

“Those alphas are even into it, it’s embarrassing.”

“They probably suck each other’s dick when their omega demands it, like some kind of slaves.”

“That happens when you let your omega decide anything, they just -”
The alpha didn’t finish as Seokjin jumped at him, pinning the human down in his wolf form. The two hunters changed within seconds and Hoseok could hear Namjoon change behind him as well. He felt frozen, feet rooted to the ground as he saw Namjoon and Seokjin fight the alphas. He heard howls and snarls, not knowing who it belonged to and he could feel panic build up inside of him until he changed as well, ready to fight as fell.

But as soon as Hoseok so much as pushed one of hunters, people from outside entered the infirmary, having heard the commotion, and pulled the wolves apart. It was all loud and blurry and Hoseok only realised he was ordered to leave the infirmary when someone yelled it right into his ear. He didn’t even know who it was but his ears pulled back immediately and he followed Seokjin and Namjoon outside, both bleeding slightly but not seeming too hurt. He could see other medics rush inside, probably to tend to the hunters. It all got out of hand. Hoseok knew they didn’t have an option not to run now.

“**You got into a fight?** In wolf form? Have you lost your minds?”

Taehyung was mad. He wasn’t mad often but when he was, he didn’t easily calm down again. It was simply the tip of the iceberg, the extra factor of stress and stupidity they did not need at that moment. They were all tired. They were all upset. Every one of them was emotionally stressed to a point where Taehyung knew none of them got any sleep the previous night. And yet, he looked at Namjoon and Seokjin, sitting on his bed, scratches all over their body. It wasn’t anything serious, they would heal in no time; but what none of them needed was another reason for the pack to keep an eye on them. If anyone saw them run away, it would be easy for the Shin pack to track them down and that would have fatal consequences for not only Yoongi and Jungkook but all of them. Taehyung was fuming.

“So, they know you’re a polyamorous couple now”, Yoongi stated with a tired sigh as he sat down at the edge of the bed. Taehyung felt like a ticking time bomb with everything going on and had half the mind to hold Jimin still who was pacing through the room. But he knew his best friend, knew Jimin needed to pace before he exploded, just like the rest of them. Jungkook lay flat on their bed right behind Namjoon and Seokjin, and Hoseok stared out the window, probably not even listening.

“I know we shouldn’t have gotten into this fight. I’m sorry if we made things harder”, Namjoon said meekly, giving him and Yoongi an apologetic look.
“There’s no point in feeling bad about it now, Joon. We need to find a solution, that’s was important at the moment.” Taehyung didn’t know if Yoongi said that because he actually believed it or because he understood Namjoon and Seokjin and would have fought as well if anybody attacked Jimin like that.

“Did I understand right that we all want to run?”, Taehyung asked into the round, getting weak nods from everyone. “You too, Jimin? What about Jihyun?”

“I’ll tell him tonight, he will come with us. I mean, he’d have to fight otherwise, and he fits into our group”, Jimin answered as he stopped pacing. He lay down on the bed beside Jungkook, a lost look in his eyes. “The attack is supposed to be in three days. I think it would be smart to leave before that because they will have their eyes on us on that day. Plus, we need to get out of here before the rumour about Hoseok, Namjoon and Seokjin spreads.” Taehyung tilted his head.

“When exactly are you planning on leaving then? This day is almost over, tomorrow is the bonfire to send the alphas off and they are already leaving the day after—”

“Wait”, Namjoon interrupted him, perking up, “There is a bonfire?”

“They sent out invitations this morning and have posters up everywhere. There will be a big bonfire for all the alphas that will participate in the attack”, Yoongi explained, “We started to cook the food today and it’s been hell. This bonfire will be huge.”

“But that’s perfect, isn’t it? That’s the distraction we need!”, Namjoon exclaimed, standing up and looking at the others.

“Wouldn’t it be more likely to see us then?”, Jungkook asked as he sat up, “I mean, usually they are all inside and resting but tomorrow they’ll be outside and could roam everywhere.” Seokjin turned around to look at Jungkook at that, eyes lighting up.

“No, Namjoon’s right, that’s actually perfect! If they see us run during a usual night, it would be suspicious but when everybody is out, they will think that we are coming to party like everybody else! We can say we’re taking a walk in the forest while a few of us bring our bags and stuff outside ,and most of the people will be too drunk to even care much, believe me. This is our chance. We’ll run tomorrow.”
Jimin was practically buzzing as he made his way towards his parent’s hut. They had decided on a pack before they all parted ways and Jimin couldn’t be more satisfied with the choice. The final decision was between the Kang Pack in the north and the Yoon Pack that was placed South from them but since the Yoon Pack was close to their pack now and traded often enough that information about them could easily be slipped, they voted on running to the Kang pack. It was small and its focus was on the fruit market since they grew some berries no other pack did. The pack apparently had been taking in some omegas that were thrown out from other packs, however it was strict with rules and didn’t like to keep any members that caused tension or fights in the pack. As far as Jungkook could tell, it wasn’t too keen on traditional mating bonds which was perfect for Namjoon, Hoseok and Seokjin.

He gently tapped on the window of Jihyun’s room, hoping his brother would open it and let him in. The lights were already out, and the curtains closed so Jimin guessed Jihyun was already asleep so he knocked a little louder onto the glass. It took a few minutes before he heard noises from inside and a head peaked out from behind the curtains. Jihyun’s eyes were half closed but widened when he saw Jimin and he quickly opened the window.

“What are you-”, started but didn’t get to finish when Jimin pushed him to the side to step inside.

“I need to talk to you. Sit down.”

Jihyun did as he was told, a confused look still on his face. Jimin closed the window and sat down in front of him with a small smile on his face. He was glad he came with good news.

“So… the group and I… we made a plan. You don’t have to fight and Yoongi and Namjoon don’t have to either!”, he whispered excitedly. Jihyung’s brows shot up on his forehead, mouth opening slightly.

“What plan?”

“We will run. There is a small pack in the North, led by someone named Kang. They are perfect for us, Jihyun. No traditional behaviour, no stuck-up alphas, no old-fashioned rules. They don’t even have a ceremony where you can get killed, you just have to try not to start fights or cause any
problems. We will go tomorrow during the bonfire, so you need to pack your stuff in the morning—"

“Wait, wait, wait”, Jihyun interrupted, stopping Jimin. “Jimin, what- I mean, you come here in the middle of the night and have this whole plan worked out. What about mom and dad? What about, well, our home and everything.” Jimin felt his heart sink a little but he knew he shouldn’t have just dropped the bomb on him like that.

“I’m sorry, I know this seems like a lot now. But this is the only chance. The attack is so soon so we don’t have much time. You can still communicate with mom and dad through letters and we will just… create our own home. In the new pack. We’ll be together, like Yoongi and Jungkook.”

“Jimin, their parents died. They didn’t… they didn’t choose that.” Jimin felt his stomach fill with something heavy. He ignored it.

“No, believe me. We can do this. You don’t want to attack the Shin pack, do you? And we only just got along again, we…”

Jihyun’s look was apologetic. Sad. Jimin felt his heart sink. No, no, no, this cannot happen.

“Jihyun, we- we only just started talking again. I just got you back, I just got my little brother back.” His voice cracked, vision getting blurry. “Please, Jihyun, you can’t let me go alone. I can’t lose you again. We only just—”

“I’m so sorry. I’m so, so sorry. For the time we lost and everything. But Jimin, I have a home here. I can’t imagine leaving mom and dad, I have friends here, I love my job. I even… I even want to court someone. I’m one of the best fighters and the other hunters will deck me, I’m not afraid of the attack. I have a life after this, and I can’t leave that. I’m sorry.” Jihyun’s voice sounded wet.

“So… that’s goodbye then?”

Jihyun’s shoulders started to shake as he nodded.

“I will visit you. I can find you and visit you”, he offered but it did little to ease the pain in Jimin’s chest.
“Okay”, he said.

Jimin pulled his little brother into a hug then, crying silently into his soft sweater. He remembered how Jihyun could only sleep in soft clothes when they were kids. Jimin would never forget that.

“Please know”, Jiyhun whispered, “that I’m incredibly proud of you. You are so, so strong Jimin. I’m so proud that you are my big brother.” Jimin only cried harder.

“Take good care of yourself. Promise me you’ll make it. And write me, somehow”, Jimin said shakily, hoping he understood.

“I will. I promise.”

Jimin pulled back and wiped the tears from his eyes, wanting to see Jihyun. His brother pulled something from his neck, a thin, silver necklace with a flower pendant at the front.

“Keep this.” Jihyun didn’t say anything further and Jimin wordlessly took it, held it close. He lifted his ankle and opened the little foot bracelet he liked to wear, it didn’t have a special pendant or anything, but it was Jimin’s and he wanted his brother to have something from him.

“Don’t forget your promise.”

They hugged one more time, Jimin feeling hollow and sad. He left through the door this time, trying to give his brother a smile as he waved one last time. He started crying as soon as he closed the door behind him, trying to not make a noise because he was still in the hut of his parents. He just prayed that Jihyun would be alright.

He needed a moment before he started to walk towards the door and stopped when he heard a noise behind him. Suddenly, the lights turned on and Jimin whipped around to see his mother, nightdress loosely hanging around her shoulders and her hair in a braid. She looked thin, thinner than Jimin remembered. Her eyes were full of guilt as she looked at Jimin, looked at him closely.

“You will leave, don’t you? You will leave with Min Yoongi.” Jimin nodded.
“I saw the way you looked at him. During the ceremony.” Jimin felt a lump in his throat. He nodded again.

“You love him.” It wasn’t a question.

“Yes”, Jimin answered, “I do.”

“You never loved Sungwoon.” Again, not a question. Jimin’s gaze hardened.

“You knew. All this time, you knew”, he whispered, his voice weak. His mother looked down in shame.

“Not a day passes that I can live with it. I saw the light leave your eyes when you were with him. But I never quite knew how to ask for your forgiveness.”

“Ask.” Jimin took a deep breath before he repeated himself. “Just ask me.”

“Can you forgive me?”

Jimin would leave. He would never see his mother again. He used to think his parents didn’t deserve forgiveness. But was forgiveness dependant on deserving? Or was it dependant on him, the one who had to forgive. He deserved it. He deserved to forgive her, to make peace with it. Jimin held her gaze, nodded.

“I forgive you.”

He could see her eyes fill with tears and quickly looked away, not wanting to see it. He heard a quiet sob and his throat burned but Jimin’s gaze stayed stuck on the door.

“Take care of yourself, mom. Get healthy again.”

And with that, he left. Left the hut, his home, his family. Jimin knew the hardest part was done.
After Jimin came back crying, Yoongi made sure to hold him close, comfort him and make Jimin feel cared for. He didn’t ask, didn’t try to make him talk. Yoongi simply held him. He didn’t know how Jimin felt since the first time he ran away, it was on impulse with no time to think about it and now the only thing that made this pack feel like a home were the people close to him who would all stay with him. Yoongi and Jungkook would leave nothing behind like the others and therefore tried to make sure to be there for them.

After Jimin stopped crying, they talked. Not about what happened but about meaningless things. Jimin wondered if the shape of the clouds predicted the future, if there were people that shifted into other animals than wolves or maybe not at all. Yoongi talked about dishes he wanted to try out and told Jimin about Jungkook wanting to start drawing again. They talked and laughed, almost forgetting what would be happening the day after.

At one point. Jimin started kissing Yoongi. Yoongi had found out that he loved kissing Jimin and was eager to give back, hands roaming Jimin’s body. They had kissed before, but something was different this time, it was urgent and passionate and intimate. When Jimin’s hands started to slip under Yoongi’s shirt he felt his heartbeat quicken and stilled, feeling all too much at once.

“Sorry, was that too much?”, Jimin asked, looking so beautiful that Yoongi wanted to cry.

“No… I just wasn’t prepared.” Yoongi had never done this. He didn’t want to do anything wrong.

“It’s okay. Do you want me to stop?” Jimin gave him a warm smile and Yoongi felt himself relax. He trusted Jimin.

“No. I want to.” He could feel Jimin’s cheeks flush and reached out to cup one cheek gently. “I trust you.”
The music was loud. People were laughing, singing, yelling. The drums were played like a constant rhythm, feeling like a heartbeat. Jimin swallowed. They could do this. He had packed everything in the morning and gave his bag to Namjoon who stored all their stuff further into the woods. Yoongi, Namjoon, Seokjin and Jungkook were already in the forest and changed into their wolf forms. Jimin, Hoseok and Taehyung would stay in their human forms to carry their bags easier, but they would eventually have to take turns.

“Seokjin’s bag is the heaviest, he packed so much”, Hoseok complained. Jimin was glad to see the sad look gone from his eyes from when he had said goodbye to his sister. Taehyung had also tried to lift his own mood and talked about how he wanted to decorate his new hut in the new pack.

They talked while getting nearer to the woods when they suddenly saw someone emerge from them. Jimin immediately recognised Sunhee who stilled when she saw them.

“Where are you going?”

“Taking a walk. What have you been doing in the forest?”, Hoseok answered with a raised brow. “I hope you didn’t drink.”

“I didn’t. One of my friends is lovesick and we are all trying to comfort her. She’s hiding in the woods.” Jimin tensed. He could feel his stomach clench and was sure Taehyung and Hoseok didn’t hide their shock well, either. Sunhee’s eyes windened and she stared at them for a moment.

“You’re...” She didn’t need to finish. Jimin held his breath, hoping, praying that she wouldn’t call the pack alpha. But-

“I’ll distract them. Go, quick.”

Jimin looked towards Taehyung and Hoseok whose eyes all lit up. They thanked her quickly before running off, relief washing over them. Jimin internally hoped for Sunhee to be happy, too. One day.

They met the others and greeted them quickly. Jimin nuzzled his face into Yoongi’s black snout, kissing his forehead quickly.
“We can do this. I love you”, he whispered before walking to his side and climbing onto his back. Yoongi was bigger than he remembered but he felt safe, secure. It was Yoongi.

“Are you all set?”, Hoseok asked, sitting on top of Seokjin. “Namjoon will lead the way. We will switch when you guys get tired, so please give us signs when that happens. We have food, our clothes, everything. So… ready?”

Jimin held onto Jihyun’s necklace, feeling his heart ache but also excitement slowly settling in his stomach. He was ready.

“Yes!”

Taehyung scratched Jungkook’s copper fur before he also nodded, a nostalgic look in his eyes but a smile on his lips.

“Then, let’s go!”, Hoseok chuckled and gave Namjoon a pet to his head before the brown wolf started ahead. Next were Hoseok and Seokjin, and then Jungkook with Taehyung.

And then Yoongi started to run. Jimin felt the wind hit his face and held tightly onto Yoongi, a wide smile on his lips. He couldn’t hold back a laugh, feeling euphoric to finally leave this pack, leave everything that ever held him back. He saw his closest friends in front of him and felt a rush of affection for each one of them. They all fought for their love. And Jimin did too. All his life he thought he was weak. He wasn’t as strong as the others, was emotional, was below his alpha. But Jimin had never realised how strong he was. He was smart despite many not seeing it, headstrong despite many not expecting it and most importantly, he was Jimin despite many not knowing what that meant. Jimin was Jimin. He was free. He loved freely, fiercely. He loved Yoongi. He didn’t know what was still to come, if he would ever lose his way again. But he knew that Yoongi would always be there to carry him home.

Chapter End Notes

So... where do I start?
First of all, thank you. For giving this story a chance, for screaming at me, giving me feedback. For laughing and crying with me. I've worked on Carry Me Home since Oktober and I cannot believe it's already April now. I grew with this story and learned with Jimin to break free from whatever held me back. This story means so much to me and I am incredibly grateful I could share this with you guys. You were patient, supporting and suffered with me through some chapters. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Now, I wouldn't be at this point without a few special people. My best best BESTEST friend Rayne beta read every single chapter of this, no matter how busy she was. Without Rayne, I don't know if I would have even gotten the motivation to get to chapter 3 of this. Also, Lexa who promoted this story from chapter one on more than her own fics. Thank you, truly. There are many many people that helped me with kind messages on twitter, on CC, in dms and you know who you are, I love you. Thank you.

If you have any questions, please ask me. You can ask me on twitter @jinslostlines or CC (anon is available) @jinsbabies. You can also ask me here, on ao3! I love talking about this fic and yoonmin soooo if you want to spam me in my dms...please do. Also, if you have questions about a potential sequel or ideas, wishes, headcanons, anything.

I really hope you enjoyed this story. I have other AUs here on ao3, as well as on twitter but not all of them are finished yet :)

Thank you, everyone. Be yourself, love yourself. I love you.

End Notes

You can find me on twitter ! Comments and feedback are always welcome, thank you for reading!

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