Alphabet

by SakuraLani

Summary

I am an omega unlike any other. A genetic anomaly is what they call me. Too bad genetic anomaly is just a nice way to say freak show. I’m stronger than other omegas, stronger than I should be. The omegas have learned to deal with me because I protect them. Even though I’m their guardian, they hate me just as much as the alphas. Don’t even get me started on those assholes. As far as my family goes, I’m the little omega that could. Nevermind that I’m not little. They do have one thing right, though. I definitely can, no matter what it is. My name may be Park Ji Min, but everybody calls me Alphabet.

OR

Ji Min is a badass omega with a genetic disorder.
"Get the fuck away from her!" I screamed, bearing my teeth and claws.

The alpha looked up and his eyes widened. I’m sure he could smell me before he saw me, but they’ve all learned to be afraid of seeing me come at them. He dropped Mi Mi and began to run. I didn’t bother looking to see if she was all right because I could smell relief in her cinnamon and apricot scent. I’ve spent years teaching myself to distinguish even the smallest changes in the way she smells. I took off at full speed to catch him. I have to admit he’s fast, but I’m faster. I tackled him to the ground, turning our bodies so I could straddle him. I punched him in the head, once to stun him and another time to make sure he didn't get back up. Even though I only used some of my strength, he looked like he was about to pass out. His eyes fluttered and were clouded.

"Weak ass alpha!" I spat, getting off of him.

I extended my claws again and slashed him deeply on the left side of his face. He cried out in pain. I wiped the blood from my hands onto his jacket. I like to leave vertical scratches from alphas' hairlines to the corner of their mouths. It's like my calling card. It says *this alpha's ass was kicked courtesy of Alphabet*. Usually, their wounds heal without scarring, but I like it when they don't. I love it when they have to carry the shame of being beaten by me for the rest of their lives.

"Hey, Mi Mi?"

"Yeah?" She replied as she appeared next to me and put her head on my chest. She wasn’t harmed by this worthless alpha, just shaken up by the encounter.

"Want to finish him off?" Her eyes lit up at my offer and she nodded excitedly. "Go on then."

I smiled back at her. She is adorable when she's excited. I love doing anything I can to make her happy because she is my favorite person in the entire world. Mi Mi walked up to the semi-conscious alpha and lined her feet up with his head.

"Just like I showed you, sweetie."

She nodded and swiftly kicked him in the side of the head. He groaned loudly before he blacked out.

"Good girl! I knew you could do it."

She beamed at me and my world felt right. She jumped into my arms and I spun her around. Despite the fact that I often compliment Mi Mi because her omega craves praise, I really am so proud of her. I have been slowly trying to teach her to take care of herself. It hasn’t been easy. Omegas are taught to be submissive and obedient. We live in such a fucked up culture. If an alpha wants one of us, we basically have to give in to them. If we don't want to date, it doesn't matter. If we don't want to have sex, it doesn't matter. The only thing that matter is what the alphas want. I fight every day to make sure she doesn’t fall victim to that mindset. I shook my thoughts loose when I heard Mi Mi calling my name.

"What's up, sweetie?"

"I'm dizzy, Ji Ji! And his blood got on my shoes!"
I stopped spinning and leaned closer to her face. "Aww... Well, we'll have to get you cleaned up. If we can't clean it up, then I'll just have to buy you some new shoes." I smiled brightly when her eyes lit up. This little omega is my whole world.

She thanked me half a dozen times, giving me a kiss on the cheek. I chuckled and nuzzled her nose. The cloyingly sweet scent of apricots filled me, calming me down from the rush my wolf was feeling. She’s the only thing that can get me to chill out or stop fighting once I’ve started. The bell rang, bringing us back to reality. Mi Mi had wrapped her whole body around me as I spun her, so our classmates came out to see us in an intimate embrace.

"Get a room!" Sung Ji Ae screamed out jokingly. Mi Mi giggled and climbed off of me.

Ji Ae's twin brother called out to Mi Mi as they stopped in front of us. "Why are you with that freak when you could be with me?"

His smirk and wink made me sick. I thickened my scent and growled loudly enough for him to hear me. Usually, the orange blossom in my smell overpowers the balsam, but, when I'm angry, the slightly bitter and woody balsamic undertones become pungent. Ji Ae's eyes widened as she cowered behind her brother. Mi Mi didn't bother releasing calming pheromones because she knew that I might need to fight again if Ji Tae decided to press the issue.

"Back the fuck off, Ji Tae." My voice dropped half an octave as I made myself look as imposing as possible.

Other omegas around me walked away, except Mi Mi. She isn't afraid of me. Other alphas watched, but didn't gather around like they normally would. They knew better than to fuck with my fights. Usually, alphas would form a circle and instigate violence. Anytime they tried it with me, they all got hurt. Alphas are all lone wolves who like to watch people fight if they're not fighting themselves. Too bad they can't cooperate for shit. If they all teamed up on me, they could probably kill me. But I know that can't happen for a few different reasons. I'm Alphabet. They wouldn't dare go against me. I heard Ji Tae start to walk towards me, but stopped when he saw the bloody alpha on the ground next to me.

"Just fuck off, Alphabet!" He growled at me, took Ji Ae's hand, and walked away.

Mi Mi grabbed my hand and pulled me towards the cafeteria. "That's two alphas starting shit in one day. You think they've synched their ruts like omegas synch their heats?" She cackled at her statement, making me laugh too.

"That's the last thing we need. Could you imagine the whole school filled with those disgusting hormonal meatheads? We would have to home school all of the omegas for almost a week! Wait, maybe that's not a bad thing. Hey, Mi Mi, how do we synch their ruts again?"

"Anything to get out of this hell, huh?" She said in between bites of her lunch.

"I'd like a break every now and then. It's not easy being Alphabet."

She rolled her eyes. "That's the dumbest name."

"I've started to like it, really. I love it when these alphas run from a guy named Alphabet. I mean, who the fuck is scared of someone named Alphabet?" I howled with laughter, a small tear forming in the corner of my eye.

Mi Mi smiled and rolled her eyes again. "Remember you're not just Alphabet. You're Ji Min, my Ji Ji."
"I know, sweetie. Even if I can't remember, I'll have you to remind me for the rest of my life."

"You're damn right!" She cuddled up to me and laid her head on my shoulder.

"I'm glad we love each other so much, Mi Mi."

"Yeah, me too. Being life mates would suck if we didn't."

Chapter End Notes

I was asked how old the characters are, so I am posting it here. The ages might not make a lot of sense now, but they will as you go along.

Seok Jin: 21
Yun Ki: 20
Ho Seok: 19
Nam Joon: 19
Ji Min: 18
Tae Hyung: 18
Mi Ran: 17
Jeong Guk: 16
“Mom, I’m almost out of my pills!” I yelled towards the stairs.

Usually, I’m not so rude, but my rut was starting. Yes, rut. I’m the only omega in the world who has a rut. I also go into heat. It can be very conflicting. I’m just glad I don’t have those crazy sexual urges that others get when they’re in rut or heat. Even with medication, some of them aren’t controlled very well. I couldn’t imagine being homy for three days once a month, having to seclude myself from the world for that long, or needing the company of a partner just to end the pain. More than anything, I feel aggressive and angry when I have my rut. It feels right to me. It’s more natural than my heat. When I’m in my heat, I feel weak and needy. Well, weaker. I’ve still scratched up plenty of alpha’s faces when I’m in heat. Luckily, my medication keeps all of my pheromones and urges in check – for the most part.

It also helps that Mi Mi and I have synched our rut/heat. This means her scent is much sweeter for me when I’m feeling hyper-aggressive during rut. We’re also both clingy, needy messes at the same time during heat. If we could manage, we would just lock ourselves in a room for three days and watch movies. Usually, we can’t. I ran downstairs as I pulled on my oversized tee.

“I’ll call the doctor and make sure you get more pills, Minie.” My mom put breakfast down on the table as she motioned for me to sit down.

“Thanks. I’m sorry I yelled at you. Sometimes these hormones get to me.”

“Well, keep taking your pills and it will be all right. The best thing about your condition is that your pills were made just for you. They dull your symptoms because they’re not a one-size-fits-all solution like Primatin and Emmeryn. Other people have to deal with half-masked scents and out of control sex drives while you get to be regular Ji Min. You should be grateful that modern medicine has made mating cycles a lot easier to deal with. It’s exciting really.”

“If you say so.” I chuckled and grabbed my backpack.

My mom is super into science, especially the science behind my condition. She gets really excited when she discusses the genetic aspects of my disorder. She also thinks I’m a miracle. Technically, I am. I am an omega unlike any other. A genetic anomaly is what they call me. Too bad genetic anomaly is just a nice way to say freak show. I’m stronger than other omegas, stronger than I should be. The omegas have learned to deal with me because I protect them. Even though I’m their guardian, they hate me just as much as the alphas. Don’t even get me started on those assholes. As far as my family goes, I’m the little omega that could. Nevermind that I’m not little. They do have one thing right, though. I definitely can, no matter what it is. My name may be Park Ji Min, but everybody calls me Alphabet. I’m famous for a condition that only I have – RHDS, Random Hormonal Dominance Syndrome. In the scientific jargon that separates the genetics from the “spiritual” aspects of life, it means that certain hormones have become dominant in my body, despite the fact that they should be at too low levels for this to happen. When we take into consideration the practical aspects of RHDS, it’s a name given to the phenomenon of being born with two wolves – one alpha and one omega. I call it Alphabet Syndrome. I really have embraced the nickname.

I laughed to myself as I walked to Mi Mi’s house. As usual, she was waiting for me outside of her door. She perked up as soon as she smelled me coming around the corner. She always loves the way I smell when I go into rut. The balsam comes out as a piney and earthy smell instead of the sweeter, vanilla smell I get during heat.
“Hey, gorgeous!” I said as I hug her close and smelled her hair. My alpha calmed a little at the action.

“Hey, yourself, hottie!” She giggled.

I contemplated how wonderful having Mi Mi in my life was, how happy her presence made me. There isn’t anything that I wouldn’t do to make this little omega smile. I want to give her the whole world.

“What are you all dressed up for, Mi Mi? You got a date you forgot to tell me about?” I put on a fake pout and stared into her brown eyes deeply. Even though it was a joke, my alpha wasn’t very happy about it. He is way too possessive over Mi Mi.

“Of course not! I have a presentation in Mrs. Choi’s class and dressing nicely is part of our grade. Face it, Ji Ji. You are stuck with me.”

“Good!” I screamed a little too loud when my alpha jumped in excitement. “I can’t think of anyone else I’d rather be life mates with. Hell, even if I could, you know we’re still gonna be together.”

Mi Mi tangled her small hand into mine and giggled. I stopped to take a picture of her so I could keep it forever. We have a scrapbook that we put all of the pictures in to document our lives together. I looked intently at the picture. Her dark brown hair fell just below her shoulders, curling slightly at the ends. Her bangs came just above her eyes, making her appear sweeter and more innocent than she really was. Her almond eyes radiated with the typical honey specks of an omega. Their light brown color gave them a depth that I have never seen. Her slightly-tanned skin was flawless, like a porcelain doll. Her nose was small and curled up just a little at the tip. She had a set of pouty pink lips that many alphas have tried to claim. Luckily, she has me as her personal protector.

“You really are gorgeous, Mi Mi.” She stuck her tongue out at me. “Don’t get all shy on me now! I need you to be a fierce little omega today since you look so pretty. I’m starting my rut and you know the first day is always hard for me. Try not to get into any trouble today. I may kill the guy.”

“I already knew. Even with your meds, I can smell a difference in you immediately. Like, even if you don’t bathe for a day, I can tell.”

I chuckled and squeezed her hand. “I’d say that’s creepy, but I can do the same with you. How do you think I always know you’re in trouble?”

“Because you love me?” She responded with a huge smile.

“Goddess, that’s cheesy. But, accurate.”

We arrived at our lockers and put on our school blazers. I helped Mi Mi put her jacket on over her dress. Then, she helped me button mine up. Suddenly, my pupils dilated as an unusual smell permeated the hallway. An involuntary growl came from my throat.

“Ji Ji, what’s wrong?” My life mate asked, putting her hand on my arm.

“Either someone is having the worst rut in the history of puberty or we have a hella strong alpha as a new student. Smells like both.”

Because of my Alphabet Syndrome, my senses are better than most alphas’. My sense of smell was especially sensitive. Most likely, this alpha’s scent wasn’t bothering anyone else, but it was driving me crazy. It was so strong and aggressive. Whenever I inhaled, all I could smell was bitter orange and tinges of passion flower. It sparked every bit of alpha dominance I had in my body. I’ve never
had this kind of reaction to someone’s scent. It spiked a change in my own fragrance.

“How fun! Do try to play nice, Ji Ji!” She giggled as she closed my top button and brought me into a strong hug. The calming pheromones she released quickly made my alpha more docile.

“As long as he keeps his dirty paws off of you and the other omegas, I’ll be a perfect gentleman. If he doesn’t, then Alphabet will have to make him pay.”

“Don’t refer to yourself in the third person. It’s weird.” She made a sour face that made me chuckle to myself.

“Alphabet is disappointed you think so. Alphabet will take your advice into consideration. Alphabet will–.”

She put her hand to my mouth to stop me from talking. “Alphabet will be eating by himself if he doesn’t shut the fuck up!” She stared me down with a sly smirk on her lips.

“You may not be the strongest omega, but you’re getting scarier, Mi Mi. I’m happy.” She nodded her head like a child, with a proud smile plastered on her face.

“Get to class, Mi Mi. Try to stay out of trouble.” I gently nuzzled her cheek and waved goodbye.

“Hey, it’s been two weeks since you’ve had to rescue me! I’m learning to take care of myself some.”

“Good girl! Now go to class. Just remember to yell for me if you need me.” I smiled brightly at her.

“I always do.” She gave me a quick hug and ran off to class before the bell rang.

I pray to the moon goddess that no one messes with any omegas today. Despite my cute moments with Mi Mi, my hormones were out of control. For some reason, I still hadn’t really gotten over the scent of that alpha. The effects of Mi Mi’s scent faded so quickly that I wondered if I was ever calmed in the first place. I could still smell him, but he wasn’t as close as he was before. I don’t even know the guy and I already hate him. His scent makes me want to crack skulls.
A low growl escaped my lips as Mi Mi and I walked into the gym.

“Ji Ji?”

“It’s nothing, sweetie. Just alpha problems.”

She hummed in response and grabbed my arm. The smell of that new alpha was all over the gym. It was faint, but it was still there.

“He must have had gym class earlier today.” I said with a unamused voice.

“The new alpha?”

“Yeah. His scent really bothers me.”

“It doesn’t help that you’re in your first day of rut. You’re way more sensitive on the first day.”

I nodded. “You know me too well. Sometimes I wonder if you can read my mind.”

“Nope. That would be scary. I don’t want to know what goes on in Alphabet’s brain. But,” she stopped when we got to the girl’s locker room, “maybe I’d like to know what goes on in Ji Min’s.”

I chuckled to myself as I walked to the locker room to get changed. Two thoughts struck me at the same time. One, Mi Mi is perfect. I am so lucky to have her as my life mate. Even though we both have our reasons for choosing each other, we could not have been better matched. Two, I am so glad she can’t read my mind. Especially on my first day of rut with that alpha’s scent in the air. On days like this, alphas only have two urges. First, they want to rip someone’s head off. Second, they want to stick their dick in something. Yep, that’s it. Kill something. Fuck something. Kill something. Fuck something. As for me, it’s always kill something. I can’t help but wonder if it would be easier if I just wanted to have sex while I’m in my rut, instead of wanting to fight.

I walk in and smirk to myself. Right now, I’m such a fucking alpha that even the alphas in the locker room who always want to start shit won’t look at me. I am oozing back the fuck up vibes. My scent and presence are heavy as I take my clothes off in the bathroom stall. I don’t dress in front of the others. I don’t want them to know that I look just like they do. I may be a head or two shorter and physically smaller than other alphas, but my body is built like one. I have strong, muscular arms and abs for days. My thighs and calves are too thick to fit into normal pants. Hell, even my ass is muscular. I can snap chopsticks with it! I never show off though, especially my ass. I don’t want any alphas to even begin thinking about trying to claim me. I know I’m an attractive omega. I’m not going to end up in jail because I killed some dickbag alpha who thought he was going to fuck the holy grail of omegas. Yes, I know I’m special. I’m fucking Park Ji Min, fucking Alphabet. I am the rarest, strongest, sexiest omega there is.

I heard Mi Mi call me from outside the locker room and it snapped me back into reality. I left wearing a long sleeve black shirt and some baggy sweats. I shake my head at my previous ego trip. The first day of rut is always difficult for me. I get so hormonal that I end up doing stupid shit, like hyping myself up to be the greatest omega of all time.
“Your scent went all alpha. You all right, Ji Ji?”

“Yeah. I’m just a little messed up right now. Rut and that guy’s smell are really fucking with me. It’s a bad combination.” I didn’t bother telling her about my crazy self-centered thoughts.

“Luckily for you, we’re going outside and running today.” She laughed at my relieved face. “Whoever he is really has you fucked up. He must be some alpha.”

I nodded and followed her outside. At the track, we could see alphas running their hardest, either trying to outdo one another or impress an omega. The omegas, on the other hand, were walking around in small groups. Mi Mi and I decided to jog around the track at a moderate pace. I like to push her so she can continue to grow stronger. I also use her to slow myself down. That way, I don’t show too much of my strength. My goal in life is to not draw too much attention to myself. Sure, I beat the shit out of alphas, but they all deserve it. I’ve never attacked an alpha for dominance or because they were a jerk to me. I’ve only ever done it to protect an omega. Not all of the alphas here are assholes. A good amount of them are actually nice and respectful.

I just hate how disruptive the minority of them are. I’m up to 12 different alphas that I’ve had to mark. I’ve had to mark several of them more than once. Some of the other alphas help me keep them under control, but most of them steer clear of me. People don’t like to be around the freak of nature alpha/omega hybrid. I say hybrid like I’m actually half alpha and half omega. Honestly, I’m all alpha. My omega always seems to be missing in action.

“You think that we’ll get the OPC off the ground this year? I know so many omegas who would love to join. Even a few of the alphas think it’s a good idea.”

“I hope so, Mi Mi. It originally got denied because Mrs. Choi is worried that it will cause backlash with the alpha-centric curriculum and the alphas will use it as a mating or bullying tactic.”

“Fucking alphas ruin everything. It’s not fair!” She growled loudly as she ran, startling a group of omegas who were walking close to us.

“Freak!” I heard an alpha say as he ran by.

“And?” Mi Mi yelled after him.

“That’s my girl!” I gave her a high five. “I’m so proud. My little baby is growing up!” I fake cried into my hands.

She giggled and jumped onto my back. I jogged part of the track, carrying her until our teacher, Mr. Myung, asked me about it.

“I’m, uh, weight training?” He shook his head as he told Mi Mi to get down. “Worth a shot, right?”

“Funny, Park.”

Mr. Myung understood me in a way that most of my other teachers could not. He is a male omega. Male omegas are not exactly common, but they’re not rare either. Maybe one out of every 100-200 guys is an omega. I just made that number up, but it sounds right. I feel like I should know this though. I should probably look it up.

“Hey, Mr. Myung? Mi Ran and I wanted to ask you for help with something. We’ve designed a new school organization, but we can’t seem to get it approved.”

“What is it, Park?” He seemed interested. Mi Mi and I had never asked him for help before, so I’m
sure he knew we were serious when we did.

“We want to start the Omega Protection Club. I proposed it to Mrs. Choi. She was worried it would clash with the alpha curriculum and that alphas would use it to prey on omegas.”

“But, you see, Mr. Myung,” Mi Mi interjected, “we want to go against the curriculum. The current curricula only teaches the alpha way of thinking and emphasizes omegas as a lower rank. The world is changing. Omegas are holding important offices in both business and government sectors. We are finally starting to get some of the recognition that we deserve as people, not property. Teaching our students to protect and accept omegas will be a crucial step in making sure we keep moving forward. It’s important! Ji Min and I only have one more year of high school left. We want to get this established so we can make sure there are people to run it when we leave.”

Mr. Myung nodded as he took in all of the information. “It would be unwise of me to deny your request. Omega rights is a topic very dear to my heart. As a male omega, I have experienced so many issues and injustices. I will do whatever I can to help you. Give me a copy of your proposal and I will look it over. I will also talk to some of the other staff to see what we can do.”

Mi Mi squealed with delight as she bowed deeply to Mr. Myung. “Thank you so much!”

I bowed and thanked Mr. Myung as well. The OPC is something very precious to Mi Mi and me. It’s basically our baby.

“You know what is super weird?” I say as we walked back to the locker rooms. Mi Mi turned her head to the side with a curious look. “Calling you Mi Ran and you calling me Ji Min.”

She laughed and nodded in agreement as we parted ways to change. We met up at the cafeteria and made our way to our usual table. We were the only people who had an exclusive table, thanks to me being the infamous Alphabet. We ate and talked about anything that came to mind. Our conversation was cut short by the entrance of six alphas traveling together. Neither of us had ever seen them before, but they were impressive – so impressive that a hush fell over the lunch room as they walked around. They were distracting. From their stupid perfect looks to their imposing auras, they were 100% alpha. As they came closer, another involuntary growl came from my throat.

“Ji Ji?” When she grabbed my hand, I realized that my claws were dug deeply into the table.

“It’s him.”

“Which one?”

“Grey shirt.”

She scanned him up and down, analyzing everything she could about him. “He’s strong, all right. They all are, even the shorter one. He’s not that much taller than you, Ji Ji. From the way he smells, grey shirt is definitely the strongest.”

I couldn’t take my eyes off of grey shirt. Everything about him made me want to jump on him and tear open his throat. I wanted to rip out his perfectly tousled brown hair that fell just above his eyes. I wanted to gouge out his bottomless brown eyes that were speckled with an alpha’s signature crimson. I wanted to break his perfectly sculpted, too-big nose. I wanted to run my claws over those lips that curved into an idiotic smirk. I wanted to shatter his chiseled jaw. Everything about this alpha pissed me off. I’ve never attacked an alpha because I felt like it, but I may just make an exception for him.
I wanted to make note of the tense of this story. It keeps going back and forth because it's supposed to be Ji Min's thoughts and feelings. We don't necessarily think in all present or all past tense, so I wanted to write the story in both. We also talk in both when we don't mean to. Most people probably won't even notice or care that some times it says "She looks at me..." and some times "She looked at me..." I still wanted to address it for those of you who do see it. It's intentional.
As Mi Mi was trying to calm me down and snap my attention away from grey shirt, said alpha looked up at me. His eyes met mine and, for a brief moment, we stared each other down. He raised an eyebrow at me, biting his lip. He had a smirk plastered on his face. I couldn’t place the look in his eyes. Did I confuse him? Was he analyzing me? Did he want to fight? The questions swirled around in my mind until I was dizzy. Why does he affect me so much?

“We need to go, Mi Mi.” I said as the alpha broke his gaze.

He went back to talking with his friends like the moment never happened. Mi Mi grabbed her stuff as I threw away our trash. She took my arm and dragged me out of the cafeteria. As we stepped outside, my head cleared up some.

“Thank the moon goddess that I can’t smell that disgusting meathead’s scent out here! And I can’t see his stupid face! Did you see the way he was looking at me? I’m pretty sure he wanted to fight. Maybe he should be meet Alphabet.”

“Uhh, Ji Ji?” Mi Mi stopped walking and looked at the ground nervously.

“What’s up, sweetie?” I pulled her face up to look at me.

“I don’t even know how to say this, but, umm, I’m pretty sure he wanted to jump on you in a different way. Like, he was eye fucking you hardcore.”

“WHAT!? I don’t think you were looking at the same alpha I was. Grey shirt, right? He wanted to fight for sure.”

“Maybe fight to snatch your virginity…” She mumbled just loud enough for me to hear.

“You bitch! You better run!”

She took off, screaming for me to leave her alone in between giggles. I gave her a 10-second head start before I casually jogged towards her. I caught up with her in a matter of seconds. I tackled her, but switched our positions before she fell to the ground. She landed on top of me with a gentle thud. Mi Mi laid her head on my chest and I put my arms around her.

“Seriously, Ji Ji, I’m pretty sure he was interested. That eyebrow, smirk, lip bite move he did even had me feeling a little seduced. I’m still me and all, but it was questionable for half of a millisecond. It was sort of uncomfortable to watch how he looked at you. I felt like I needed to leave the room to give you two some privacy.”

“For real?” I put my hand on her forehead. “Are you sure you’re not sick? He must be on a whole other level of alpha make you say that. My Mi Mi never gets flustered by alphas.”

“That’s what I’m trying to say! Oh goddess, Ji Ji, you better watch out! He’s going to take my baby’s booty! You’re too young and innocent for that!”

I moved my hand to cover her mouth. “Shut the fuck up, Mi Mi! We both know I’m the dominant one. He wouldn’t be taking anything from me, except my dick. But, unfortunately for him, I hate his
guts and I have a super awesome, wonderful, gorgeous life mate. Sucks to be him. He’s missing out.”

“You’re damn right!” She called out loudly.

I picked her up and threw her over my shoulder. I carried her to her next class and set her down gently. She glared at me and hit my arm with a silly smile on her face.

“Try not to get seduced by any alphas, Mi Mi!” My teasing earned me a scowl.

“Try not to get your cherry popped by grey shirt, Ji Ji!” I glared at her and walked away. My alpha was on edge just thinking about another alpha being interested in me. I bit back a growl that was forming in my throat.

My walk to class was interrupted by an alpha with wavy brown hair and dangly earrings. He was a bit taller than me, but didn’t give off a menacing aura. He smelled like lavender and oats. What a strange smell for an alpha.

“What’s your name?” He gave me a boxy smile to show he meant no harm.

“Me? They call me Alphabet.”

“What kind of name is that?” His amused grin only served to make me more upset.

“It’s my superhero name. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I have to get to class.”

I walked past him until his words stopped me. “Is that cute little omega your girlfriend?”

I clenched my fists tightly. Today was not a day to fuck with me and this guy seemed like he wanted to fuck with me. “She’s my life mate. What about her?” I eyed him aggressively, daring him to say something inappropriate about Mi Mi. I’m sure he could tell by my scent that I was not in the mood to deal with his shit.

“Nothing really. Just curious. You two are very cute together. What are you anyway? You’re giving me pure alpha vibes and you smell like you’re in your rut, but your eyes have honey spots and you’re too petite to be an alpha.” He bent down slightly to examine me.

“Like I said, I’m Alphabet. Just ask around about me and you’ll get your answers.” I was going to walk away, but I remembered he knew grey shirt. “Oh, you’re friends with that new alpha kid, right? The one in the grey shirt? Tell him to stay the fuck away from me and Mi Mi. I can’t stand the way he smells.” I moved closer to him, surrounding him with my scent. “Honestly, let that be a warning to all six of you. Don’t fuck with any of the omegas. You’ll hear soon enough what I’ll do if you don’t.”

I walked past him, bumping my shoulder into his. I heard him say interesting as I passed by. When I got to class, I couldn’t focus. I kept thinking about the last hour’s events. First, that cocky stupid alpha gave me a weird look. “Oh, you’re friends with that new alpha kid, right? The one in the grey shirt? Tell him to stay the fuck away from me and Mi Mi. I can’t stand the way he smells.” I moved closer to him, surrounding him with my scent. “Honestly, let that be a warning to all six of you. Don’t fuck with any of the omegas. You’ll hear soon enough what I’ll do if you don’t.”

As I began walking down the hallway, I smelled the anger and fear in her scent from the outside of the building. It was a strong hit of spicy cinnamon that I had become too used to smelling ever since
she hit puberty and alphas started paying attention to her. Then, I heard a yell for me. I exploded into a sprint and found two alphas trying to corner Mi Mi and Sung Ji Ae behind the school. Mi Mi yelled for me again as I saw one of the alphas grab her face roughly. I knew she could smell me, but they couldn’t.

“Your little lover boy can’t save you, bitch. That abomination can’t help either one of you.”

I recognized the voice—Kwon Jae Seok. He was the one who started calling me Alphabet. He was also the reason that I started protecting the omegas. My alpha let out a growl when I remembered how he almost raped a male omega in the locker room during our first year. I hate that mother fucker.

“Think again, dumbass.” I said coolly, smirking.

This was honestly perfect. Grey shirt and his friend had me wanting to break something and these two pathetic wastes of space happened to have some really ugly faces that could use a little work. My senses heightened when the two alphas turned around. I focused solely on them and Mi Mi. Jae Seok let go of Mi Mi’s face and walked towards me. The other alpha eyed me warily. He had partially-healed claw marks on the left side of his face. I laughed.

“You again? Look, I don’t want to embarrass you a second time. I mean, my mark hasn’t even healed yet and you’re already back for more? I only punched you twice and you were useless.”

He looked at me and then at Jae Seok, who was standing about 10 steps in front of me. He got twitchy. I could see the hesitation written all over his face. I could smell the fear seeping out of him. He eventually chose the smart decision and ran like a little bitch. By now, other students had gathered around us to watch the carnage.

“Come here, Mi Mi. I want you to stand behind me so you’re safe.” She nodded.

When she walked by Jae Seok, he grabbed her arm forcefully. “Where do you think you’re going, bitch?”

I saw her wince in pain and I lost it. I was at his throat with my claws in a second. He howled in agony, shoving Mi Mi down forcefully. He punched me in the stomach and pushed me away. I giggled. He hits like a pup.

“Having fun, Alphabet?”

“Oodles.” I smiled coyly and flutter my eyelashes like a girl trying to flirt. Why not have a little fun with this pathetic alpha?

That pissed him off. Perfect. It’s what I wanted. He charged at me with his fist raised. I grabbed it and twisted his arm behind his back. I slammed his body into the brick wall before forcing him onto his knees. I jerked his wrist up with so much force that I’d be surprised if his arm wasn’t dislocated. I punched him in the head, which caught him off guard. He gagged involuntarily. This was my favorite way to dispose of scumbag alphas. They just love to dominate us. They love to climb on top and take what they want. I like to do what I can to give it back to them. Right now, there’s nothing I crave more than Jae Seok’s blood. I’ll gladly top him and take what I want.

I fired a barrage of punches at his head. One for Mi Mi, one for Ji Ae, one for the other omegas, one for that bitch alpha who ran before I could hit him. As I was punching, I started thinking more about my day. One for grey shirt’s awkward stare, one for “seducing” Mi Mi, one for his weird friend. I was so caught up in myself that I didn’t hear Mi Mi screaming for me to stop. My rut rage was out of
control and I didn’t care. My alpha was finally beginning to feel satisfied as Jae Seok’s face became a bloodied, unrecognizable mess. His nose was broken, his lip was split, and he had two black eyes. It was my most beautiful beating yet. I couldn’t even tell if he was still conscious. Suddenly, I felt a strong grip around my waist, pulling me away from my victim.

“Easy there, little omega. You don’t need to go to jail for killing a nothing like him.” The low, breathy voice was right next to my ear.

A chill ran down my spine and my pupils dilated. Grey shirt’s words brought me back to my senses as his scent surrounded me. My alpha growled at his proximity. “What do you want?” I spat, my voice dropping an octave.

“I said easy, little omega.” He held me closer, effortlessly pulling me into his lap. A different scent filled the air around me. It was floral, fruity, and calming. “I don’t want any trouble. I just want to keep you from making a mistake. You’ve got a sweet life mate who needs you. I wouldn’t want you to leave her alone. I know the first day of rut is hard, this guy pissed you off, and my scent is driving you crazy, but you can’t kill him. I want you to mark him and go back to Mi Ran. You understand me?” His voice was so calm and soothing. His arms around me made me feel so warm.

I nodded and stood up. My claws extended on their own as I straddled Jae Seok again. My head was fuzzy. I couldn’t seem to focus and my wolf was disoriented. The only thing on my mind was marking Jae Seok and returning to Mi Mi. I slowly dug my claws into the defeated alpha’s skin, savoring the feeling of his flesh under my nails.

“I keep telling you bastards to leave us alone. How many of you idiots do I have to mark before you fucking learn? Just let us live like normal people.”

The words came from my mouth as if I were in a trance, something deep inside me needing to say them. My voice was low, but I knew those who were gathered around could hear me. My message was clear even without words. Jae Seok was the lead alpha at our school. He was the strongest. Taking him down technically made me the school’s new alpha. Now, I felt accomplished. Maybe this meant that they would finally stop fucking with the omegas. I was doubtful, but still tried to keep hope. I lost myself in my dizzy thoughts as I marked him. I was probably cutting him deeper than I should have, but I didn’t notice. I felt grey shirt’s hand on mine, pulling me away.

“Run along, little omega. Don’t keep your life mate waiting.” He wiped the blood from my hand onto his shirt and led me to Mi Mi. “Take care of him, Mi Ran. He needs it.” He said as he walked away, staring at me and smiling faintly.

Chapter End Notes

There will be some interesting information revealed in the next chapter! I hope you are all enjoying this so far. Thank you for reading!
“What the actual fuck, Ji Ji?”

Mi Mi’s voice pulls me out of my stupor. My head was still a little foggy and I felt lost. “Huh? What’s up, Mi Mi?”

I look at her and realize we’re in her bedroom. I’d recognize these lilac walls covered in gold swirls anywhere. Her scent was so strong here that it only added to my disorientation. Mi Mi looked like her eyes were going to pop out of her head when she saw my shock.

“When did we get here?”

“About 20 minutes ago. Ji Ji, what the fuck happened? What did grey shirt do to you?”

I was confused for a moment, but the memories quickly came flooding back to me. “I don’t know. I remember his scent surrounding me and his voice in my ear. It’s like I blacked out. My head started spinning and my body moved on its own. All I could think to do was what he told me to do. Everything else melted away. I just…” I trailed off, not knowing what else to say.

Her eyes widened. “Holy shit! That alpha tamed my baby. Ji Ji, he charmed you. He fucking charmed you!”

“There’s no fucking way he charmed me. He couldn’t have. Do you know how strong he’d have to be? Strike that. He can’t charm me. Alphas can’t charm other alphas and I’m 200% alpha right now. I’m in my rut, his scent pissed me off, Jae Seok pissed me off, and I was in the middle of a fight. There is no way in hell that alpha charmed me.”

We stared at each other blankly for a while. Neither of us believed what I said. We both knew he charmed me. How? An alpha can only charm an omega if the omega allows it or if he’s a lot stronger than the omega. I’m talking at least twice as strong. I am technically not an alpha, but I’m the strongest alpha I know. How is he twice as strong as I am? It just doesn’t make sense. As quickly as the panic set into my scent, Mi Mi climbed on top of me and released calming pheromones.

“What if he’s the one, Ji Ji?” Her voice was a sad whisper.

I didn’t have to ask her who the one was. She meant my alpha. The alpha who was meant to claim me.

“So what if he is? That doesn’t change anything between us.”

“Of course it does! You remember why we became life mates to begin with, right? If he’s your alpha, I’ll give you up. It’s not like we’re really dating anyway.” Her face was blank, but she was determined.

“Silly, Mi Mi. I don’t give a fuck about dating, relationship, soul mate, destiny bullshit. We chose to be life mates because we will never find our alphas. My choice to be life mates with you is more important than any nonexistent alpha.”

“But, he does exist. He’s real. He’s at our school.” She choked on her own tears as I pulled her into
my lap. This time, I was the one to release a soothing scent.

The scenes from years ago played in my mind:

“He’s not going to be able to mate with his condition.” The doctor stood in front of my mother, who was dumbstruck.

“What? Why?”

“I’m going to explain this to you in the practical terms, instead of speaking scientifically. His body and personality are different than anyone else we’ve ever seen. No matter how much his body resembles or reacts like an alpha’s, he is an omega. His omega must have had control while he was forming for him to visibly present as an omega at birth. Consequently, his body is designed to want and withstand an alpha, just like any other omega. However, his omega isn’t strong enough to be the main wolf anymore. That’s evident in the fact that body is developing as an alpha as he gets older. Because his alpha has control of him, he’s an alpha in his own mind. He’s not going to allow another alpha to claim him. That’s part of the RHDS. There is a disconnect between his wolves, his body, and his brain. The only way he will truly be comfortable with having a mate is if he found an alpha who roused his omega and made him submit. However, that is highly unlikely.

“RHDS makes your son’s alpha very strong. He would have to meet an alpha much stronger than him in order to feel any level of submission. Even then, it may not be enough to actually make him choose a mate. His alpha still might take over even if his omega is awakened. It’s likely all of his omega traits are locked behind this wall of submission. We are also assuming that he will be asexual because of the conflict between his wolves. This would theoretically be resolved if he finds an alpha to make him submit. We can’t confirm that because we cannot test anything about his omega. His alpha is too prominent for his other wolf to be sensed. He is essentially an alpha trapped in a smaller alpha’s body that may or may not become an omega one day.”

My mother nodded solemnly as the doctor left the room. I was 8 at the time, so I didn’t fully understand what he was saying. It meant that I would be alone forever. At least, that’s what I thought until I met Mi Mi. We met when I was 10 and she was 9. We became instant friends due to her bubbly and feisty personality. It was a side of herself that she only showed to me. Everyone else thought Mi Mi was just a typical submissive omega with no redeeming qualities. She quickly became my only source of happiness in life. My alpha latched on to her as if he was claiming her as his own. When I was 13, I confided in Mi Mi about my mating situation. She giggled and hugged me. I was taken aback by her strange reaction.

“You’re just like me, Ji Ji! I can’t find a proper mate either!”

“What could my Mi Mi possibly have wrong with her that would keep her from getting a mate.”

Her eyes fell and filled with sadness. “I’m a lesbian.” It came out as a whisper, but I could hear it as if she shouted.

She didn’t have to explain to me why exactly being a lesbian meant she was mateless. In our society, we don’t really judge same-sex couples. Alphas don’t usually consider sexuality when choosing a mate. If an alpha has a male or a female partner, it doesn’t actually matter. Mi Mi’s problem wasn’t being a lesbian. It was the fact that our close-minded society only recognizes alpha-omega relationships as real relationships. There are no female alphas, so she is doomed to a life of omega-omega mating. The bottom line is that Mi Mi will always be looked down upon because she can never find a “real” mate.

“I’ll be your mate!” I tried not to sound too excited.
“Ji Ji, I don’t think you understand.”

“I do. What I mean is that we will be life mates. Neither of us can have ‘real’ mates because our alphas don’t exist. So, we will be partners for life. I’ll always be there to protect you from any alphas who want to claim you, and you can keep me sane when my alpha is out of control. It’s like an arranged marriage, only we get to pick instead of our parents. We don’t actually have to get married or have pups or anything, but we’ll be together forever.”

She looked down and grabbed my hand. Small teardrops landed on the ground. I pulled her face up to look at me. She looked so small and helpless with her tear-stained face cupped in my hands. Mi Mi stared deeply into me. Her eyes were filled with so much pain and gratitude. She smiled and put her hands on top of mine.

“What did I do to deserve a wonderful life mate like you?”

I dried her tears and hugged her tightly. Maybe it was the alpha in me, but I knew I had to protect my omega from the world.

Mi Mi and I have been inseparable since we decided to be life mates. We keep each other grounded. She keeps me human. Well, as human as we can be since my human self is technically outnumbered two to one. Then again, does that technicality count when I’ve never even met my omega?

According to everyone, Mi Mi and I have the perfect relationship. Of course, when everyone heard that we call each other life mates they assumed we were in a romantic relationship. They didn’t know that’s why we use the term life mate. Usually, people will use girlfriend or boyfriend before they are mated and either mate or husband or wife after they are mated. Life mate shows that we are partners for life. We don’t have to be mated to be together forever. Now, Mi Mi believes that her life mate is being stolen. More than that, she is worried that I will let that alpha claim me and she will be completely alone.

“Shh… Mi Mi. Don’t cry.” I pulled her close, hearing her sob loudly into my chest. “Kim Mi Ran, my beautiful, wonderful, amazing life mate, listen to me! I don’t care if grey shirt is my alpha. I don’t care if we fall madly in love and want to be together forever. You and I are life mates. Do you remember our promise?”

When she nodded gently, I encouraged her to repeat our agreement. “We promised that we wouldn’t mate until we both found our alphas.”

“Now, unless grey shirt has a super manly girl alpha cousin, then I’m not going anywhere.” I teased her, hoping to make her smile.

“Why does she have to be manly? What if I want her to be girly like me?”

“I don’t think that’s a thing, Mi Mi. With all of those alpha hormones going through her, she’d be super manly.” I proceeded to take my shirt off and flex. “She’d be me with a vagina!” She screamed with laughter as I grabbed some of her clothes and put them on. “This! This is what your alpha is going to look like!”

Mi Mi fell off of the bed because she was laughing so hard. “Stop, Ji Ji! I’m going to pee on myself if you don’t stop!” She kept me from taking off her clothes, so that she could take a picture. “This is going into the scrapbook.” I laughed at the picture of myself flexing my biceps in a flowery white camisole and a knee length skirt.

“There’s my sweetie’s smile!” I said as I finished getting dressed.
“You really think I’ll find her?”

“I honestly don’t know. But, even if you don’t, I’ll still be here. I’ll gladly spend my life alone if it means I get to spend it with you. You’re the baby sister I never had, Mi Mi. I’d do anything for you.”

Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry this chapter took me so long to upload. I've been caught up in the comeback hype and I've been working on my Twitter AU (the current one and the next one). I'm hoping to upload Alphabet more frequently in the future.
First Contact

The next few weeks were quiet. Uncomfortably quiet, really. Usually, I would have to help an omega at least once or twice a week. Sometimes it was more, depending on who started their rut or heat. Since I beat Jae Seok, no one has messed with any of the omegas. I’m not sure why though. The stupid alphas in this school are always fucking with us. I guess me being the new alpha meant they respected my wishes. That or they were planning something. Either way, I kind of liked the quiet. It was nice taking a break from being Alphabet. My alpha wasn’t happy, though. He really likes fighting. His frustration at not being able to fight gave me a general uneasiness that was starting to get under my skin.

“He’s staring again.” Mi Mi said with a giggle.

I looked up from my lunch and met his eyes. I had been avoiding grey shirt like the plague. Even when I asked others about his friends, I was sure not to learn anything about him. I didn’t want to risk getting to know the alpha who charmed me.

“Why do you think he keeps staring?” I asked Mi Mi as I continued to stare back at grey shirt.

“I keep telling you, Ji Ji. He wants you. He really, really wants you.”

I continued to stare, analyzing the look in his eyes. I slowly began to examine him as I was caught in his gaze. His jaw was firmly set as if he was clenching his teeth, but his light pink lips curved into an arrogant smile. His light brown hair was swept to the right side, touching his eyelashes. He seemed innocent enough as his large doe eyes held me in place. They screamed something to me, but I couldn’t tell what it was. I can’t deny that he is attractive. He’s an alpha. They’re all attractive. The problem with this alpha was that he knew what he was doing. I could tell by the look he was giving me that he knew I was trapped. He seemed to like it that way.

“I still think he wants to fight, Mi Mi.”

“Yeah, he’s gonna fight for that ass.” She was clearly amused by the thought.

“Well,” I said as I trailed my eyes to the door and tilted my head towards it, signaling him to follow me outside, “let’s find out.” Grey shirt and I stood up at the same time, neither of us breaking eye contact. “I’ll be right back, Mi Mi.”

“Be good!” She called after me as I walked through the door.

I didn’t have a plan or a clear course of action, but something told me I needed to speak with grey shirt. The only logical conclusion I could come to was that my alpha was looking for a fight. I’m not sure how well that’s going to turn out, but I’ve never backed down from a challenge. Whatever the reason, I felt the urge to have a conversation with the alpha I had been sidestepping for weeks.

“So, what’s your deal, grey shirt?” I said, resting my back on the brick wall.

He raised an eyebrow and chuckled. “Grey shirt? My name is Jeo–.”

I raised my hand to stop him and cut him off. “I don’t really care. As far as I’m concerned, your name is grey shirt. But, that’s not the point. What’s your problem? Mi Mi has caught you staring at me every day since my fight with Jae Seok. You want to fight or something.”

Grey shirt looked at me and flashed a sweet smile. His eyes lit up with laughter. He looked like a
small child or a bunny—definitely a bunny. “I’ll go with or something. You intrigue me. You’re the famous Park Ji Min. Who wouldn’t be curious?”

I narrowed my eyes at him and took a step closer. My scent thickened while my voice dropped. “I have no desire to be any cocky fucking alpha’s personal entertainment. So, what, you just came to laugh at the freak show? Or are you here to fuck my life up? Either way, I don’t want anything to do with you or any of your fucking friends.”

I turned to walk away, but he grabbed me by the waist. My alpha let out a growl that slipped past my lips. I don’t like being restrained and I definitely don’t like the weird feeling in my stomach I got when he grabbed me. No matter how hard I struggled to break free, his grip wouldn’t budge. How strong is this guy?

“Easy, little omega.” He breathed into my ear.

“Fuck, no! You’re not charming me again!” I tried again to escape, but I couldn’t.

He turned me around and backed me into the wall. He kept a slight distance between us. He wanted to show he wasn’t a threat. “I don’t think you get it.” He stepped towards me and bent down to my eye level. “I don’t give a fuck about Park Ji Min, the omega with RHDS. I’m interested in you. The Park Ji Min who calls himself Alphabet, has a life mate named Kim Mi Ran, and absolutely hates my scent.”

“Why?” The question came out quieter than I intended. I was really confused about why he would care.

“I guess you could call it a morbid, torturous fascination.”

I didn’t question him. I knew he wouldn’t answer. I kept my gaze locked onto his eyes, desperately trying to decipher their hidden message. He gave me another innocent bunny smile that faded into a cocky smirk.

“So, I charmed you?” He raised an eyebrow.

I felt a twinge in my stomach. His disgusting face made me want to punch it. “Fuck off.” I spat. I walked away from him towards the lunch room.

“We’re eating lunch together tomorrow, little omega.” He called to me casually.

“Like hell, we are, grey shirt!” I half ran back to Mi Mi.

“So?” She asked, staring into my eyes expectantly. “How did it go? Did you figure out what he wants?”

“I think so?” It was definitely more of a question than a statement. “I think he wants to be friends?”

“You’re not sure?” Her voice was skeptical.

“Not even a little bit. All of that was confusing. I’ve got no fucking clue what’s up with him. He did say we’re going to eat lunch tomorrow though.”

“Oooh! Like all eight of us or just you two?” She giggled and stuck her tongue out at me.

“You little brat! Come here!” I grabbed her and began to tickle her aggressively. “We’re not having lunch with grey shirt or his gang of weirdos.” I tickled her until she curled herself into my lap,
screaming for me to stop.

I felt a hand on my shoulder and I immediately let Mi Mi go. I could tell by the smell it was one of grey shirt’s friends. I looked up to see a pair of dark brown eyes looking down at me. His hair was the color of almonds and it perfectly outlined his face. He was just as attractive as the other alphas, although he was slightly more handsome. He had the weirdest scent combination I’ve ever smelled—figs and coconut—but it somehow worked for him.

“How can I help you, Kim Seok Jin?” I was careful to make sure my tone came out as inquisitive and not stern.

“I wanted to tell you two not to bring lunch tomorrow. We are going to bring lunch for the eight of us. Think of it as a party to celebrate our families becoming friends.”

“Families?”

“Yes. Our family of six and your family of two.” He smiled and walked away.

I took a few moments to gather my thoughts about the situation. Grey shirt offered for us to eat lunch with his friends, which I declined. Then, another of the group came and offered the same. They wanted to celebrate our families becoming friends. When did we become friends? Did grey shirt just decide this out of nowhere? Who gave him the right to make that claim? I watched the group of alphas for a moment, locking eyes with grey shirt. The intensity of his stare always caught me slightly off guard. I noticed the stares of a few of his friends as well. At length, I made a choice.

“So, I guess we’re going to have a party, Mi Mi.” I sighed deeply and leaned back in my chair. It was one thing to decline grey shirt’s offer. I wasn’t raised to refuse the polite gesture of someone who was older than me.

“Yay! Can we dress up? Please?” She cupped her face and batter her eyelashes at me. A sweet smile spread across her face.

“Yah! Quit being so cute. We will dress up. Just tell me what you want me to wear.”

“You know those skinny jeans I bought you?”

“Goddess, no, Mi Mi. Anything but that. You know how I feel about showing myself off.”

She pouted and groaned. “It’s not like your school blazer won’t cover you. I just want us to match for once. I know you don’t like showing off, but let’s do it once. Then again, it might not be a good idea. I don’t need grey shirt attacking you. That ass is mine!”

“You’re so cute when you go into girlfriend mode, Mi Mi.” I laughed loudly at her.

She really is adorable. Even though we’re not actually together, we are just as much of a real couple as any other. We take care of each other, we support one another, and we love each other. Mi Mi always has my back. There have even been some times where she’s fought for me. Alphas may be the kings of sudden bursts of violent, testosterone-filled competition, but omegas have their own way of fighting. We mostly play mind games and establish dominance based on how much we can fuck up the other omega’s life. When it comes to physicality, omegas are all fangs and claws. Mi Mi isn’t the strongest omega, but she has a lot of endurance and a sharp set of teeth.

A couple of other omegas have challenged her for me. Usually, people respect our relationship and don’t bother us. The rest of them don’t want anything to do with me. A select few, however, seemed to think it was a good idea to fight her. Both alphas and omegas can challenge someone for their
significant other. If the person is interested in both people, the two can fight to see who gets to be with them. Whenever an omega challenges her for me, she begs me to accept. She really loves to prove to herself that she’s worthy of being my life mate. I’ve never had an interest in any of the challengers, but I would do anything to make Mi Mi happy—even if it means letting her get hurt while she beats the shit out of another omega.
“Hold still, Ji Ji!” Mi Mi said as she applied the last sweep of eyeliner to my eyes.

She styled my hair so that it was parted to the left. A large portion of my forehead was showing. It made me uncomfortable, but I looked damn good. She snapped a picture of us before we headed off to school. We were in total couple’s clothes—matching black and white striped v-necks, black skinny jeans, and black converse highs. It was the first time we had ever dressed completely the same. My alpha was pleased at the end result. Not only was I attractive, but Mi Mi was dressed like she’s mine.

“I guess since we’ve been life mates for five years, it’s about time we do this. It’s cute. We should do couple things more often, Mi Mi.” I quickly stifled my possessive ideas in favor of something more cutesy. I wouldn’t allow myself to even begin thinking like the type of alpha that I’ve been training Mi Mi to avoid.

She nodded and linked her arm in mine. I grew more anxious as we got closer to school. This was the most exposed I have ever been in front of others. My shirt didn’t show much, but these pants hugged every inch of me. I could feel the fabric stretch with every step I took. It felt as though they would rip at any minute. Mi Mi is very lucky that I love her so much. She is the only one who could get me to wear something this ridiculous.

As if she could hear my thoughts, Mi Mi tightened her grip on my arm. “You look hot. Don’t worry about anything. If any omegas start shit, I’ll kick their asses. You can handle the alphas, except maybe grey shirt. You better not let him see you bend over.” She giggled at the thought.

“You’d like that wouldn’t you? You just want to see if he’d jump on me. You’re so on about him wanting to claim me that I’m almost tempted to let him see me just to get you to shut up.” It was true. I’m completely sick of hearing her go on and on about how much grey shirt wants me.

“You wouldn’t. You’re afraid. Big, strong Alphabet is too scared that grey shirt would try to claim him and I’d be right.” Her coy smile told me that she knew exactly which buttons to press to get me worked up. I’ve never backed down from a challenge and she knew that too. She was right.

“Fine. You drop something at lunch and I’ll pick it up for you. You can check his reaction. Will that finally stop you?”

She nodded fervently and smiled. Mi Mi took time to set my mind at ease about the plan, and the rest of our walk consisted of us laughing at the potential outcomes. I was really surprised at my own idea because it was such an omega thing to do. Even though I identify mostly as an omega, I tend to solve my problems like an alpha. Manly displays of brute strength that had the subtlety of explosions were my usual tactics. Sly planning and subterfuge were not my normal way of handling things. I was surprised to notice the absence of something that was all too familiar. For the first time ever, my alpha wasn’t sulking in the back of my mind and telling me to hurt someone or growling at my thoughts.

The morning went by much quicker than I expected—probably because I was dreading lunch. I couldn’t remember anything that happened in my classes, except being stared at by some of my classmates. I mentally cursed Mi Mi’s decision to make me wear this ridiculous outfit. My school
blazer helped me blend in some, but I felt like they could still see what I looked like underneath. The makeup didn’t help either. It drew too much attention to my face. I felt so uncomfortable while being watched like this. I don’t know how to handle attention that doesn’t come from me fighting.

Eventually, I met up with Mi Mi in front of the lunch room. I took a deep breath, steadying myself for the awkward, unwanted party and attention. A sweet blast of apricot helped me center myself.

We made our way into the cafeteria and walked to our normal spot. The large circular table was built for ten people, so we knew everyone would fit.

“Hey, Ji Ji? Do you think we should be super cute and flirty when they get here? We could piss off grey shirt.” Her singsong voice indicated that she was super amused with her own idea.

“Are you talking our normal levels or the amount of cute that we were when Choi Jeong Ja said you would never find a mate who loves you?”

“More like Choi Jeong Ja cute.” She smiled brightly.

“Damn, you’re evil. But, I still love you.”

I pulled her face to mine and nuzzled her nose. She giggled loudly as she pulled my hands to hold them. Right on cue, six alphas walked up to the table.

“Are we interrupting something?” The alpha with the bright red hair and the sunshine smile said.

“Not at all, Jung Ho Seok. Mi Mi was just being really cute.”

She scrunched her nose at me and flashed an innocent smile. I scanned the group to see their reactions. They all thought we were adorable, although one seemed to be a little bothered. Grey shirt smiled absentmindedly, but it didn’t seem like his normal amused grin. His eyes seemed frustrated or annoyed. Maybe Mi Mi was right. As they began to sit, Kim Seok Jin and Kim Nam Joon brought out several large containers of food. It was enough for a small army.

“Are we expecting more guests? There’s so much food!” They all laughed at Mi Mi’s question.

“You haven’t seen our boys eat. I honestly question if this will be enough.” Nam Joon answered with a chuckle.

I looked around at the selection of food—beef bulgogi, rice, bibimbap, steamed eggplant, and spiced radish salad. Min Yun Ki gave out plates and chopsticks as Kim Tae Hyung started passing the dishes around. Their movements were well synchronised. It was almost like watching a dance. I could tell that these guys have known each other for a long time. Once we all had our plates full, Seok Jin began to speak.

“Thank you to Ji Min and Mi Ran for accepting our invitation to honor our families becoming friends. I hope this is the beginning of a long and wonderful friendship for the eight of us.”

Although I don’t understand the need for something like this, and I definitely don’t think we’re friends, it seemed harmless enough. Mi Mi and I stood in unison, bowed to the group, and thanked them for the food. We talked casually as we ate.

“So, how long have you all known each other?” I asked.

“We all joined at different times, but the six of us have been together for six years now.” The speaker was the alpha with the boxy smile who had interrogated me, Kim Tae Hyung. I couldn’t quite figure him out. He seemed so shy and reserved when he wasn’t speaking, but so confident and outgoing when we has.
“How about you and Mi Ran?” Grey shirt asked politely.

I hadn’t noticed that he was sitting right across from me. His eyes were still trained on me, watching every move I made. They held some sort of secret that I couldn’t quite make out. I felt fidgety and anxious the longer he stared. Being close enough to him to see the cinnabar tones in his eyes made my stomach feel uneasy. I couldn’t hold his gaze at this distance, something wouldn’t allow me. I also found it odd that his smell wasn’t bothering me and my alpha wasn’t on edge. All of this was so strange to me, but I pushed through it for the sake of courtesy and keeping up my Alphabet image. I’ll be damned if grey shirt is going to break me.

“We have known each other for eight years and we’ve been life mates for five.”

I put my head on her shoulder and kept it there for a moment. Mi Mi followed my lead and placed a kiss on the top of my head. My eyes flashed to grey shirt. For a moment, he seemed to lose his happy facade—his eyes darkened and the scarlet flashed within them. But, almost too quickly, his arrogant smile played on his lips once more. I couldn’t help but feel like I had imagined the whole thing. Maybe Mi Mi was wrong.

“What exactly is a life mate?”

“Yunie you can’t just ask stuff like that!” Ho Seok exclaimed. He apologized for his friend’s rude question.

“It’s fine. We get asked that a lot. A life mate is a choice. Ji Ji and I chose to be together even though we are both technically omegas. We chose to become life mates because we knew that we would always be together no matter what happened. A life mate is more than a boyfriend or girlfriend. It’s a promise. It’s a conscious decision to stay with someone despite whatever else may come our way.”

“You two are so sweet that it makes me physically sick.” Yun Ki said, watching us cuddle together during Mi Mi’s response.

Grey shirt watched me intently as I continued to eat. I gave up trying to decipher his stares. Too many emotions swirled inside his ruby-tinged eyes. We continued to talk about our classes, what we like and dislike, and all of the typical things that new friends would discuss. They were actually a lot of fun. Even grey shirt was not that bad. I waited until he was eating to give the signal to Mi Mi. She swung her arms a couple of times and accidentally let go of her chopsticks. They flew a few paces behind her chair.

“Ji Ji, I dropped my chopsticks. Can you get them for me?”

“Of course, sweetie.”

I walked confidently over to the chopsticks and slowly bent down. As I reached for them, I shifted so my shirt and blazer would lift up. I stuck my ass out as much as I physically could without looking too obvious. When I bent all the way down, I heard coughing. I came back to the table to see grey shirt’s face red from choking.

“You good, grey shirt?”

“You throat is dry.” He managed to say as he nodded.

In that moment, I decided to be more of an omega than I have ever been. I looked directly in his eyes and dropped my voice to a low tone. “You thirsty?”

For just a moment, I swear I saw his composure falter. His eyes widened and he started coughing
again. I saw the crimson flash in his eyes once more, before he could stop it. Nam Joon handed him a bottle of juice and he busied himself with drinking. Afterwards, he was back to being his regular alpha self. Although I relished the thought of him faltering for even the smallest amount of time, I was disappointed that I couldn’t break him more. I wanted to see that cocky, prideful alpha become a stuttering, flustered mess. Our lunch break soon ended with the promise that we would meet again tomorrow. Mi Mi and I walked to our classes and discussed the outcome of our mission.

“He definitely wants you. His eyes nearly popped out of his head when he saw you bend over. He couldn’t help choking on his food. When you asked him if he was thirsty, I almost died. I swear I heard Tae Hyung say ‘you have no idea’ to Ho Seok. I bow down to your newfound omega. He’s a total tease.” Her wide smile did not reflect the disappointment that I was feeling.

“I guess he is.” I chuckled and sighed quietly.

“Why aren’t you really happy that our plan worked perfectly?”

“I don’t know. I guess I’m just disappointed that I didn’t get more of a reaction from him. He just drank the juice and then he was fine. I thought I saw something in him break, but I’m pretty sure I imagined it at this point. I wanted to see him suffer. I wanted to see him squirm.” My voice was a little more frantic than I intended. It was so conflicting for me to have these thoughts and do these things. I’m an asexual alpha, I don’t do flirting and seduction. Especially with other alphas.

“Goddess, Ji Ji, what is this sudden omega side of you? That’s not the normal alpha Ji Ji I know. What has grey shirt done to you?”

I replayed the day’s events in my mind. All of a sudden, I decided to toy with an alpha that I suspect wants to claim me. I showed off my ass to him and flirted with him in a not-so-subtle manner. Then, I was disappointed that he didn’t want me more. When did I become such an omega? When did these sneaky games become a source of entertainment for me? Mi Mi’s question kept playing in my mind over and over, spinning with enough force to knock me down. I could feel the rumbling growl of my alpha tearing through my chest as my scent sharpened. What has this alpha done to me?

Chapter End Notes

Does anyone have any ideas on what's happening with Ji Min? Also, did anyone notice the discrepancies in his inner monologue—specifically how he identifies himself?

I may do a double update today! It really depends on how much I'm avoiding finishing my Twitter AU... lmao
After a week of hanging out with the six alphas at lunch, Mi Mi and I decided that we actually like these guys. They weren’t the typical show-off, jerk alphas that we always manage to encounter. They seemed to have their wolves in check and their wits about them at all times. Even when Ho Seok went into his rut, he was still a nice, normal guy. Grey shirt was a big surprise to me—or, should I say, Jeong Guk? It was inevitable that I learned his name, no matter how hard I tried not to. Jeong Guk was the calmest, most docile alpha I’ve ever met. He didn’t fight, try to establish dominance, or mess with omegas. He just spent time with his family.

If I had to guess a reason, I would say it was because he didn’t need to. I may be the only one at our school who knows exactly how strong he is. When you have that much strength, it kind of oozes out of you and others respect it. I still wanted to punch his stupid cocky face, though. That was one thing I hated about him. He seemed so arrogant. He knew what he could do. I can’t stand it when alphas know how good they are. It always goes to their heads. Despite his shortcomings, I didn’t mind having him around. Mi Mi and I have been by ourselves for so long that we had forgotten what interactions with other people were like.

I had forgotten that I could have more than one friend. Maybe it was the fact that only Mi Mi wanted to be around me that made me believe I could only be with her. Whatever the reason was, it was nice to have six potential friends in front of me. I say potential because it’s only been a week. I still don’t really know these guys. My suspicions were partially fueled by the lack of alpha activity. It’s been a month since I’ve heard of any omegas being harassed. Usually, I would be happy about the lack of assholes being assholes, but this felt different.

Ever since these alphas came, the other alphas have gone dark. It was too convenient to be a coincidence. More than that, their group dynamic scared me. They were more than six alpha friends. They really were a family. They were almost like a pack. A pack of only alphas is probably the only thing I am really afraid of. Somehow, I found myself sitting with my one true fear at the lunch table and watching it laugh at one of Mi Mi’s jokes. No, I definitely couldn’t call these six my friends—even if I wanted to.

“I’m sorry, sweetie. I’m just having Alphabet problems.” I whispered into her ear.

She hummed in response. Alphabet problems was our code for when we were concerned about anything related to alphas attacking omegas.

“Ji Min? Mi Ran? I hope it’s not too forward, but I baked you guys a cake. We wanted to celebrate the establishment of the OPC. We know that it is very dear to you two.” Seok Jin said suddenly.

We thanked them and began to divide up the cake. This was a perfect segue into the topic I had been thinking about. I didn’t trust these alphas. I watched Ho Seok as I spoke because I quickly learned that he is a terrible liar.

“We are very proud of the OPC, but it seems that we may not need it anymore. It’s been a month since any of the omegas have been attacked. It’s wonderful, a miracle even, but it’s very suspicious.”

Ho Seok cleared his throat and shifted nervously. His eyes darted between the other alphas who avoided his gaze.
“You haven’t heard anything about it have you, Ho Seok?” Despite my intentions to break him down, I tried to fake innocence.

“I… uh… I haven’t—”

“I talked to the other alphas.” Jeong Guk said, abruptly cutting Ho Seok off. “I heard what you said when you were marking Jae Seok. I decided to persuade them to leave the omegas alone. I wanted to help.”

His eyes met mine and held me prisoner. I was taken with the flakes of crimson dancing within them. That unspoken secret still remained hidden in the back of his stare, but I could see honesty and sincerity in the foreground. Something about him made me want to trust him. His normal arrogant smile was replaced with the innocent bunny smile that he saved for his closest friends. I was dumbstruck or awestruck—maybe both. People don’t usually do nice things for me, especially alphas. I barely stuttered out a response after an uncomfortably long moment of staring at Jeong Guk.

“Why? I mean, how? I mean, thank you. B-but why?”

His smile transitioned back to the smug smirk I hated so much, but his eyes were still the same. That was the moment I realized his feigned self-importance was some sort of defense mechanism.

“The how was simple. I asked around about the troublemakers and discussed their behavior. They were all extremely cooperative after our conversations. My family and I have been keeping an eye on them to make sure they’re good. As for why, you can attribute it to my horrid curiosity.”

“Curiosity?” Mi Mi’s voice pulled me back to reality as it has done so many times before. While staring at Jeong Guk, I had forgotten that anyone else was around.

I hadn’t told Mi Mi about Jeong Guk’s “morbid, torturous fascination.” I had honestly forgotten about it.

Jeong Guk raised an eyebrow at me, silently questioning why I would hide something from my life mate. “I really must apologize to you, Mi Ran.” He didn’t take his eyes off of me as he spoke. “I find myself uncomfortably preoccupied with your life mate. It’s disconcerting really. I’m unable to escape it despite my best efforts. I’m just so insufferably curious.”

There was no humor or malice in his voice, only honesty. He looked relieved as though he has been holding his tongue for years. I searched his eyes for any signs of his secret, but it was gone. He had finally confessed.

“I can’t say I blame you, Jeong Guk. My Ji Ji is a very interesting person.” The alpha forced himself to look at Mi Mi as she spoke.

I scanned the table and saw looks of horror on the other alphas’ faces. They could not believe that Jeong Guk would discuss something like this with my life mate. Finally, I looked at Mi Mi as well. Her smile was genuine and her eyes were shining. I could tell that whatever she was going to say to him was how she truly felt.

“He is the most selfless, caring person I have ever met. No matter how many times I or the other omegas have needed him, he has always been there. He helps even when no one is grateful for it. Ji Ji is a very special part of my life that I am so glad to have. I would not be who I am if it were not for him. All of us are lucky to have him in our lives, even if you guys don’t know it yet. So, as I said, I don’t blame you, Jeong Guk. I understand you. Just make sure that you respect me and I will respect
Jeong Guk smirked again, but it was an actual smirk instead of a defensive one. Amusement sparkled in his eyes. “Of course I respect you, Mi Ran. That is exactly why I had to tell you. It was a confession, not a challenge. If our families are going to be friends, then I want no harmful secrets between us. If I had not told you about this, you may have grown resentful of my behavior. Now, you understand the situation.”

They started each other down with unblinking eyes and unwavering smiles. Their scents, however, never changed. I couldn't fully understand what was going on. Their silent communication seemed like a battle. I couldn't tell if Mi Mi was trying to out-alpha Jeong Guk or if Jeong Guk was trying to out-omega Mi Mi. Were they fighting over me? I couldn't see how they could be doing anything else, but it doesn’t make sense. None of this does. What is Jeong Guk’s endgame? What could possibly be going on in that alpha’s brain? The whole group stared at them in awe.

“So, it’s settled then?” Mi Mi said suddenly, extending her hand for a handshake.

“I believe it is.” Jeong Guk smiled his bunny smile and firmly took her hand.

They smiled at each other again and began to discuss how delicious the cake is. The rest of us just looked around, unable to process what happened. Yun Ki was the one to eventually break the silence.

“Would either of you mind telling us what just happened?”

“Mi Ran and I have come to an agreement.” Mi Mi nodded meaningfully at Jeong Guk’s words.

No matter how much we questioned them, neither Mi Mi nor Jeong Guk would tell us what the hell was going on. When lunch ended, Mi Mi and I walked in silence. I didn’t know what to say. She stopped at my locker and held my hand.

“What do you think of Jeong Guk?”

I knew better than to question her for asking. She never brought something like this up for no reason. I figured answering her was my best option.

“I don’t really know him, but I sure as hell don’t understand him. He’s this disgustingly strong alpha who is also a little bunny. He’s part of what I can only describe as a pack of alphas. That’s not even a real thing. And he’s not even their leader! Alphas can’t be in a pack alone, they’re too dominant. If they could be, the strongest one would be the leader, but he’s not. And he fucking charmed me! He also beat the shit out of the alphas we’ve been having troubles with. He did it as a favor even though he didn’t know me. I don’t understand a single thing he does, but I want to. I want to trust him, even though I know I can’t. But, I want to. I don’t get it, Mi Mi. I really don’t know.”

The words escaped my lips before I could fully think about what I was saying. I wasn’t embarrassed by my feelings, whatever they were. I was embarrassed that I didn’t understand how I was feeling. I’ve never felt anything I couldn't explain before. She smiled and squeezed my hand tighter. I tried to find any sadness or anger in her eyes, but there was none. There was only amusement.

“I think we will be seeing more of Jeong Guk.”

“Why do you say that?” I was confused as to why that would be her response to everything that I said.

“Because you’re curious about him too, Ji Ji. I can see it in your eyes.”
I hadn’t thought about it, but she was right. What the hell is Jeon Jeong Guk? What’s with the pack of alphas? How is he so strong? Ever since he charmed me, I have had a growing uneasiness every time I see him. I have been trying to ignore it. I thought it was anger or resentment or a desire to fight. I suppose it was curiosity all along. I seem to have fallen into a mutual curiosity with Jeong Guk. I guess there’s no harm in us getting to know each other. Maybe I can make friends or, at least, an alliance with a pack of strong alphas. Being Alphabet is only going to get me so far. Having a close relationship with a pack, or even being a member, would offer me a lot more social and personal options. Plus, they seem like really nice guys. I like hanging out with them. I think we could all be good friends. I even think I could be friends with Jeong Guk, much to my alpha’s dismay.

Mi Mi giggled as she watched my face. It must have changed while I was thinking. “I'll take that smile as a yes?”

“I guess it can't hurt to make new friends, right?”

She shook her head and giggled. “New friends can be fun. I'm excited, Ji Ji. We've gotten so used to just us that it's kind of nice to think we'll have new people to talk to.”

“Sorry about that. Being my life mate makes you kind of lonely. I know only a few omegas hang out with you and that’s only when we aren’t together. I think it will be nice to have a few other people to talk to, even if they are alphas. They’re not worried about being seen with us and they don’t instantly hate me. They aren’t total jerks either. Those are all benefits in my book. I say we try to be friends and see where it goes. Jin already tried to force us to call them by their nicknames, so that means we’re already close, right?”

She nodded and smiled. “Maybe they will be the part of us we didn’t know was missing.”
“Ji Ji, carry me!” Mi Mi made grabby hands at me as she stood in the hallway. I knelt in front of her and waited for her to climb onto my back. As I stood, she wrapped her hands around my neck and laid her head on top of mine.

“I see your Emmeryn still isn’t helping your whininess.”

She scoffed and hit me in the chest. “We can’t all have no symptoms when we go into heat like you! I’m just glad it’s only clinginess and whining. I could go into super slut mode like some other omegas do. Do you know how conflicting that would be for me?”

“That would be a special hell. Even if you were like that, I wouldn’t let another alpha touch you. I’d lock you up for 3 days before I’d let you sleep with a guy.”

“And that is one of the many reasons I love you.” She said into my ear, giving me a kiss on the side of my head.

We arrived at the lunchroom late, so five of the six alphas were already waiting for us.

“Where is Jeong Guk?” Mi Mi asked as she was getting off of my back.

“He will be here in a few minutes. He had to talk to one of the teachers.” Yun Ki answered.

“We were wondering if you guys wanted to come over tonight to watch a movie? Once a month, we skip after school study to have a movie night. Since we are friends now, we wanted to invite you over to our home.” Nam Joon smiled as he spoke.

I looked at Mi Mi and had a silent conversation with her. “We will have to ask our parents, but we would love to join you.”

We took our phones out and texted our mothers. We talked and ate with the alphas as we waited for replies.

“Jin and Yun, how were your classes this morning?”

“My classes were fine, Taehyungie. I’m sure Yunie’s classes were fine too.”

Yun Ki rolled his eyes at the mention of his classes. “Actually, I’m sick of college already. If I didn’t have to go, I would just drop out.”

“Wait. You guys are in college? What are you doing here then?” This was the first I was hearing of them not being in school with us.

“They come after classes every day to have lunch as a family. We all have different schedules and obligations, so we decided to make time to eat together. This way, we stay close. It’s important to talk to your family at least two times a week.” As he spoke, Ho Seok’s bright eyes and huge smile almost made me forget how strange these alphas are.

What the hell kind of family is this?
“Oh! Jeonggukie just texted me and said he can’t make it for lunch.” Tae Hyung said in a disappointed tone.

“I hope he’s not in trouble.” Mi Mi said with a slightly worried smile.

They assured her that Jeong Guk was fine, saying that he rarely got into trouble. By the time lunch ended, our mothers had given us permission to attend movie night. Having friends was a new thing for me, so I was actually excited. It was nice to think I would be doing something fun with this new group. I absolutely adore Mi Mi, but I would be lying if I said I didn’t enjoy the company of other people too. Plus, this would give me time to find out more about Jeong Guk. I wasn’t sure about this curiosity thing, but I wanted to make sure I explored it as much as possible. I didn’t want to miss my opportunity to make good friends and alliances. Perhaps it was the omega in me, but I liked the idea of being friends with a strong group of alphas. And maybe—just maybe—I liked the idea of being friends with Jeong Guk. My alpha begged to differ, though.

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We decided to start movie night at 7 pm. This gave Mi Mi and I plenty of time to go home, put our stuff away, and get ready. At 6:45, I picked Mi Mi up from her house. I was uneasy for some reason. My alpha was restless and there was an odd churning in my stomach and chest that I have never felt before. I blamed it on having an odd emotional reaction while in heat. Slightly increased emotional reactivity and slight clinginess are the only symptoms I ever feel during heat. Even around alphas, Mi Mi and I aren’t really affected. I was glad that our symptoms and scents were well masked by our medications. I don’t know what I would do to those alphas if they tried to start something because we’re in heat. I always assumed Mi Mi’s sex drive was calmed by her medications. I never smelled arousal on her, but I’ve never actually asked her about her urges. Sex is one of those topics we didn’t really talk about. It doesn’t have a place in our relationship.

“Are you nervous, Ji Ji? You smell nervous.”

“Omega problems.” She hummed in response to my words and grabbed my hand. I stopped walking, grabbed her by the waist, and buried my nose in her neck. The spicy sweetness never failed to placate me.

She giggled and squirmed a little. “I know you’re trying to calm yourself, but we can’t walk like this. We’re going to be late if we don’t move. You know I hate being late.” Her voice dropped at the end of the sentence, giving me a warning.

“All right. We’ll go.”

I bent down to grab her waist again. I pulled her onto my torso and stood back up. She squealed and wrapped her legs around my waist. I began walking again, stabilizing Mi Mi by holding her back tightly.

“You’re really proud of yourself, huh?” She asked when I stuck my face in her neck again.

I hummed contentedly. “Don’t act like you don’t like this. You always want me to carry you everywhere when you’re in heat.”

“I like the way it feels when you hold me. I feel protected.”

“We are each other’s security blanket. I need you around to keep me Ji Min and you need me around to be your alpha.”

“It sounds depressing when you say it that way, but you’re right. We are definitely stuck together.”
Mi Mi hugged me tightly as if she was saying she was happy being stuck with me.

When we arrived at the alphas’ home, I knocked to signal our arrival. As Tae Hyung opened the door, Mi Mi climbed off of me.

“Come in! We are so excited for you guys to be here.” A huge boxy smile took over his face.

I followed Mi Mi to the sofa and an involuntary whimper escaped my lips. The stinging smell of citrus and mild floral undertones hit me, making me lightheaded. It was faint, but it lingered on the cushions.

“Ji Ji?” Mi Mi’s worried tone was clear. In the eight years of knowing me, she has never heard me whimper. Hell, I’m not even sure if I’ve ever heard me whimper.

“Omega problems,” I whispered into her ear.

“What do you mean? I’m not having any issues.”

“That really strong scent made me dizzy.”

“I don’t smell anything weird, just a bunch of alphas.”

“I think someone is in their rut. It smells like Jeong Guk.”

“You guys all right?” Tae Hyung asked as he laid on top of Mi Mi and me. I didn’t realize that we were rudely whispering while he watched us and the other alphas were waiting.

“Umm… can I ask a really awkward question?” I was partially whispering to Tae Hyung, whose head was in my lap.

He nodded happily. “Sure! Those are my favorite kinds of questions.”

“Is Jeong Guk in his rut? I can smell something really strong on the couch.”

His face contorted into the weirdest, most perverted smile I have ever seen. He raised both of his eyebrows. I wasn’t sure why he did it, but it made me want to punch him. He answered with a simple yes before running off to help Ho Seok and Nam Joon set the table.

“Where is Jeong Guk?” Mi Mi’s question made me scan the room. I hadn’t noticed he was missing. I guess the dizziness made me a bit confused.

“He had to go help his cousin pack. The cousin just got a promotion at work, but he has to move on Monday. Guk offered to help him pack since he has to have it done by tomorrow night. He’ll probably spend the night there too.” Nam Joon answered.

I was relieved, yet very disappointed. I wanted to use this time to get to know Jeong Guk better. I wanted to see what he is like outside of school, look at his bedroom, see what he’s interested in. I couldn’t help but be relieved, though. His scent was overpowering when it was just on the couch. I don’t think I could handle it if he was sitting in the room with me. The seven of us ate dinner before we began watching movies. I was mesmerized by the alpha’s synchronization once again. They were so precise and attuned to one another. When Yun Ki handed me the spicy seaweed, I caught a glimpse of five bites on his left wrist. Those markings on the left wrist indicated a pack bond. Suddenly, the blank, meaningful stares the pack often gave each other made sense. Packs can communicate via the pack bond if they want. It can be a call to every member or just one or two in particular.
“Holy shit!” I exclaimed before I covered my mouth. I apologized profusely before burying my head in my hands.

“You good?”

“Yes, Yun Ki. I saw your pack mark and I was really surprised. I always thought you guys were like a pack. I didn’t know you actually are a pack. That’s terrifying and impressive.”

“How so?” Seok Jin asked with a tilt of his head.

“Well, most alphas are too territorial and possessive to form a pack of just alphas. They have to have omegas in there to balance out all of the alpha-ness. As an omega, I find it really scary that you guys are capable of doing just about anything since you’re together and you can cooperate. As Alphabet, the only thing I’ve ever been afraid of is alphas who could work together to beat me.”

“We’re not interested in doing whatever we want or beating you up. We just wanted to solidify our family bond.” Seok Jin said with a smile. I smiled back and nodded. For some reason, I believed him.

“So, Ji Min, I have been really curious how you got the name Alphabet.” Ho Seok said in between bites.

I laughed a little. “It’s a super dumb story. We were talking about the Greek alphabet in class, discussing how alphas and omegas got their names from the letters. Kwon Jae Seok, that alpha Jeong Guk stopped me from killing, decided to call me Alphabet because I’m not an alpha or omega. He said because I was technically both that I was like the whole alphabet. Since we were eight, my classmates thought it was the funniest thing they had ever heard. Jae Seok has kept it going for 10 years, but I stopped hating it when I turned 13. I started seeing it as my superhero name, my alter ego. Alphabet was a stupid child’s attempt at making me feel insignificant and less than. Now, Alphabet is someone who protects omegas from jerk alphas who can’t seem to keep themselves in check. I’ve adopted it as part of myself. Even though it’s completely stupid, I like being Alphabet. Plus, I really see myself as both an alpha and an omega. Alphabet encompasses the fact that I really am everything in between.”

Our conversation continued as we ate. We discussed how mean kids could be and how each of us had encountered bullying in some fashion. Some of them were more open with their stories than others. Tae Hyung was often bullied because he’s too nice and clingy to be an alpha. Ho Seok is looked down on because he loves dancing and wanted to become a professional dancer, something many alphas believe is an omega job. Yun Ki has been made fun of because of his height and the fact that he would rather sleep than fight. Seok Jin and Nam Joon simply said that they made decisions when they were younger that caused them to be bullied. I didn’t press for any more information. If anyone understands keeping secrets, it’s me. Mi Mi shared that she is bullied because she’s Alphabet’s life mate. I hugged her tightly and apologized.

“I don’t really care, Ji Ji. I have you, so I don’t need them.” She climbed into my lap.

“Please forgive this omega. She gets clingy.” I didn’t have to finish the sentence. They are all alphas. I have no doubt that they could smell her heat pheromones, even though her Emmeryn was blocking the majority of them. I wonder if they can smell my heat too.

“We both do when we go into heat, you jerk!” She playfully hit me for calling attention to her heat.

“Wait. That’s what that smell is? Ji Min, you go into rut and heat? I just thought you had some weird cologne or something because it’s not that strong and you don’t really smell like a normal omega in
“Yeah, I get both. My rut is way worse than my heat though. I don’t actually feel anything when I’m in heat, except slightly clingy. It’s not like the horror stories I’ve heard about other omegas. I’m good at keeping my scent controlled and my Primemmeryn keeps all of my hormones under control.”

“Primemmeryn? Is that Primatin and Emmeryn mixed?”

I nodded at Yun Ki. “Because of my condition, they had to create a special mixture of both just for me. It works as a blocker and a suppressant, just like Primatin and Emmeryn do. The main difference is that I have to take mine every day, instead of just when I’m in rut or heat. The joys of being the only person with Alphabet Syndrome.” I saw Ho Seok’s inquisitive look and cut him off. “It’s not actually called that. I named it that. It’s actually Random Hormonal Dominance Syndrome.”

As we cleaned the dishes, we discussed the differences between heat and rut. They had the typical alpha curiosity in an omega’s heat, but they never crossed the line into lewd or disrespectful territory. They were genuinely curious because they didn’t encounter too many omegas. The pack also answered our questions about typical alpha ruts, both on and off Primatin. I was surprised that even Mi Mi joined in on the conversation. She’s usually very shy around others when she’s in her heat, especially around a whole group of alphas. The fact that she was so comfortable with the pack made me like them even more. If they made Mi Mi happy, then they had to be good people.

Chapter End Notes

What do you think of the alphas being in a pack together? Also, how do you feel about Ji Min and Mi Ran getting closer to the pack? There was no Jeong Guk in this chapter, but it’s for a good reason.

To those of you who were reading my Twitter AU, I finished it! The next one will start in a few days. For those of you who want to, my name is @HimeSakuraLani on Twitter.

**Please, someone, tell me they get the talking to your family two times a week reference. I know it’s obscure, but I can’t be the only one who’s seen it. A hug and 5 purple hearts to the first person who guesses correctly ^_^
“So, we have narrowed it down to three movies. Since none of us can agree on which one to watch, we are going to watch all three. Mi Ran gets to pick the order.” Nam Joon said authoritatively, quelling the argument between the rest of the pack. Since he was their leader, their pack alpha, he held power over them all.

“Romantic comedy first, so we can get it out of the way. Then, the action movie to cleanse our systems from the fluff. We will finish off with the scary movie, so no one can sleep!”

“I love your brain. I am going to marry it. Ji Min can have the rest.”

I grabbed on to Mi Mi protectively, but she cut me off before I could speak. “Sorry, Tae, but I’ve already got a life mate who likes all of me. It seems like a downgrade to marry someone who only wants my brain.”

I cuddled up to Mi Mi and surveyed the reaction around the room. The five alphas were laughing from mild shock as Tae Hyung fake cried in a ball. I was proud of her. She usually is more submissive when she in heat. These alphas really were great guys for making her feel so comfortable. They didn’t treat her like she was a piece of meat or like she was beneath them. They treated her as an equal. It was all I needed to know about them. I had no issues calling them friends now.

We settled ourselves in the living room. Seok Jin and Nam Joon sat next to me on the couch, while Mi Mi sat on my lap. Yun Ki, Tae Hyung, and Ho Seok sat in armchairs that were placed around the couch. It was fun to see this pack of alphas watch a romantic comedy. During the movie, Ho Seok and Seok Jin got into an argument over how realistic the couple is. Seok Jin said they had no chemistry, but Ho Seok said they were perfect together. By the middle of the movie, the plot no longer mattered. The two alphas forced almost everyone to join sides. Mi Mi and I tried to stay neutral, but we were assured that we would be held against our will if we didn’t pick a side. Mi Mi and I decided to flip a coin. Since we both got heads, our votes counted for Seok Jin’s team. His argument won, meaning the couple officially has no chemistry and the movie was a failure. The rest of the film was spent picking apart how ridiculous the plot was because the couple wasn’t in love.

“Tae, can you get me my blanket? I’m cold, but I’m comfortable and I don’t want to move.” Yun Ki asked.

I realized I was chilly despite Mi Mi being in my lap. “Could you get me one too, please?” He got up and disappeared into the hallway.

“Am I not warm enough, Ji Ji?” Mi Mi giggled.

“Apparently not.” I retorted, sticking my tongue out at her.

“I’m not cold. It must just be you.”

I motioned for her to get up as Tae Hyung returned with the blankets. I took the one he handed me, wrapped myself in it, and put Mi Mi back on my lap. A whimper crawled out of my throat as the scent overpowered me. Mi Mi immediately looked at me, knowing what the problem is.

“Tae, did you give Jeong Guk’s blanket to Ji Ji?”

“Yes. We don’t have any extras.”
“Why would you do that? You know how Guk gets. You could have given Ji Min any other blanket.” Nam Joon sternly said.

“It would be way worse for Ji Min to use someone else’s blanket. Guk would smell his scent if it were somewhere else. You know Ji Min’s scent can’t be anywhere else in the house. I just wanted to help.”

I wanted to ask what they were talking about, but Jeong Guk’s smell had me paralyzed. My head swam as I placed it down on the arm of the couch. A strange tingling sensation settled in the pit of my stomach.

“You all right?” Mi Mi whispered to me when the next movie started playing.

“Omega problems.”

“You’ve had more omega problems tonight than in the last five years. Are you really okay?”

“I feel dizzy, weak, and nauseous, I think. My stomach feels tingly inside. It’s only when I smell Jeong Guk’s scent. I don’t know what’s going on.”

Mi Mi shrugged. “I don’t know either. I’ve never had that happen to me. If you need anything or if I can do anything, let me know.”

I felt restless but unable to move. Even though I felt like I was on the verge of passing out, consciousness lingered in the recesses of my mind. I wanted it to end. With my last bit of strength, I pulled the blanket over my head. I wanted to inhale all of his scent. I hoped it would be enough to end my suffering. I woke up in a bed, gasping for air. Much to my dismay, there was none. I didn’t recognize the room. The walls were beige and everything was neatly placed on shelves and tables. I found the window and opened it, hoping to clear my head from Jeong Guk’s aroma. I assumed this had to be his room because his scent was so concentrated. I felt sweat dripping down my neck and realized how hot I was. Sweltering heat and a dizzying scent were a bad combination. I removed my sweatshirt and sweatpants in an effort to alleviate some of my distress. I cooled down enough to stop sweating, but I couldn’t sober up. I lay back down on the bed and covered my head. I waited for the fragrance to overwhelm me again, praying not to wake up until morning.

I heard a knock on the door and Mi Mi calling for me. I jolted awake, but still could not move much. I found myself biting on one of the pillows while another was shoved between my legs. The blanket was half off of the bed. I couldn’t find my voice. Mi Mi opened the door and gasped when she walked to my side.

“What the fuck, Ji Ji? Are you grinding on his pillows or something? And your pupils are really dilated. Are you all right?” She uncovered me from the remnants of the blanket and wrestled the pillows from me. “Why are you in your underwear? You only sleep like that in the middle of summer when the air conditioning breaks.”

After a few minutes, I found the strength to sit up and talk. “Last night killed me. I couldn’t breathe and it was so hot. How did I get here?” My voice was low and cracking.

“Tae put you in here because there was only room for one person on the couch. It would be better for your scent to be here than mine and you definitely can’t go into one of the other alphas’ rooms.”

“What does that even mean?”

“Nothing. Let’s get you dressed. Yunie is making breakfast.”
I shakily stood as Mi Mi grabbed my clothes. It has been years since she had helped me dress. It was a very strange feeling. She began to kneel to help me with my pants when she dropped them and moved away.

“I don’t really want to be near that thing. It’s going to bite me.” She said with an awkward, almost embarrassed, giggle.

I looked down to see my dick fully erect. “What the actual fuck? I’m sorry, Mi Mi. I didn’t mean to traumatize you. Where the fuck did this even come from?”

“Isn’t that a guy thing in the morning?”

“It’s not usually like this though.” My voice was an annoyed grumble. We walked into the dining room after she finished helping me get dressed.

“We were beginning to worry about the two of you.” Ho Seok said.

“I had a rough night, so I’m not feeling very well.” I said quietly.

“You look like you just got into a fight without all of the bruises. Or like you just had sex. Did you and Mi Ran do something in Jeong Guk’s room? He would kill—”

“Eww, Tae!” Mi Mi interrupted. “Ji Ji and I would never have sex. How could you even say that?”

“Yeah. Mi Mi and I are the last two you have to worry about having sex. I couldn’t even imagine.” I said with a sour, amused face.

Mi Mi and I burst into a fit of laughter. The alphas looked at us, confused. I shot a look to Mi Mi and she nodded.

“Our relationship isn’t sexual. We’ve never had sex with each other and we never will. We’re both actually virgins.”

Seok Jin choked on some of his rice when I made my statement. “How have you two been together for five years and never had sex? Are you guys monks or something?” He managed to finally say.

“No. Ji Ji and I are life mates, but we don’t see each other sexually. Plus, we don’t really have those kinds of urges. At least, I don’t.”

“I don’t either. I’ve never been horny before.” I admitted sheepishly. It was weird to talk about this with anyone, especially my new friends.

I was glad that none of them questioned me further. They could tell my arousal situation was an awkward subject. The rest of our meal time was discussing the ridiculousness of being in a relationship for five years without sex. Mi Mi and I silently discussed telling them our secret, but decided against it. We may be friends with these alphas, but we aren’t to the point of sharing deep life secrets yet. At least not the scarring kind. It was better for them to think we were celibate weirdos than for them to be able to use the truth as ammunition.

“Guk just texted me and said he’ll be here in an hour.”

I internally panicked at Tae Hyung’s announcement. I couldn’t handle being around Jeong Guk right now. Mi Mi sensed my fear and pulled out her phone.

“I’m sorry, guys, but I forgot that I have to go to my grandmother’s house today. Ji Ji and I need to
I was grateful that they understood. We finished eating and quickly helped the pack clean the dishes.

“Thank you for having us! We had a lot of fun.” Mi Mi and I bowed slightly to show our gratitude.

“We did too! Please come to our next movie night.” We left assuring them that we would definitely be back.

Mi Mi and I began walking home. I felt a strong urge to discuss everything that happened at the pack’s house. I usually talked about my problems with Mi Mi, but this felt like the information was going to jump out of me if I didn’t tell her now.

“Thanks for finding a way out of there. I barely survived sleeping in Jeong Guk’s room. I don’t think I would have been able to handle being around him. I don’t know what the hell is up with his rut, but the smell drives me insane. I had actually gotten used to his scent and it hasn’t bothered me.”

“Is it as bad as it was last month?”

“Yes, but it’s different. A month ago, I wanted to rip his throat out when I smelled him. Now, it’s like I can’t move and I can’t focus. It makes me dizzy.”

“I’m guessing when you were in your rut, he was too. That definitely means it’s his rut scent that bothers you. It’s weird that it would affect you differently depending on whether you’re in heat or rut. I don’t get why it would make you violent when you’re in rut, but disoriented when you’re in heat.”

“Great. Now, I have to avoid him once a month in order to function normally.”

Mi Mi tilted her head to the side and smiled. I didn’t like the look of that smile. “Is that a problem? A month ago, you wanted to kill him. Now, you seem sad that you won’t be able to see him.”

“I’m just so curious! It seems like every time we get closer to the alphas there’s another thing about Jeong Guk that affects me. I don’t know what to make of it. I feel like the only way I’m going to get any answers is if I get to know him better. He’s also a good guy from what I can tell. I would like to be friends with him. After their family movie night, I feel closer to the others. I’m honestly kind of upset he wasn’t there. I had fun, but it would have been nice to hang out with everyone.”

“Maybe we can invite him over to hang out with us.”

“You don’t think it would be rude to ask just Jeong Guk to spend time with us? I feel like that’s super rude.”

Mi Mi got another strange smile on her face. I didn’t bother trying to figure it out. “I know for a fact that no one would find it rude if we hung out with just Jeong Guk.”

“How do you know that? You look like you’re hiding something.”

“I’m hiding plenty of things. But, this is part of the agreement that Jeong Guk and I made. No, I can’t tell you about it. What I can say is that you and I will be spending a lot more time with him. Starting Tuesday, he’s going to study with us after school.”

“How? He’s a year younger than you. He shouldn’t be in the same classes. Also, how do you know this?”
“He skipped a grade because he’s too smart for his own good. I know this because he texted me and told me.” Her matter-of-fact tone bothered me.

“When did you get his number?” For some reason, I was disappointed that he gave Mi Mi his number, but not me. I guess she was wrong about him wanting me. Maybe he wants Mi Mi. He better not be trying to get to her through me.

“You good, Ji Ji? You just went from cute, pouty puppy to kill a bitch in two seconds. Your scent changed from sad to angry all of a sudden too.”

I shouldn’t be surprised that she could tell all of those things. Even if she didn’t know my scent as well as she does, she’s known me long enough to know my facial expressions. “First, I was upset that he gave you his number and not me. Then, I started to think of why he would do that. He better not be trying to fuck with you. I swear I will rip—.”

Mi Mi put her hand to my mouth, giggling at my sudden protectiveness. “Trust me, Ji Ji, he is so not interested in me. Tae gave me Jeong Guk’s number so that he and I could talk about our agreement when we’re not at school. He and I have a lot to discuss.”

I stopped walking and hugged her tightly. “I know better than to ask you about this. I know you won’t tell me when you have your mind made up. If you tell me that everything is all right, then I will believe you. Just promise me it’s actually okay. This whole situation is freaking me out and my alpha is pissed. I feel like I’ve been trapped in something—that no one is telling me about—and I don’t have a choice but to go along with it.”

“I promise everything is all right. Jeong Guk and I are up to something, but it’s a surprise. Just relax and enjoy making friends.” She grabbed my face and brought it closer to her own, nuzzling my nose.

I placed my nose in her neck and inhaled deeply. The apricot quelled some of the anxiety my alpha was feeling, but I still had a level of uneasiness that I couldn’t place. It was extremely rare that Mi Mi’s scent didn’t completely calm me—that thought alone made my alpha even more upset. “Can we go to my house and cuddle? I don’t want to be alone right now.”

“I’m worried about your omega problems, Ji Ji. But, yes, we can go to your house and cuddle. I’m feeling really clingy too.”
“Why aren’t you wearing your jacket?” Mi Mi asked as she grabbed my hand on the way to school. It was colder than I expected and I shivered a few times on our way to school.

“I left it at the alphas’ house.”

“I’ll text Jeong Guk and ask him to get the others to bring it.”

“Why isn’t he—oh, yeah. He’s helping his cousin move everything today isn’t he?”

She nodded as she typed on her phone. I back hugged her as we walked, hoping to steal some of her warmth. She’s not very big, so I didn’t have much luck. We were met at the school entrance by Ho Seok. He handed me my jacket and ran to class. I put it on and Jeong Guk’s scent took me over once again. I fought the involuntary whimper, trying to keep it from being heard. I failed miserably.

“Jeong Guk’s scent is on your jacket.” Mi Mi declared, instantly knowing what the problem was.

“He must have worn it or something. This is a lot stronger than it just being in his room.”

I heard Mi Mi whisper something about impatience as she left to walk to class. Instead of feeling completely overwhelmed, I felt slightly calmer. I still had a buzz running through my brain, but I was more aware now. This breakthrough in clarity made me determined to get used to his smell. My alpha felt challenged by how Jeong Guk’s scent made me feel. I’m Alphabet and I’ll be damned if I let any alpha’s smell bother me. Even if he’s in his rut, I’m not going to let him win. I pondered how to get used to his fragrance and decided I would have to build up a tolerance. If we are going to be friends, then I have to be able to be around him when he’s in his rut. I zipped the jacket up to my nose and inhaled. I spent my next two classes focusing on taking notes while breathing in bitter orange and passion flower.

“What are you doing, Ji Ji?” Mi Mi turned her head to the side and laughed as she caught me sniffing my jacket in gym class. She cackled when I told her that I challenged myself to accept Jeong Guk’s scent. “You’re too competitive for your own good, but I think it’s a good decision. Maybe you should give your jacket back to him so he can scent it again.”

“It’s going to be completely sweaty once I start running. I’m not subjecting him to that—that’s so gross.”

“A little bunny told me that he’s trying to get used to your scent too. I don’t think he’ll mind.”

“So, I’m not the only one having problems here? Thank the goddess.”

Mi Mi pulled out her phone and snapped a picture of me with my hood on while smelling my sleeves. “Since when do we use our phones for scrapbook pictures? Why would you even want a
picture of me sniffing my jacket in the scrapbook?”

“It’s not for the scrapbook. I’m sending it to Jeong Guk.” She laughed.

“What? Why?”

“He didn’t believe me when I told him you were actually trying to inhale your coat.”

“When did you even have time to tell him? I just told you.”

“I’m talented. Oh, he says that he’s going to bring you a sweaty shirt in exchange for your sweaty shirt.”

“How do you know that? You haven’t even looked at your phone!”

She scoffed and took her phone from her pocket. She showed me Jeong Guk’s messages, covering the screen to make sure I only read the last two.

Me: Is there any way you can give Ji Ji something with your scent? He’s going to give you his sweaty jacket.

Jeong Guk: I can do that. Tell him to keep his jacket so he doesn’t get cold. I’ll take his gym shirt since that’s sweaty too.

“One, how much do you two talk? You seem way too comfortable with each other. Two, who is just okay with exchanging sweaty clothes? What the hell do you two even talk about that makes sweaty shirts look like a normal conversation?” I couldn’t quite wrap my mind around the ridiculousness of this situation.

Mi Mi just laughed and told me to start running so my top would be soaked enough for Jeong Guk. As I was running, I contemplated the decisions I have made in life that led me to drenching a shirt in sweat to give to an alpha. It somehow didn’t seem like the strangest thing I had ever done, even though it was completely out of my comfort zone. The more I ran, the more my mind wandered. I wondered what Jeong Guk was doing—as well as the other alphas—and what Mi Mi could be planning. I focused mainly on Mi Mi’s secret agreement with Jeong Guk and what it could be.

I trust Mi Mi with my life. If she says there is nothing wrong, then everything is fine. She doesn’t lie to me and she only hides things when absolutely necessary. She has always and will always take care of me. She is my life mate, my companion, my omega. But what does Jeong Guk have to do with that? Is she getting his help with something? Is she giving him permission to get to know me? Why would he need permission for that? Before I knew it, the final bell was ringing. I was thankful we didn’t have study group tonight. Our school doesn’t mandate after-school studying, but most students still group up and meet after classes. Mi Mi and I study on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays until 10 pm. Occasionally, we study with a few other classmates that know Mi Mi, but usually it’s just the two of us.

“Here. Guk just got back home and Jin dropped this off on his way to the store.” Ho Seok said as he threw a damp white shirt at me. I put it around my neck and threw him my now dry gym shirt. “This is disgusting!” He said with a scowl.

“I think it’s cute, Seokie. It’s like exchanging love letters but with sweat.” Tae Hyung said with a huge, boxy smile.
“You’re so weird, Tae!” Mi Mi laughed.

“I think you’re all weird. I’m just doing this so I can get used to being around Jeong Guk when he’s in rut. I wouldn’t want to have to avoid my friend because of something he can’t physically help. There are no love letters, there’s no love. I’m just trying to be a good friend. I know what it’s like to be isolated because of something you can’t control. It’s not even his problem, it’s mine. I’m the one reacting so poorly to his rut scent. It’s not like he’s avoiding me because I’m in heat.”

“Nope, not at all!” Ho Seok said with an exaggerated, questionable smile.

Tae Hyung turned Ho Seok around, “Sorry to run, but we have to get to our study group. See you later!”

“I can’t tell if that was suspicious or not. Seokie looked like he was hiding something, but Tae just seemed like his usual weird self.”

I wrapped Jeong Guk’s shirt around my face like a scarf and tried my best to continue everything normally.

“You may be having too much fun with this Ji Ji.”

“Is your idea of fun covering your face with a sweaty shirt? It sure as hell isn’t mine! I need to get past this though. I meant what I said. I don’t know why his scent is so strong when he’s in rut—or why it bothers me so much—but I know that I’m not going to be a jerk and avoid him because of it. I was serious about being his friend. I can’t be his friend if I can’t be around him.”

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“Welcome back, Jeong Guk. It seems like it’s been a while since we’ve seen you.” Mi Mi said when Jeong Guk sat down at the table.

“It’s only been three days, but I have missed talking with you two. Did you guys also get assigned that project on mating and reproduction in Mr. Lin’s class? I was hoping we could work on it together during study. I was assigned the evolution of heat and rut and I’m not sure where to find the best information. What topics did you guys get?”

Mi Mi huffed with a scowl and a large pout that I couldn’t help laughing at. “I got the mating process. I’m so mad about it. I wanted Ji Ji’s topic!”

“She’s just angry because I got the only subject she had an interest in, reproductive controversies.”

“It’s not fair! I could write 20 pages just on omega-omega relationships. Why did he give you my topic? Stupid old alpha jerk!” I pulled her into my lap in an attempt at comforting her.

“You might be able to write about it, but you don’t know that much. You and Ji Min aren’t even in a real relationship.” Yun Ki spoke calmly. Mi Mi and I exchanged panicked glances, wondering how he managed to figure it out.

“What do you mean, Yunie?” The confusion was written all over Jeong Guk’s face.

“They’re both virgins. How can you say you’ve been in a relationship for 5 years and you haven’t even had sex? I get if you were a new couple. Hell, I’ll even excuse a year. But, 5 years and no sex? It’s not a real relationship.” Yun Ki’s tone was dry and his face was blank.

“Listen here, you salty old grandpa! Just because you have never had someone love you as much as
Ji Ji and I love each other doesn’t mean you get to comment on the validity of our relationship. Our relationship is probably more real because it isn’t built off of lust or sexual attraction. There were no hormones or sex drives involved in our decision to be life mates. Maybe you have to have sex to get someone to love you, but not everyone is like that!” She got so worked up that she got off of my lap and took a few steps closer to Yun Ki.

“You tell ‘em, sweetie!” I cheered Mi Mi on as she yelled at Yun Ki.

“Is he being serious, Ji Min? You two are virgins?” The alpha’s quiet voice was filled with something I couldn’t place. It annoyed me for some reason.

“Yes, Jeong Guk. You got a problem?” I moved towards him and brought my face closer to his. It was a pointless intimidation tactic because we both knew he wasn’t afraid of me.

He chuckled and flashed his bunny smile. “Not at all. I just figured you two had sex based on how much Mi Ran crawl all over you. Come to think of it, I’ve never even seen you two kiss.”

“You never will,” I said flatly. I was frustrated by the sudden judgment of how real my relationship with Mi Mi was. It bothered me and angered my alpha.

“I don’t think they’ve kissed. You two have to kiss! You’re definitely not a real couple if you don’t even kiss.” Mi Mi and I stared at each other as Seok Jin spoke. I assume they thought we were discussing whether or not to kiss in front of them. We were really trying to decide if this was the right time to tell them.

After a moment, we slid closer to one another. Moving our faces nearer, we puckered our lips and slowly bent to kiss each other’s cheeks. We burst out laughing at the surprised looks on their faces.

“Did you guys really think that we would kiss just because you asked us to? My life mate and I have a relationship built off of mutual trust, respect, and support. We do not have to prove anything to a curious group of alphas who aren’t even in relationships. What the hell do any of you know about it anyway?” Mi Mi held my hand to try to calm me as I spoke.

After taking a steadying breath, I began again. “None of you have to understand our relationship, but you do have to respect it. I really don’t appreciate my feelings being questioned by people who I’m pretty sure don’t have significant others of their own, let alone someone who is like a life mate.”

Mi Mi sat in my lap and clung to me. She was so good at keeping me calm that it came as fluid, subconscious movements. My alpha beamed with pride knowing that my omega knew exactly how to take care of me when I needed it. The six alphas looked at each other, silently discussing the situation. Nam Joon spoke after a few moments.

“First, we want to say sorry. We shouldn’t make fun of or judge your relationship just because we don’t understand it. We really didn’t mean any harm. All of us were just playing around. I, of all people, fully grasp what it’s like to be with someone and have no one support us.” He pulled his blazer’s collar back to show his mating mark. “My mate and I are both alphas, so I know how you feel.”

My stomach sank with guilt at his words. I had no idea he was mated—to an alpha no less. “I’m sorry. I shouldn’t—”

He cut me off with a hand motion. “You don’t need to be. My pack and I are used to others questioning me and my mate’s relationship. We should have been more sensitive to those feelings. Even if it was meant to be a joke, it can still hurt.”
We spent the rest of the lunch period reconciling our differences and solidifying our friendship. Despite their misguided attempts at humor, they really were amazing people.

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“Did you guys know you can mark your mate on their right wrist before you mate mark them? It strengthens the mate bond and makes it so you can locate your mate anywhere. I’ve never heard of that before. My parents don’t have wrist mate marks. I don’t think anyone in my family does.”

“That’s pretty cool, Mi Ran. I’ve never heard of that either. Do you make that mark at the same time as the normal mate mark?”

“You’re supposed to do it before. First, your and your mate present themselves. Then, you wrist mark them and synchronize your heat and rut. The last step is mate marking and sex. I also didn’t know there’s a time limit for the sex. It says here that if you don’t have sex within an hour, the mating isn’t official—the pair won’t be connected, both marks will go away after a while, and they’ll have to start the mating process over again if they still want to be mates. Preventing sex is apparently a method some people use to steal other people’s mates. That’s fucked up. I had no clue mating was this complicated. I just thought it was biting and fucking.”

Mi Mi laughed as she spoke. Jeong Guk’s eyes grew wide at her last few sentences. It was obvious that he had never heard her say fuck before. “I’m not that sweet and innocent, Jeong Guk. I just can’t swear with the pack around because it’s usually seen as disrespectful.”

“That’s funny because we haven’t been swearing because of you. Jin and Joon thought it would offend you or something. They’ll be so happy that they can talk normally.”

We continued to flip through reference books and read articles online until Jeong Guk gasped. “Holy shit! Did you guys know that heat and rut used to happen every six months and it would last three weeks? Apparently, too many people were dying because they weren’t eating for weeks on end. We adapted to have less intense, more frequent mating cycles. Three weeks? I would die. No, I’d probably kill someone else because of my rut rage.”

“Are your ruts really that bad? You didn’t seem that bad when we first met. Not that I can say anything. I have to take my Primemmeryn every day and who times a day when I’m in rut or heat.”

“I don’t feel so bad now. I have to take two Primatin every day and two pills twice a day when I’m in my rut.”

“Holy fuck! Why? That’s enough to tranquilize four alphas.” I was shocked by his admission. It logically didn’t make any sense. One Primatin once a day is enough to keep an average alpha at bay during his rut. If Jeong Guk took that much Primatin, then there shouldn’t be any trace of his wolf—basically, he should be a wolfless human.

“I… uh… I have a genetic disorder that has strong physical and neurological effects.” He looked down, bashfully rubbing the nape of his neck.

“What are you being shy for? I’m the king of fucked up genetics. I’m not going to judge you, but I’m also not going to force you to talk about it. I’m here for you if you want to talk.” I placed my hand on his shoulder and smiled at him.

He quickly closed this distance between us and pulled me into an embrace. I ran my hand up and down his back as I hugged him. The closeness felt peaceful and a little tingly. I wanted to support him, even if he wasn’t ready to open up. If anyone could understand having a condition that made
you something you shouldn’t be, it’s me. Jeong Guk pulled away and apologized for hugging me.

“No apologies for that. Alphas may not be big on affection, but omegas are. You can’t apologize because I’m an omega and I say it’s okay.” I gave a small nod to drive home my point.

“What kind of logic is that, Ji Ji?” A small laugh escaped from Mi Mi’s lips.

“I don’t know! I just want him to know it’s fine if he hugs me.”

Jeong Guk laughed at our bickering as he wrote more notes for his project. A comfortable silence fell over us as we worked. After a while, Jeong Guk’s phone vibrating reminded me of something.

“You need to give me your number, Jeong Guk.”

He motioned for me to give him my phone and programmed his number into it. I chuckled when I saw the contact. I decided to text him now so that he would have my number too.

Me: Jeonggukie and a smiley face? Are we to that point in our relationship now?

He giggled when he read my message.

Jeonggukie 😊: Yes

Me: All right. You have to save me as Jiminnie with like a star or something then

He showed me the screen and I laughed. “Now we’re even, Jeonggukie.” A huge grin spread across his face as he began reading again.

“Did you know that there used to be a stigma against same-sex mating?” I said, flipping through more pages. “People used to hate them because they can’t reproduce, but then they learned that it was necessary for population control. That’s just stupid. Who cares? Why is it okay for opposite-sex couples to decide not to have pups, but same-sex couples aren’t okay because they can’t have pups? Fucking stupid. Anyway, I’m beginning to think that we were tricked by our teacher into learning something. I know more about mating now than I’ve ever wanted to. Damn teachers and their stupid plans.” My dramatic tone earned a laugh from my study group.

We continued working until Mi Mi’s “finished studying” alarm went off. We packed up and left the school for the night. I couldn’t have been more grateful to be finished for the day.

“Umm… where are you going, Jeonggukie?” I asked when he started following Mi Mi and I—the opposite direction from his house.

“I’m walking you two home. It’s an alpha thing. I have to make sure you and Mi Ran get home safely. I know that you would be fine without me, but I can’t help it.”

“You’d be walking an extra 20 to 30 minutes if you take us home though.” Mi Mi argued.

“I’m fine. I really kind of have to. If I don’t, I would be a complete wreck while I waited for you two to get home. I also would probably demand to see pictures that prove you’re home safely. I guess it’s because I’ve never really been near omegas. Now that I have two omegas, my instincts are working
overtime. My alpha is all hyper and telling me I have to protect you at all costs.” Jeong Guk laughed and shook his head.

“First off, I’m also an alpha. Second, when you say you have two omegas, it makes it sound like you’re dating us.” I said sarcastically.

“First off, you’re not an alpha, little omega. Second—”

“Little omega? I’ll show you little omega!” My alpha was angered at his words, causing me to lunge at his neck.

“Big mistake, Jiminie.” He said as he wrapped his arms around my waist, pinning me to his chest.

“Let me go!” I squirmed and flailed, but he held me in place. My alpha was not happy.

“You might as well get comfortable, little omega. I’m not letting you go until we get to your house. You wanted to be a big, bad alpha and now you’re stuck here. Real alphas know how to admit when they’re defeated.”

I sighed and wrapped my legs around his waist so I could be more comfortable. “I’m going to get you back for this.”

He laughed. “I’m ready any time, any day.” His voice dropped as he leaned closer to my ear.

“Is that a threat, alpha?” I lowered my voice as well and leaned into him. My scent spiked, signaling to Mi Mi that I was actually getting upset.

“Break it up, you two! Quit flirting.”

“I’m pretty sure that’s not flirting, Mi Mi.” I laughed. “Then again, I don’t really know what flirting is.”

“You two don’t flirt? How the hell did you end up together then?” Jeong Guk’s voice sounded so surprised.

I shrugged. “We were friends and then we decided to become life mates.”

“That’s the most unromantic love story ever.” He seemed almost disappointed with my response.

“I’ll leave you guys to talk some more. Bye, Ji Ji! Bye, Jeong Guk!” We bid Mi Mi farewell and waited for her to get into her house safely.

“Love doesn’t have to be romantic, Jeonggukie. It just has to be love.”

“You’ve never been in love, have you?” I put my head on his shoulder to avoid interacting any further. “It’s all right if you don’t want to talk about it, Jiminie. I’m here for you if you need someone to support you.”

I clutched onto him tighter. Not being in love had never hurt before, but Jeong Guk’s words made me question my concept of love.

“What is love?” I whispered quietly, praying he didn’t hear me.

Chapter End Notes
In the next few chapters, you'll start to notice some nicknames. If any of them are confusing, I'll create a legend for them. Just let me know if I need to!

I'm about to start my next Twitter AU, so updates may be a little slower. I'm going to try to find a good balance for updating both.
The Truth

Jeonggukie 😊: I didn’t mean to pry. It’s none of my business

Me: It’s fine. I’m just wondering things now

Jeonggukie 😊: You need to talk? I can call you

Me: It’s 2 am. You should be sleeping

Jeonggukie 😊: So should you

Me: I’m older so you have to listen to me

Jeonggukie 😊: By that logic, I’m an alpha so you have to listen to me. Go to sleep!

Me: You did not just play the alpha card! That’s low. Plus, I’m an alpha too!

Jeonggukie 😊: No you’re not, little omega. Try as you might, you’re still naturally an omega. We’re even from how I see it. You’re older and I’m an alpha. We need a tiebreaker

Me: I’m cuter because I’m an omega

Jeonggukie 😊: Bitch where?
Me: Right here

Jeonggukie 😊: That is so going to be my contact pic for you

Me: What? No! That’s a terrible pic

Jeonggukie 😊: Too late

Me: I’m using yours now too!

Jeonggukie 😊: Fine with me
Me: You’re no fun!

Jeonggukie 😊: Then why are you smiling?

Jeonggukie 😊: Don’t even try to lie. I know you are

Me: Thanks for cheering me up. We need to go to bed now

Jeonggukie 😊: Good night, Jiminie

Me: Good night, Jeonggukie

I smiled as I put my phone down. This alpha really was a good kid. I curled up to my pillow and I felt Jeonggukie’s shirt beside it. I had forgotten about sleeping with his shirt to get used to his smell. I sniffed it and all of his scent was gone. I grabbed my phone before I knew what I was doing.

Me: Would it be weird to ask you for another shirt? This one doesn’t smell like you anymore. I know it was to get used to each other’s scent, but I guess it’s comforting or something

Jeonggukie 😊: Only if I can have another one of yours. The one you gave me smells like me now because I may or may not have slept with it

Me: You too? I thought I was weird for doing that

Jeonggukie 😊: We can be weird together. Good night, Jiminie

Me: Night, Jeonggukie

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The past month has been a blur of midterm exams, presentations, and papers. Even our study sessions have increased to five nights a week. I missed what it felt like to have free time and have fun
with my friends outside of school. The only things that kept me sane were Mi Mi and Jeonggukie. They kept me in touch with myself when it felt like I was becoming a machine. I woke up with the urge to hit someone and realized that I started my rut. Usually, I wouldn’t lose track of my mating cycle like this, but things have been so hectic lately. I texted Mi Mi and Jeonggukie warnings before I dressed for school. I was nervous because I’m not sure how I’m going to react to Jeonggukie’s rut. Within the last two months, he has become my second best friend. I don’t know how I would handle it if I hated being around him when we’re both in rut. I know for a fact I would feel like a bad friend. I'm still not sure how to process any of this yet. As I got ready, my alpha seemed restless.

“I know you’re worried, Ji Ji.” Mi Mi jumped into my arms so I could carry her. I was glad she was in heat because that extra sweet smell helped calm me.

When we arrived at school, Jeonggukie wasn’t waiting for us. He must have been nervous too. In my first class, we presented our reproduction projects. Mine focused on the stigma of omega-omega and alpha-alpha relationships. It was a subject close to my heart because of my taboo relationship with Mi Mi and Nam Joon’s relationship with his mate. After the presentations, I had an exam and then gym. I was grateful for the chance to mindlessly focus on physical activity.

“You going to zone out and do the meathead thing so you don’t have to think about how nervous you are?”

“You know me so well, Mi Mi.”

She jumped on my back and I jogged around the track while carrying her. Mr. Myung was too busy refereeing a game of basketball to notice.

“What if I still hate him?” I said while breathing heavily. Even running wasn’t helping my uneasiness completely.

“Then we will figure it out. Maybe you two could trade shirts again or something.”

“Umm… we never actually stopped doing that.”

“Really? That’s completely not in your character at all. Do you like him or something? I’ve never known you to trade scents before.”

“You mean romantically? No. You know I’m not capable of having those kinds of feelings. I do like him as a person though. I like spending time with him and I like who he is as a person. I feel a similar feeling for him as I do you, just less intense. I like Jeonggukie, but I love you.”

“Did you just friendzone him?” She laughed at the thought.

“How many times do I have to tell you everyone is friendzoned? That’s what asexual means. Or is that aro? Either way, I’m both. Being with someone wouldn’t work anyway. I can’t date an omega because I would break them and I’m built to ‘want’ an alpha. But, I can’t want an alpha because my alpha would kill them. Even if my wolves could somehow agree on someone, no alpha or omega can handle me.”

“Jeong Guk can. He charmed you when you were in your rut. You can’t move when he grabs you. He’s even got you on the verge of scent marking. He’s your alpha, Ji Ji.” Mi Mi’s voice was steady and firm. She had already made up her mind about the topic.

“How can he be my alpha when he hasn’t made me feel anything? How can he be my alpha when I don’t feel submissive around him? That’s the problem, really. I’ll never feel submissive and that’s the only way to trigger romantic or sexual feelings in me. Why do you want him to be my alpha
anyway? Why are you pushing this?” My mind was a frenzied mess as I spoke and the piney balsam of my scent spiked the air.

“Because he’s real. Our promise was made on the assumption that neither of our alphas exists. But, yours does.”

I stopped jogging and shifted Mi Mi to my chest. “Magical, nonexistent alpha or no magical, nonexistent alpha, you are my life mate. I chose you to be my one and only. Jeonggukie is a wonderful friend, but he will never come between us. Now, stop trying to pawn me off to the first eligible alpha. You want to get rid of me that badly?” She squealed as I held her closer and sprinted to the locker rooms. We got dressed and trudged toward the lunch room.

I sighed heavily and grabbed Mi Mi’s hand. We stood outside of the cafeteria, all of the possible outcomes running through my mind. Mi Mi also sighed and pulled me towards our table.

“All you can do now is try.” I nodded at Mi Mi as I sat down—immediately noticing that Jeonggukie was missing.

“He’s on his way,” Yunie said, noticing how I was looking for the alpha.

“I should know that, but he hasn’t spoken to me today.”

“He’s worried that you’re going to hate him and that you two will fight and—” Jin covered Tae’s mouth to keep him from rambling more.

A growl came from me as I dug my claws into the table. I glanced up to see Jeonggukie walking through the door. “Sit next to me,” I muttered through clenched teeth.

I could sense his anger sparking as a reaction to my scent and tone. He sat next to me and all of my nervousness went away. It was filled with rage. My alpha was furious and urged me to attack him with everything I have. I slowly raised my hands towards Jeonggukie and he snarled. The bitter citrus in his scent gave me a warning. I quickly pulled him into an embrace, hoping to overwhelm the anger. Despite my alpha’s frenzy, my human side managed to win the fight for now. His aroma calmed down and he hugged me back.

“Jiminie?”

“I want to break your stupid nose and dislocate you stupid jaw. I want to sink my teeth so far into your throat that I rip out your spine. I want to gouge out your scent gland so I never have to smell you again.”

“I love you too, Jiminie.” He laughed as he pulled me onto his lap and held me there. I took deep breaths and focused all of my energy on not attacking him. As we ate, he whispered into my ear. “You don’t have to learn to tolerate my rut. It’s all right if we avoid each other for three days every month.”

“No, it isn’t. You are my friend and I am not going to let my hormones control me. I will master this like I’ve mastered every other challenge I have ever faced.” At this moment, my alpha was conflicted. On one side of the issue, my alpha absolutely hated everything about Jeonggukie and his rut. His existence sparked every bit of alpha I had in me. On the other side, my alpha was not going to back down from the test of accepting this other alpha’s rut. Somehow, the confusion pissed me off even more.

“I know exactly what the problem is.”
I let out a low growl as his breath fell on my neck. He wrapped his arms around me tighter. “What is that?”

Jeonggukie leaned closer to me, his lips brushing against my ear. “Your alpha is intimidated by me. I’m stronger than anyone else you’ve ever met. Even if I’m on enough Primatin to knock out multiple alphas, my scent can’t be fully covered and my alpha can’t be subdued. Your alpha hates me because he’s terrified. He knows I’m stronger.”

I’m not sure if I was more enraged by the fact that Jeonggukie thought his alpha was stronger than mine or by the fact that I secretly knew it was true. Either way, I extended my claws and turned in his grasp—trying desperately to clutch his throat. He quickly grabbed my wrists in one of his hands.

“Easy, little omega. You don’t really want to hurt me. You’re stronger than this, aren’t you?”

I nodded, feeling dizzy from the floral citrus mixture in the air. I couldn’t tell if he was changing his scent to charm me or to calm me. Regardless, it was working. He kept my wrists in his left hand as he ate. “I can’t eat like this, Jeonggukie.”

He moved my lunch in front of him after he had eaten a few more bites. He picked up some of the food and held it in front of my mouth. I bit it and hummed gratefully.

“Umm… you guys are cute and all, but don’t you think that’s a little too kinky for school?”

“What the fuck, Yunie?” Jeonggukie said as he fed me some rice.

“He was just saying what we were all thinking. You and Ji Ji look like you’re doing something incredibly sexual.”

“I’m gonna be real with you, I forgot you all were here.” I looked around and noticed the pack and Mi Mi were staring at us.

“Not helping your case, Ji Ji.”

“I guess we do look kind of kinky. Jiminie is in my lap, I’ve got his arms restrained, and I’m feeding him. I could see the confusion.” Jeonggukie continued to feed me as he spoke.

“So, you’re just going to keep being gross? Anyone going to stop them?” Yunie looked around.

“I think they’re cute.” Mi Mi’s voice was broken by a giggle because of Yunie’s incredulous expression.

Jin squinted his eyes and turned his head in confusion. “Wait! Why do you approve of this Mi Ran? That’s your life mate being seduced by our youngest.”

“I keep telling you guys that we don’t have a sexual relationship.”

“So, you’re okay with him fucking someone else since you two don’t have sex?”

“Yes? No? I don't know know what I’m supposed to say here. Ji Ji, help me!”

I was snapped back into the conversation by Mi Mi’s words. I had only been half listening since Jeonggukie was teasing me with my food—pulling it away as soon as I moved to take a bite.

“Yunie, leave my life mate alone. Mi Mi, do you think it's time?” She nodded. “We have something to tell you guys.”
“Is Mi Ran pregnant?” Seokie asked with wide eyes.

“Oh goddess, no! I will NEVER have pups.”

She and I laughed together for a moment. Jeonggukie urged me to speak by wrapping his other arm around me and jostling me gently. “Okay, so… Mi Mi and I aren’t actually dating. We never were. We are life mates, but we have no romantic feelings towards each other. Mi Mi is basically my sister.” I felt Jeonggukie’s grasp on my wrists and waist tighten.

“Why did you tell us you were dating then?” Joon asked sternly.

“We never said we’re dating. We said we’re life mates and everyone assumed that we’re dating. Ji Ji and I have an incredibly strong bond and a very real relationship. We love each other more than anything and we are going to spend the rest of our lives together. We just aren’t romantically interested in each other.”

I could see the confusion on their faces as they tried to process it all. Jeonggukie was rigid beneath me. I looked to see his face completely blank.

Tae was the one who finally broke the silence. “Why would you choose to be in an omega-omega relationship instead of finding alphas?”

“We have our reasons,” I said flatly, looking at Mi Mi. I wasn’t sure if she was ready to share that part of herself.

“I can tell them. I can’t find an alpha because I’m a lesbian.” Her voice broke slightly and I pulled myself out of Jeonggukie’s grasp. I enveloped her in a tight hug.

“It’s okay, Mi Mi. Remember what I said?” I pulled her onto my lap so her chest was facing mine. I dried her tears as she nodded. “What did I say?”

“Fuck imaginary alphas,” she mumbled quietly.

“I didn’t hear you, sweetie.”

“Fuck imaginary alphas.”

“A little louder,” I called in a singsong voice.

“Fuck imaginary alphas!” She giggled as she almost screamed the mantra.

I nuzzled her cheek softly and kissed her temple. “There’s my girl.” I held her close to me and looked around the table.

“As for me, I am incapable of feeling romantic feelings. I’m actually aromantic and asexual because of my disorder. Alphabet Syndrome makes it so that my alpha personality doesn’t cooperate with my omega body. The doctor says the only way for me to be romantically involved with someone is to find an alpha strong enough to make me submit to him. But, as far as I know, I’m incapable of feeling submissive. Since our alphas don’t exist, Mi Mi and I decided that we would spend the rest of our lives together.”

I played with Mi Mi’s hair and rubbed my hand across her back. The alphas sat in silent discussion, but something was vastly different than their normal pack link conversations. Instead of looking at each other, they were all staring directly at Jeonggukie.
I could feel Jeonggukie’s apprehension as he and his pack communicated. His scent changed in a way that I had never smelled before, making me want to help him. I put my hand on his, trying to offer him as much support as possible. At length, he held my hand and looked at me.

“You remember how I said I have a genetic neurological disorder?” I nodded. I looked deep into his eyes as I put Mi Mi back into her chair. Something told me he needed all of my attention at this moment. “It’s called Hyperactive Alpha Dominance Disorder. It makes me more aggressive and dominant than other alphas, especially when I’m in my rut. I’m also stronger and have better senses than any other alpha I’ve met. I have the same problem you do, Jimine. I can’t find a mate because I’m too dominant and strong. I would break an omega and no alpha would willingly be with me. If one chose to be with me, we’d probably fight and I’d end up killing him. Other wolves tend to stay away from me or naturally submit to me.

“My alpha doesn’t really pay attention to people and their wolves. He doesn't see a need to when I could probably kill anyone I’ve ever met. My doctor told me that my alpha would attach himself romantically to my mate, but I wouldn’t be interested in anyone else. The way I understood it, I have to find my ‘soulmate’ or else I'll be alone forever.

"As far as sex goes, I only really feel any sexual desires when I’m being actively dominant—which is different than my normal being dominant. Because I sedate myself and control my symptoms, I have to be in a hormonally volatile state to be aroused. It's only happened once. I had sex and I almost killed the omega. At least, that’s what it looked like. She couldn’t walk and she had bruises everywhere. It was bad. I wasn’t even in my rut at the time. Anyway, I know what it’s like to spend your whole life knowing you won’t find a mate.”

I stood up and walked behind him, bending down to hug him. My rut-fueled hatred had subsided because of the strong emotional turmoil that Jeonggukie and I shared. I hoped my arms wrapped tightly around his shoulders, my face buried in his neck, and my calming flowery scent were enough to give him comfort. My words failed me. I could only act on instinct because my mind was racing. Jeonggukie and I were the same. He and I shared a pain that I have never been able to fully express to anyone. Even with Mi Mi, things were different. She definitely has a valid reason to not find an alpha mate, but she could still mate. If she wanted, she could find a good omega to call her own. I understand the desire for an alpha—it’s her genetics after all—but she could still fall in love and mate. Jeonggukie and I couldn’t. In a way, we are also mates. Mi Mi and I are life mates and Jeonggukie and I are misery mates. The bell rang, bringing me back to the present. Jeonggukie’s arms were wrapped around mine and his head was leaning on my head.

“It’s movie night, isn’t it?” I whispered into his ear, not wanting to move. He nodded. “Can we talk tonight?

He nodded again. “I hope the rest of your day goes well, Jeonggukie. If you need me, you know how to reach me. I’ll see you soon.” I squeezed him one last time and grabbed my backpack.
Mi Mi and I walked in heavy silence, neither of us knew what to say or how to say it. It was the first
time a while that she and I couldn't talk. We held hands quietly until we parted for class with a strong
hug. In math, we had an exam that I finished quickly. I laid my head on the desk and tried to make
some sense of everything. My phone vibrated. I immediately looked at it, expecting Mi Mi to be able
to talk through text.

Jeonggukie 😊: I wanted to say sorry for ruining the mood at lunch. I saw how you and Mi
Ran didn’t talk afterward. Also, thank you for the hug. It really helped

Me: Don’t apologize for that. Ever. It’s something that we needed to talk about. Life isn’t
always fun times and happy endings. I’m here for you no matter what.

Jeonggukie 😊: You have no idea what it means to me to hear that. My pack always supports
me when I feel down but they don’t really get it

Me: If anyone understands how much it means to you, it’s me. Mi Mi is the most amazing life
mate I could ask for but she will never fully understand how I feel

Jeonggukie 😊: Whenever you need someone who gets you, I’ll be here

Me: Promise?

Jeonggukie 😊: Promise

Jeonggukie 😊: Gotta go. I’m about to present my reproduction project

Me: Good luck!

I locked my phone and smiled. It was nice to have someone who could relate to me in this way. I am
so used to being the only weird one, but Jeonggukie and I are both freaks of nature. I contemplated
the happy warm feeling in my stomach as I drifted off to sleep. The rest of the day faded into more
presentations and exams. It was an incredibly stressful day, but I’m glad it’s over. I met Mi Mi at our
normal spot and we began walking home. Jeonggukie didn’t join us because his pack wanted help
getting ready for movie night.

“Can you come with me to my house before we go to movie night?” Mi Mi said suddenly.

“Sure. Everything okay?”

“Yeah. I just want to talk.”
“Start talking,” I said with a smile.

“Not yet. I want to do the thing when we talk.” Her lips were drawn into a straight line, which worried me.

The thing, as Mi Mi calls it, is when we lay on her bed while facing each other and holding hands. She does it for comfort when we talk about stressful topics. Usually, it’s saved for really big problems.

“Are you that upset right now?” I was worried that something was seriously wrong with her.

“No, but I know it’s going to be heavy.” I nodded and held her hand tighter.

When we were finally laying in Mi Mi’s bed, she let out a deep sigh. “I take it you’re over Jeong Guk’s rut now?” I could tell she was trying to start the conversation off slowly.

“I don’t actually know. I still feel like my normal aggressive self, but seeing him and hearing all of his pain triggered something in me. I just wanted to make him feel better.”

She nodded in recognition. I looked at her for a while, thinking more about the revelations that today brought. A question came to mind that I had to ask. “Did you know about Jeonggukie’s condition? You two talk a lot.”

“He never said anything to me about it, but I knew something was up with him. After you passed out at the last movie night, the alphas told me that Jeonggukie was different than the average alpha. That’s why I’ve been trying to get you close to him. They gave me the overall impression that having you around is good for Jeong Guk’s sanity. Plus, he and I have an arrangement. We agreed that he would be able to get to know you as long as he didn’t threaten our relationship. I don’t think he knows the other part of my plan. I’ve been trying to get him into the thought process of dating you.”

“What the fuck, Mi Mi? It’s you and me against the world.” My alpha was instantly on edge at the thought of dating Jeonggukie.

“I know, but he’s your alpha. You two are genetically predisposed to be together. If that’s not a fucking soulmate, I don’t know what is.”

I leaned in towards her and looked her in the eyes. “Jeonggukie is not my life mate. You are.”

“Alpha and omega stuff aside, he still understands you in a way that I can’t. He’s been through the same things and he’s felt the same pain. He’s actually a better match for a life mate than I am.” Even though her voice was steady, tears were streaming down Mi Mi’s face. I released calming pheromones to help her feel more at ease.

“He’s going to have to get in line because I’m taken.”

She flashed a weak smile. “I can share.”

“I feel like that’s weird. Plus, that makes it seem like we’re all dating. How are you going to hoe around with two guys? I’m pretty sure that means you fail as a lesbian.” I pursed my lips together and eyed her in an exaggerated manner so she would know I was joking.

She laughed and stuck her tongue out. “I’m serious! The three of us can be life mates if you’re not going to date him. He shares our pain. He doesn’t have an omega. Isn’t that what being life mates is all about?”
“How would we even ask him about that? You and I were friends for years before we became life mates. We’ve known him for two months. How do you even feel comfortable with this?” I could tell she wasn’t going to drop the conversation, but it all seemed to be too much and too soon.

She shrugged. “I know somewhere inside you can feel it too. Even if you won’t accept him as your alpha, you’re drawn to him. I can tell he feels the same way. Jeong Guk should be our life mate because he will take care of us just like we take care of each other.”

“How do you know that?”

“Seriously, Ji Ji? He walks us both home from school, he makes sure we eat, he listens to our problems and helps us solve them. Just a few minutes ago he video called us to make sure we got home okay. Even when I go somewhere with my family, he texts me to make sure I’m all right. He took on every problem alpha in the whole damn school just to protect us! He’s already adopted us as his omegas. We owe it to him to adopt him as our alpha.”

As much as I didn’t want to admit it, Mi Mi made some great points. “I’ll think about it. He and I are going to talk tonight anyway. I’ll see how it goes. Maybe I’ll bring it up to him. I might wait. I want to make sure he’s going to be as committed to us as we will be to him. Or maybe I need to make sure we will be as committed to him. How do you feel about Jeonggukie, Mi Mi? Could you love him like you love me?”

“I know we could both love him. We all get along so well. Getting to know him reminded me a lot of when you and I first met. We were such fast friends. We probably would have been life mates a lot sooner if we had known about each other’s mating issues. I don’t feel like it’s too soon to consider being life mates with Jeong Guk. You already said that you feel the same way about him that you do about me, just not as intense. I believe we can all love each other. Remember, being life mates is a choice.”

I hugged her tightly and laid my head on her chest. “If we do become life mates with Jeonggukie, we are going to be stuck with five other alphas for the rest of our lives. A pack bond is like a mate bond, it’s almost unbreakable. Are you ready to have a new family? I can’t help but feel like it’s happening too quickly.”

Mi Mi played with my hair as I listened to her heartbeat. “I honestly don’t know if we’re ready. It’s going to be a lot of adjustment going from a family of two to a family of eight. If Jeong Guk is going to be our life mate, I feel like it’s worth it. Plus, the pack is full of really awesome alphas who are wonderful people. It wouldn’t be so bad to be connected to them for the rest of our lives. Maybe it’s too soon and maybe it’s not. We really have to talk it over with Jeong Guk to be sure. He may not want that type of bond with us. It’s possible the pack won’t accept us or they’ll think it’s weird we’re basically having a platonic threesome with their packmate.”

I laughed at Mi Mi’s statement. “Platonic threesome? I like it. In fact, if we ask Jeonggukie to be our life mate, that’s exactly how we should do it. Imagine his face if I asked ‘Jeon Jeong Guk, will you have a platonic threesome with Mi Mi and me?’ He would be so confused.”

She squealed with laughter. “If you say it that way, it sounds like we’re going to fuck him.”

“I don’t know, Mi Mi. You did say you were almost seduced by him when we first saw him.” I raised my eyebrow and smirked.

“It was more like a platonic seduction!” I scoffed at her phrasing. “Hey! You’re the one who was basically three seconds from riding his dick at lunch. That was some kinky daddy shit.”
“See, this isn’t fair. It’s not like I can say it was platonic dick riding, even if it was.”

“I’m totally going to ask Jeong Guk if you can platonically ride his dick.”

I grabbed her hands and pinned them to the bed. “Don’t you dare!”

She giggled as my scent thickened with anger. “There’s my alpha Ji Ji! You know you don’t scare me. Why are you so mad anyway? Do you actually want to do something with Jeong Guk?”

“No. I just can’t stand the thought of letting another alpha touch me. It makes me want to strangle him. Even if I did, I’m the dominant one. How the fuck would that work?”

“He’d split your ass in half. That’s exactly how that would work. You remember what he said he did to that omega. That’s fucking crazy when you think about it. Omegas are built to withstand—”

I put my hand on her mouth, trying to stifle both her words and my growl. I didn't want to hear about that alpha's sex life or think about playing a part in it. “I really don’t want to think about it. I’m not going to fuck Jeonggukie and the thought is pissing me off. My rut rage is back and I know his smell is going to set me off. Tonight is going to be a disaster.”

“I’m sure our future life mate will find a way to calm you down.” She said as she sweetened her fragrance.

I tried to ignore the strange sensation in my gut at her words. It’s probably just my alpha wanting to kill him for trying to interfere with Mi Mi’s and my relationship. “Don’t call him that.”

Mi Mi giggled and wrapped her arms around me to calm me further. I fell asleep cuddled up to her small frame.

Chapter End Notes

If you have any questions about Jeonggukie's disorder that weren't answered, be sure to ask them. I'll let you know if they'll be answered later in the story or not. That goes for all of the questions you might have. I'm pretty good about tying up loose story points by the end (no, we're not close to the end), but it is all from Ji Min's perspective and I might miss something.
“How do you make food taste this good, Jin?” Mi Mi asked with a half-full mouth.

“I didn’t cook this time. Guk made it. I just helped with prep work.”

Her mouth formed the shape of an O and she quickly apologized. She complemented Jeonggukie on his cooking.

“Thanks, Mi Ran. I probably made way too much, but I needed to keep myself busy.” He looked down at his plate and rubbed the back of his neck.

“You know we’ll eat it, Guk.” Tae said as he put his hand on Jeonggukie’s shoulder.

“So,” Nam Joon began, “we have our midterm break coming up soon. I know we’re all ready for a break after the last few weeks.”

Yunie chuckled and rolled his eyes. “Speak for yourselves. Jin and I still have classes because our break already passed.”

“But, you guys only have like one or two classes a day and they’re not even every day. It’s basically going to be like you’re spending the week with us and then taking a learning break in between!”

“You’re right, Tae. Good job.” Jin said with a smile. Tae’s eyes lit up and he smiled brightly. He looked like a happy puppy. I couldn’t help laughing at how excited he was at Jin’s praise.

“Do you guys have any plans?” Jeonggukie asked quietly. He was still being cautious around me. I feel like he could tell my rut rage was back.

“No plans, so far.” Mi Mi answered for me. She knew that all of my concentration was on trying not to be an asshole.

Seok smiled and his eyes went wide like he had just thought of the best idea ever. “You guys could spend the week with us! We could have a whole week of family time!”

“I’m good with that. How about you, Ji Ji?” She looked at me expectantly and I nodded in response.

“It’s settled then.” Joon said definitively.

When we finished eating, the alphas rushed to clean the dishes and start movie night. Jeonggukie grabbed my hand and pulled me into his room. Flashes of my last time here raced through my mind. They made me even angrier than I was before—my alpha hating the way that the other alpha somehow rendered me defenseless without being present. It was even stranger being here with him. I had a bizarre surge of emotions as I watched him sit on his bed and motion for me to join him.

“I still want to hurt you, Jeonggukie. I don’t think it’s a good idea for me to sit here.”

He grabbed my wrist and pulled me down on the bed. “I can handle you, little omega. Don’t worry.” He flashed his signature cocky grin and laid down next to me.

“You really piss me off when you smile like that. It makes me want to break your face.”
He pulled my body to face him. “Would you like me to calm you down?”

I nodded and he pulled me to lay on top of him, placing my head in his neck. This was the closest he and I had ever been. It angered my alpha, my scent changing to reflect this sudden rage. He wrapped his arms around me and altered his own smell in response. The tangy, flowery aroma encased me and assuaged my alpha. This scent was different than his normal one, sweeter somehow. It was a stark contrast to Mi Mi’s calming scent, but it wriggled its way into my being in a way that hers could not. It brought me peace and made my head spin. I nuzzled deeper into his neck and sighed. All of my anger had disappeared.

“How do you do that?”

“The same way you do, but not quite. In some ways, it’s an alpha thing. My scent change is a little different from other alphas because my wolf is so strong.” His voice was dripping in honey, further lulling me into a placid state.

I placed my head on his shoulder and closed my eyes. “How are you so calm all the time—especially right now in your rut? When I’m in my rut, I just want to kill and break stuff.”

“I definitely get like that too. Right now, I feel the urge to snap your neck because I know that you aren’t afraid of me. My alpha really wants to show you how strong I am compared to you. I’m able to stop myself because I’m on a lot of medication and I have been in therapy since I was 6 to help me control it. My pack also helps. I have to fight my alpha every moment of every day. I could kill someone if I don’t.”

“I have to do the same thing. I’m actually stronger than most alphas, but people don’t know that. Even when I fight, I don’t show off all of my strength. I have the same problem as you do. I’m too strong and too dominant. The only difference between us is that I’m an omega—not that I’ve ever met my omega. He’s never surfaced and I can’t really feel him inside of me the same way I feel my alpha. I can sense he’s there, but it’s almost like he’s been hibernating my whole life. I have been having these strange omega moments lately, though. It’s kind of confusing.” I rambled slightly, hoping Jeonggukie could keep up with my train of thought.

“Want to talk about them?”

He could hear the conflict in my voice as I spoke about my alpha and omega. I thought about the odd occurrences that have been happening and realized they all involved Jeonggukie. I wasn’t sure I could bring myself to talk about it with him. He sensed my hesitation and didn’t press further.

“Tell me more about your mate issue, Jiminie. It seems like there should be more to it than you need to find an alpha who’s strong enough to make you submit.” His voice had a tone that I could not recognize.

“That’s like saying it’s easy to find an omega who’s a strong as an alpha—one who can handle you.”

We laid in silence for a long time. Neither of us was willing to admit that he was the alpha who could tame me and I was the omega who could take him. The implications were too heavy. If Jeonggukie and I became mates, then I’ve failed Mi Mi. I’ve abandoned my sweet, wonderful life mate. Then, Jeonggukie and I would be together forever. We would get married, be mated, live together. The thought is too much, too soon. It doesn’t matter that wolves mature very quickly and we’re both technically fully grown adults—I’m still only 18 and he’s only 16. The thought of being with Jeonggukie forever made me feel uncomfortable emotions that I have never experienced before, fear being one of them. Why does forever scare me when it’s with Jeonggukie, but not with Mi Mi? Am I afraid of a real relationship? Do I even want to be in a relationship with Jeonggukie? Just because
he’s the closest thing I have to a mate doesn’t mean we’d actually be good together. Questions and concerns swirled in my mind until I was dizzy and felt like I would be sick.

Jeonggukie smelled my uneasiness and sat up, bringing me with him. I sat straddling him, his back against the wall, which was oddly comforting. “Easy, little omega. What’s got you so upset?” He pulled my face up to look me in the eyes. “Talk to me, Jiminie.”

“Why is this comforting? A big part of me wants to kill you, but here I am getting closer to you. How do you do it? You’re the strongest alpha I’ve ever met. You even charmed me. That makes you at least twice as strong as me and I know how strong I am. You terrify me. My alpha wants to destroy you because I’m scared of you. But, here I am—sitting in your lap, wanting more.”

“What do you mean more?” His eyes flashed with a quick ruby glow before dimming back to their mostly-brown hue.

I sighed and closed my eyes again. For some reason, matching his stare was too much for me. “I don’t even know what I’m saying anymore, Jeonggukie. I’m just rambling right now.”

“Keep rambling. I like it.” I could hear a small smirk in his voice.

“Why?”

“Because I get to see what’s on your mind.”

I shifted in his lap, putting my back against his chest, and laid my head on his shoulder. Not only was this a more comfortable position, but I also didn’t have to look at him as I spoke. “I hate the way I feel inside when you call me little omega. It’s a weird twinge of something I can’t place. I love and hate the way I feel when we’re close like this. It’s peaceful, but also makes me anxious. It’s like I want to vomit, but because it’s good.” I felt his arms wrap around my waist, holding me tightly against his chest. “You’re strong and I hate it. But, I also love it. I feel safe with you around, which is weird. I’ve never felt unsafe before. I’m too strong to feel unsafe, but you being here makes me feel like I wasn’t safe before I met you. I don’t get it. I can’t understand any of this. What are you doing to me?”

I sighed and put my head in my hands. “It’s your turn to ramble, Jeonggukie. I can’t do this anymore.” It was too much for me to express everything. The more I spoke, the more a lump formed in my throat. It prevented me from continuing the embarrassing barrage of thoughts and feelings I was experiencing.

“Well, I love that you can’t seem to be your normal alpha self around me. It makes me feel like we have a special bond, like the one you and Mi Ran have. I know you’re strong and that intrigues me. I honestly feel like you could keep me grounded because you’re so strong. I don’t even have to try controlling myself as much with you around because your presence helps regulate me. I really like calling you little omega because it fulfills some sort of strange urge I have. I don’t understand it, but I enjoy it.”

He put his chin on my shoulder and intertwined his fingers with mine. “Being close to you makes me feel like it’s all right to be a fucked up bundle of dominance and hormones. You make me feel more powerful than I already am, in a way that I can’t understand or explain. It’s something that I don’t want to lose. Also, Jiminie,” he began with a tense, brittle tone, “I have to tell you something. I’m very worried that you’re going to be upset. I’ve wanted to tell you for a while, but I didn’t know how.”

I squeezed his hands and wiggled deeper into his hold. “How about you just say it? I’ll tell you
something embarrassing about me if you do.”

He contemplated my offer for a moment, wondering if it was worth his secret. “I didn’t meet you on accident. My pack came here looking for you.”

A growl rumbled through my chest and I clutched his hands tighter in my grasp. Of course, this alpha was just like the rest. Why should I expect anything different? All they ever want to do is cause trouble. “Why?” I managed to say through clenched teeth.

“At first, we wanted to get to know you because we thought it would be really cool to have the most badass omega ever to be our friend or part of our pack. The others thought that having the strongest alpha and the strongest omega ever in one group would be awesome. They also thought that maybe you’d be my mate—although I told them that wasn’t possible. Once you got into the fight with Jae Seok, they were completely convinced that you’re my omega. They’ve been trying to get us together ever since. We definitely didn’t mean any harm to you or anyone else. More than anything, we just wanted to get to know you.”

After hearing his explanation, I wasn’t angry anymore. I could tell by the tone of his voice that he was being sincere. I had assumed that he was here to hurt me or fuck up my life like any other alpha I’ve encountered. I should have known that wasn’t the case because Jeonggukie isn’t a typical alpha. I thought for a few moments and then finally spoke, addressing my main concern about what he said.

“You’re going through that too? Mi Mi has been telling me for a while now that you’re my alpha. I don’t know how to feel about it.”

“I don’t know what romantic love feels like and I’m not sure how to feel that way. It’s great that you are technically an omega that is built like an alpha, but that doesn’t mean we’re going to fall in love and live happily ever after. I wouldn’t want to be with you just because we’re both genetically messed up. If we were going to be mates, I’d want it to be because we want to be.”

I nodded as he spoke, understanding that there is much more to this potential mate issue than either of us were able to handle right now. We’re young and we’re both incapable of feeling romantic attachments. How the fuck would we be able to mate if we can’t like each other? It made me think of the conversation Mi Mi and I had earlier. “I completely get that and I feel the same way. If I’m actually going to be someone’s mate, I damn sure better love them and be ready to spend the rest of my life with them. Speaking of the rest of our lives, I wanted to talk to you about something. You have to promise it won’t be weird between us afterward, no matter what your thoughts on it are.”

“I can handle that.” He sounded sure enough of himself that I continued my thought.

“Mi Mi and I talked about making you our life mate. We know you don’t have an omega and we figure that’s part of the requirement of being someone’s life mate. If you don’t want to, I understand. I just wanted to extend the offer.”

When he was quiet, I turned to look at him. He had a blank look on his face. It made me worry that I had messed up badly. For a few painfully long minutes he was completely silent and motionless. After a while, he looked at me and smiled. “I’d be honored to be your life mate.”

I turned around quickly, wrapping my arms around his neck in a tight embrace. I was so happy in that moment that the woodsy balsam scent I had during rut turned sweet and became coated in vanilla. Jeonggukie’s floral aroma also blossomed, making me bury my nose in his neck to inhale the delightful smell. He snaked his arms around my waist and held me tightly to his body. I felt content trapped in the arms of my alpha life mate. When he rubbed his cheek against mine—slightly imparting his scent onto me—a strange vibration began in my chest. It was something I had never felt
before. It was accompanied by a strangled sound that I quickly coughed to cover. Jeonggukie pulled away and forced me to look at him, worry painted deeply upon him. His face was so close to mine, his breath fanning over me. It gave me an awkward sensation that I have never experienced before. He looked deeply into my eyes and I found myself unable to turn away. The longer I stared, the more I felt something stir inside of me. At length, I regained my composure and responded to his unsaid concern.

“I’m fine, Jeonggukie. I just had a tickle in my throat. We should tell Mi Mi about you accepting the life mate offer, but I was thinking we could also mess with your pack at the same time. You wanna?”

“Like a prank?” He asked with a smirk. “I’m down.”

“So, Mi Mi called all three of us being life mates a platonic threesome. You want to make your pack think we were making out and then call Mi Mi back to your room for a threesome that they don’t have to know is platonic? They’d lose their shit. Serves them right for trying to force us to be together.”

An evil smile spread across his face and his eyes danced with amusement. “That could be fun. I like the way you think, little omega.” He whispered into my ear with a very low voice.

The peaceful uneasiness I experienced earlier transformed into a jolt of nausea. At least, I think it was nausea. I chalked it up to my sudden omega idea while I’m in my rut.

“How should we do this? I don’t actually know what to do. You’re the only one of us who’s done anything like this.”

“The only way they’ll believe it is if we fully commit. Let’s mess up our hair, first. Then, we’re gonna go out there with your hands behind your back and my hand on your neck. They know I’m super dominant, so they won’t believe it if we’re just cute and flirty like you and Mi Mi.”

He coached me a little on how to act and what to say since typical submissive omega was not my strong suit. We did our best to get into character and finally decided it was time. As we left the room, he pulled my arms behind me and placed his other hand on the crook of my neck, angled towards my windpipe. His claws dug slightly into my skin—an action that gave me a very warm, very tingly feeling. I could feel that warmth fall over my skin, undoubtedly giving me a very strange expression. I thought this would be much harder to bear because my alpha hates being restrained, but it wasn’t. Oddly enough, I couldn’t feel him. When the pack saw us, they paused the movie.

“You guys all right?” Mi Mi asked when she saw my expression.

“Tell her.” Jeonggukie’s voice dropped as he spoke, claws digging just a little deeper into my flesh.

I bit my lip and looked down. To them, it seemed like he was forcing me to tell Mi Mi something. However, I was fighting with myself. I was trying not to do something that I knew I would regret. I realized I failed when I felt my back arch on its own, sliding my ass across Jeonggukie’s crotch. I wasn’t sure why the thought possessed me, or why I actually did it, but I felt like I had to at that moment.

He growled and grabbed my throat forcefully, nails so deep in me that I could feel them pierce the skin. I involuntarily moaned. It was a noise I have never heard myself make. “I said speak, omega!” He barked at me. I could feel the dominance rolling off of him, accompanied by a strong, alluring scent I had never smelled on him—arousal.

“Mi Mi, Jeonggukie agreed to our threesome. Please come with us.” I clicked my tongue at the end
of my sentence. That was our sign to play along with whatever the other said.

“Oh, how fun!” She said with a wide smile. She jumped off of the sofa and looked at the rest of the pack. “If you need us, we’ll be in Jeong Guk’s room!”

She ran through the hallway as Jeonggukie forcefully pushed me into his room. Mi Mi burst out laughing as soon as the door was shut, but Jeonggukie was still angry.

“What the fuck was that? We didn’t talk about that, Jiminie.” He whispered to me.

“I’m sorry! I wanted it to be believable!” It was the best excuse I could come up with, even though it was a lie. I don’t have any idea why I decided to grind against him.

He slammed my chest against the wall and pressed into me. He whispered into my ear, his lips brushing my ear lobe. “If you do that again, you’ll be screaming so loud you won’t need the pack to believe you because the neighbors will.”

I could feel how hard he was against me, causing that weird tingling nausea to explode through me once more. A low growl escaped my lips as my alpha began to understand the situation. He growled back and tightened his hold. He didn’t move away from me and he didn’t move closer. Jeonggukie stood close behind me, pressing his hard dick into me and keeping me in an unyielding grip. My alpha growled again. He wanted nothing more than to break free and have me wrap my hands around Jeonggukie’s throat just as tightly as the other alpha is holding me now. Another part of me felt strangely at peace with my current situation, even going so far as to urge me to do it again. It was a voice from within me that I have never heard before. As I began wondering if it was my omega, a loud banging on the door interrupted my thoughts.

“You guys better not be defiling Mi Ran in there! Jeon Jeong Guk, I taught you better than to take advantage of an omega in heat. I swear to the goddess I will break this door down!” Jin screamed.

Jeonggukie let me go and took a deep breath to steady himself. I tried to ignore the tinge of disappointment I felt at the loss of contact and heat. “Chill, guys.” He said when he opened the door. “It was a joke. Jiminie and I were just acting and Mi Ran played along. No one is fucking in here.”

All five alphas were standing on the other side of the door with horrified looks on their faces. They calmed down when they saw we were all completely clothed and not on top of each other. “We can smell you, Guk, and we got worried. We know you wouldn’t do anything to hurt them, but it was just a tense situation. Sorry.” Joon spoke after a moment.

“It’s a platonic threesome, an inside joke. Jiminie, Mi Ran, could you guys excuse me for a few minutes? I need to do something.” Jeonggukie asked with a stern, slightly shame-filled, voice.

“Of course. Just come get me when you’re done.” I grabbed Mi Mi’s hand and led her out of the room.

I knew exactly what he had to do, we all did. It was my fault and I was starting to feel guilty about it. I decided to push him when he was probably already having a hard time controlling himself. I know that dominant situations trigger his sexual urges. Why did I decide to grind against him when he had me in such a compromising position? Why did I have a lingering desire to do it again? Why do I still feel the ghost of his hand on my throat and his claws in my skin? Why did I moan when he choked me? I didn’t have answers to the questions that plagued me. I wanted to talk it out, but I felt like Mi Mi would judge me. I know she would never judge me for anything, but I’ve always been her alpha. Would she still feel the same if I was suddenly starting to become an omega? As if she could hear my thoughts, she called my name. I looked up at her, realizing we were in the kitchen.
“You good?”


She turned her head to the side and looked at me blankly. “Let’s talk about it tomorrow. I want you
to go back to the movie. I’m gonna wait for Jeonggukie to finish.”

She nodded and we walked back to the living room. I sat on the floor, next to the hallway that led to
the alphas’ rooms. After fifteen minutes or so, I heard Jeonggukie call for me.

“Sorry about that, Jiminie.” He said as he closed the door.

“I’m the one who should be apologizing. It was my fault. I shouldn’t have pushed you. I guess my
omega is starting to come out. I think I even heard him try to talk to me. I don’t know how, though.
I’m in my rut. It shouldn’t be possible.” We laid down on the bed and faced each other. It should
have been uncomfortable and weird that we had become so physically used to one another’s
presence, but it wasn’t. It felt normal to be this close to him.

“I have a theory on that, actually. When did the omega moments that you mentioned earlier start?”

“Right after I met you.”

“I think my hyperactive dominance is waking up your other wolf. The longer I’m around you, the
more frequently these moments happen. It seems like it’s even worse when I show dominance
towards you. Based on your reaction to what we just did, I think I’m subconsciously seducing your
omega.” His words made sense, even if I didn’t want them to.

“Well, stop. He doesn’t want to be seduced. You’re hot and all, but we can’t be platonic life mates
without the platonic part.” I tried to joke about the topic and laugh it off because the thought of
Jeonggukie and I having sex was making me feel unhinged.

“I meant the non-sexual form of seducing, but that works too. So, you think I’m hot?” He raised his
eyebrow and smirked at me.

I scoffed at his playfulness. “Just because I can’t be sexually interested in people doesn’t mean I can’t
acknowledge when someone is attractive. You’re definitely hot, Jeonggukie.”

His bunny smile replaced the arrogant one he previously sported. He looked away from me and
rubbed the back of his neck. I grabbed his face and forced him to look at me. “Is that a shy alpha I
see?” I smiled brightly.

“It’s not often a hot guy calls me hot. I guess it’s nice.” I pointed to myself with a questioning look.
Does he really think I’m attractive? “Yes, you. Park Ji Min with your perfect hair, disturbingly
bewitching honey and brown eyes, and beautifully entrapping lips. You have a very nice face. I
don’t know what the rest of you looks like, but what I’ve seen is quite handsome.”

I was speechless. My face felt a bit warm and I couldn’t seem to keep eye contact with him. Is this
what embarrassment feels like? “So,” I said trying to break the awkward tension, “we both think the
other is attractive. What do we do with this information?”

“Absolutely nothing. It’s doesn’t change anything between us. We’re not going to magically get over
our issues because we like the way the other looks.” I nodded and grabbed his hand. He looked
down at my hand and then to my throat. I could tell he noticed the claw marks he left.

“I’m sorry I choked you, Jiminie. I was already in a dominant mindset and you provoked me.” I
apologized again, but he stopped me. “I know you didn’t mean any harm, so it’s okay.”
He took his hand from mine to briefly run his fingers over the wounds. My breath hitched as the feeling of his touch and the slight pain made me feel one step closer to losing my mind. I bit my lip to stifle any reaction I might have. Jeonggukie noticed a shift in me, causing a change in his own expression. “However,” he grabbed my face and forced me to look at him, “the next time you rub your ass on me like that, it’s mine.”

I nodded, gazing deeply into the faintly-twinkling scarlet of his eyes. It was mesmerizing. I could feel my own eyes widen. I was nervous, bordering on fearful. I knew he wouldn’t hurt me, but I was still cautious of an alpha in his rut. He looked at me for a while, keeping my face firmly in his hand. His attention finally rested on my lips and I froze. Something about this felt okay to me. A part of me screamed that being with Jeonggukie was right. It’s not like I was put off by his statement. I knew how rut is. I knew it wasn’t Jeonggukie talking, it was his alpha and his hormones. An alarm on his phone went off, snapping him out of his trance.

“It’s time for my Primatin.”

He disappeared for a few minutes and came back with two bottles of water. He handed me one and I thanked him before grabbing his hand. “I’m sorry for all of that, Jiminie. I should be in better control of myself.”

“It’s okay, Jeonggukie. You can’t always help it. Plus, I kind of brought it on myself.”

He gave me a thankful smile and squeezed my hand. This placid alpha that laid in front of me was a far cry from who he was only minutes ago—the one who seemed only seconds away from trying to claim me. I could tell that he was ashamed and looking for something to keep his mind off of everything. He finally found a topic, much to my dismay. “You never told me that embarrassing thing you were going to tell me.”

“Umm… Do you remember that day we first had lunch and Mi Mi dropped her chopsticks? Mi Mi and I planned to do that so I could show my ass off because she was pretty sure you wanted to fuck me and she wanted to see if it was true and we kind of confirmed it when you started choking after seeing me.” I blurted the words out in one breath, hoping I said them too quickly for him to understand.

He chuckled and nodded in recognition. “I was surprised by that. I hope you don’t take offense to this, but it was a nice view. Mi Ran was wrong, though. I didn’t want to fuck you then. The reason I started choking on my food was that Tae, Seok, and Yunie said some incredibly inappropriate things about you over the pack link. The first time I even thought about you sexually was when you started your heat. I actually avoided you for three days because I was scared that I might do something. You smelled so enticing, like orange blossoms dipped in honey and vanilla sugar. Something about your heat scent triggered every bit of dominance in my body.

“I smelled you in the hallway on my way to lunch that first day and I left school immediately. I wasn’t actively horny, per se, but I was worried that being around you would provoke arousal. I knew that the combination—of me during my rut, dominance past my normal hyperdominance, and a hot omega who’s in heat and smells like I want to eat him—most likely equated to me wanting to fuck you. However, the first time I’ve ever actively thought about claiming you was just now when you ground against me. I’m sorry again for being that way. I shouldn’t think of you like that.”

I paused before speaking, sure to figure out exactly what I was thinking before I began. “Surprisingly, it doesn’t bother me the way I figured it would. If you were any other alpha and you said you thought about that, I’d probably kill you. But, you’re my life mate.” Why did the words “but you’re my alpha” almost escape my lips? I must be tired. As if he could hear my thoughts, Jeonggukie mentioned that he was tired.
“Are you going to sleep in my room again? We can share the bed if you do. My Primatin has kicked in if you’re scared I’ll try something.”

I chuckled at the comment. I don’t know how either one of us was so calm about the events from before, but it didn’t seem to phase us. “I’ll sleep in the bed with you. Last time I was here, the pack mentioned something about my scent isn’t supposed to be anywhere else in the house. I’m not worried you’re going to rape me in my sleep or anything. The only thing I’m worried about is not having a really big shirt. I can’t sleep if I have pants on. I usually sleep in a baggy t-shirt and my boxers.

He smiled and walked to his closet. “Wear this and give me your shirt. The other one I have doesn’t smell like you anymore. Just a warning, I only sleep in pants.”

“Together, we make a completely clothed person!” I giggled at his face when I said that. “Don’t judge me, Jeonggukie. I’m really tired.”

I took my shirt off and put the baggy shirt on. It fell just above my knees. I slid my pants off and watched Jeonggukie remove his top as well.

“You’re built just like an alpha, Jiminie.”

“Were you checking me out?” I shot him a teasing smirk and an expectant look.

“Honestly, I was just curious. I’ve noticed you only wear baggy clothes. I figured there must be a reason. This is probably the only time I’ll ever see you without a shirt, so I thought I’d see for myself what you were hiding.”

“I hide my looks so alphas don’t know how much of a threat I am. It’s also so they don’t try to hit on me. I don’t want others to know how I look.”

He nodded and grabbed my hand. “Your secret is safe with me. I wouldn’t want anyone else to see you like that anyway. If my life mate doesn’t want to show anyone else his body, then I’ll do whatever I can to make sure that doesn’t happen.”

“Thank you,” I said as I laid down on the bed, facing the wall.

Jeonggukie turned off the light and laid down beside me. He draped his arm over my waist—an action that both surprised and comforted me. I didn’t expect him to be near me in the bed, but I found myself not caring. I cuddled into his embrace and quickly drifted off to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

How do you guys feel about this chapter? What do you think made Ji Min do what he did? Be sure to give me any of your thoughts and theories! I would love to know what you all think will happen next.
New Secret

Chapter Notes

Trigger warning: Rape, not JiKook.
In context, it isn't meant as rape. However, I wanted to include a warning for people who are really sensitive to the subject.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

I was awakened by a shushing sound and slight movement behind me. My eyes popped open and my body prepared to hurt someone. I tried to move but Jeonggukie was asleep on my arm. He was holding my other hand tightly and his leg was wrapped around my hip. I lifted my head up as much as I could to see Mi Mi and five alphas staring at us while we slept.

“What the fuck are you doing?”

“We were admiring how cute you two are. We were also taking bets on whether or not Guk popped your cherry.” Seok said with a big smile.

“Seokie, people in the next neighborhood would have heard him if I popped his cherry. Now, can you get the fuck out of my room?” A low, raspy voice said from beside me.

“Jeonggukie!” A surprised noise, almost like a giggle, came from me as I spoke.

“What? They’re being dumb. They totally would have heard you if we had done something.”

“He has a point,” Joon said. “Guk can’t be gentle. I don’t think even Ji Min’s stubborn self could be quiet if Guk got ahold of him. Plus, the room would smell like sex.”

I sighed and rolled my eyes. “We’ve established I’m still a virgin. Can you please leave? I want to talk to Jeonggukie.”

With over-exaggerated groans of frustration, the six left Jeonggukie and me alone.

“Are they always like this?” I asked after they had finally closed the door.

“When it comes to you, yes. They constantly bother me about you and whether or not we’ve had sex. Yunie, Seokie, and Tae are always trying to get me to fuck you.”

“Why?”

“I think they’re trying to live vicariously through me. None of them have mates or even fuck buddies. Since they’re convinced you’re my omega, they want me to fuck you so they feel better. Or they’re just really enthusiastic about the thought of you actually being my mate and they want me to claim your body as my own. I’m not actually sure which.”

“Alphas are dumb.” I said with a chuckle, trying to ignore the odd feeling I got when Jeonggukie said “claim your body as my own.”

“We really are. We’re pretty simple. Sex and fighting are our two main ways of expressing
ourselves. It’s sad really. I’m actually glad that I go to therapy and take so much medication. It allows me to express myself without the insanity, at least most of the time. Joon says it gets better when you’re mated. It’s still there, but you become so consumed by being a good mate that you’re able to look past the lust and anger. He said the only times it becomes unbearable for him is during his natural rut and when he’s jealous. On a side note, I can’t imagine how bad natural rut would be.” He fake shuddered at the thought.

“I almost wish I knew what that lust felt like. When I’m in my rut, I’m only ever violent, angry, and possessive. I’ve never even been horny before. The doctor seems to think that me being submissive will magically unlock my libido, but I’m not even sure I’d want to. I don’t think I want to be an illogical, slutty mess. I’ve heard sex is nice, but I don’t really think I’m willing to lose myself for it. Was it worth it for you?”

He paused briefly and refused to look at me when he responded. “I’m not really the best person to ask. I only did it once and it didn’t go well.” I could hear the disgust in his voice as he spoke. He looked disappointed in himself.

“Please tell me about it. I can see it bothers you and it’s my job as your life mate to help you however I can. Maybe talking it out will lessen some of your guilt.”

He thought for a moment before nodding hesitantly. “It happened last year at my old school, right after I fully matured. Her name was Min Hwa Young and we had a few classes together. Somehow, she found out about my condition. After that, she started following me everywhere. She always tried to get me to sleep with her—talking about how she liked it really rough and no one in our school could do that for her. I always brushed her off when she bothered me. My alpha wasn’t interested in her and neither was I. One day, two alphas started a fight with me. After I got done kicking both of their asses, Hwa Young started to pester me again. I remembered she smelled weird, maybe she was in heat, and she started pressing herself against me. I was so rage-fueled after the fight that I grabbed her throat and pinned her against a wall.

“I was really just trying to scare her off so I could get away and calm down. She moaned really loudly when I grabbed her and she asked me to choke her harder. She slipped her hands down my pants and I more or less blacked out. I actually don’t know how I ended up on top of her in an empty classroom. She had bite marks, hickies, and scratches all over her. My handprints were bruised into her in a few places. She honestly looked like I beat the shit out of her. When I realized what I was doing, I tried to stop—but my alpha was controlling me. She started screaming, so I put my hand over her mouth. I could tell she wanted me to stop but I couldn’t.

“Joon, Seok, and Tae ran into the room and stopped me before I hurt her too badly. They took me home and made sure I was all right. Later, they told me Hwa Young couldn’t walk right for a couple of days and that her marks took weeks to heal. I don’t know what would have happened if they hadn’t felt my distress over the pack bond. My doctors have always told me that I needed a physically strong omega to be able to withstand me. After what I did to Hwa Young, I knew I needed an omega who is as strong as an alpha—even then, I’m still worried. I never planned on having sex because I knew I would hurt someone. Even though it wasn’t intentional, I failed. I’ve only ever been turned on when I’m in dominant situations and she used that against me. I also think that it had to do with the change in my hormones during the maturation process.”

A wave of rage and nausea came over me, hitting me harder than I could handle. My chest felt intense pressure and my stomach felt like a storm had started inside of it. I have never felt this feeling before. Jeonggukie’s story had caused me some unknown emotion that I instantly loathed. My breathing increased and my heart pounded. I would normally assume it was disgust or anger, but this was something different—something more powerful. I felt Jeonggukie’s arms engulf me as his scent
surrounded me. He looked deeply into my eyes.

“Easy, little omega. Tell me what’s got you so upset.”

My mind went blank as it filled with a familiar haziness. “I felt something that I’ve never felt before when you told me your story. I don’t know what it was, but it was so strong.”

“Was it because I hurt her?”

“No, that doesn’t bother me. You couldn’t stop yourself because your alpha took over. Everyone knows it’s almost impossible to stop an alpha once they get started, especially if she was in heat. The only reason the others were able to stop you is because of the pack bond. Even with your disorder, your alpha isn’t likely to hurt your packmates.”

“When exactly did the feeling start?”

“When you talked about pinning her and her grabbing you—I didn’t like that part. I especially didn’t like it when you talked about being on top of her.”

He thought for a moment and hummed in recognition. “I see. I think I know what you’re feeling, but I can’t tell you. I don’t think you’re ready to know how you feel yet. To confirm, I want to ask you something else. Does it make you feel better to know that I didn’t enjoy being with her and that we didn’t do any of the kissing, hand-holding, cuddling couple stuff? We weren’t in a relationship. I didn’t even like her.”

“That does make me feel better.”

“Well, I definitely know what the feeling is. Whenever you’re lucid again, I want you to forget I know what you’re feeling, okay? As I said, you’re not ready to know yet.”

I nodded, still in a daze. When I finally came out of it, I was alone in Jeonggukie’s room. As the memories flooded back, I put pants on. That fucker charmed me again. I stomped into the living room. “Where the fuck is Jeong Guk?”

Tae pointed towards the kitchen, too shocked to speak. I was so angry that even I could smell the overwhelming earthiness in my scent. I opened the door to find Mi Mi and Jeong Guk getting ingredients out of the refrigerator. “You have three seconds to tell me why the fuck you charmed me before I crack your skull open!”

“I didn’t mean to. I was trying to calm you down and I ended up charming you.”

“How the fuck do you accidentally charm someone?” I was getting louder and Jeong Guk looked unsure of how to answer.

His hesitation pissed me off. I walked up to him and pushed him backward. Mi Mi yelled at me to stop, but I refused to listen. I yelled at Jeong Guk again and got in his face. He was shaking slightly and I could see the crimson in his eyes faintly glow. When I reached out to claw at him, he grabbed my arm and twisted it behind me.

“I’m trying not to hurt you, Jiminie, but you’re making it really hard.” He was holding my wrist so tightly that I thought it would break.

“What the fuck is going on?” Joon boomed as he pulled Jeong Guk off of me.

I held my wrist and growled at the youngest. “He charmed me for no fucking reason and said it was
an accident! Then, he tried to break my fucking wrist!"

“I was trying to calm him down because he was upset! I didn’t even mean to grab him so hard but he was trying to attack me!” Jeong Guk spat back at me.

Joon sighed heavily and took both of our hands, joining them together. “Guk, you can’t hurt your omega. Ji Min, Guk doesn’t know how to regulate his scent change properly because he doesn’t know how strong he is sometimes. He didn’t mean to charm you. Now, you two are going to kiss and make up. You aren’t leaving this spot until you do.”

“Do you actually want us to kiss, Joon?” Jeong Guk had regained his composure and looked at the other alpha cautiously.

“Yes, but I know you two aren’t there yet. Just hug or something.”

I wasn’t ready to forgive Jeong Guk. I’m still angry at him, but he began moving towards me anyway. He wrapped his arms around my neck and bent down to speak in my ear. “I really didn’t mean to charm you, Jiminie. I honestly thought you were having a panic attack, so I made my scent really strong to calm you. I’m sorry. I’ll do my best to control it in the future. I got worried when I saw you upset and my instincts kicked in. I just wanted to make it better.”

I felt my anger melt away as he spoke. My alpha life mate didn’t mean any harm. It struck me suddenly that he was my life mate. Of course, he didn’t mean to do anything bad to me. We’ve promised to be there for each other and support each other forever. I shouldn’t have assumed that he would do it on purpose. I hugged his waist and whispered to him. “I’m sorry I got so mad. In my rut, I’m all alpha—being charmed while I’m an alpha really fucks with my brain. I also haven’t taken my meds yet. My anger is out of control when I’m not on my meds.”

“Is your wrist okay?” He asked, pulling away from the hug and grabbing my wrist gently.

“It’s sore, but I’ll live.”

“I’m sorry.” He whispered, a look of disappointment settling onto his face. “I really didn’t want to hurt you.” He hung his head. I couldn’t tell which was the clearer sign of his frustration with himself, his loud sigh or the change in his scent.

I lifted his chin and made him look me in the eyes. “It’s all right, Jeonggukie. You didn’t mean to. Plus, I’m basically contractually obligated to forgive you for stuff after last night. Unless you do something really horrible.”

He flashed his bunny smile and grabbed my hand. “We still have to tell everyone.”

“Tell us what?” Joon asked with a raised brow. I was surprised that he and Mi Mi were here. How did I forget?

“We have an announcement for the pack, Joon.”

I grabbed Mi Mi’s hand and the three of us went into the living room. I sat next to Jeonggukie on the couch as Mi Mi sat in my lap. “This won’t do at all,” Jeonggukie mumbled as he pulled me onto his lap—Mi Mi still sitting on me.

The five alphas joined us in the room. They shot questioning glances at us and Jeonggukie spoke from behind me. “We are going to be adopting Jiminie and Miranie into our family. They’re not officially joining our pack, but we are going to treat them like they are. The three of us have decided that we are going to be life mates because we don’t have actual mates.”
I couldn’t decipher the looks that they were giving me and my life mates. I had no doubt that at least some of them were saying choice words over the pack link to Jeonggukie. At length, Yunie spoke. “That’s cool and all, but when are we going to talk about the fact that you and Ji Min are actual mates?”

“That’s what I keep telling Ji Ji but he won’t listen!” Mi Mi’s voice became shrill as she agreed with the pack.

“Don’t be a traitor, Mi Mi! You’re our life mate. You should be on our side.”

“I am. That’s why I’m pushing this. I know you’re his omega. His pack knows you’re his omega. I wouldn’t be surprised if half of Seoul knows you’re his omega, but you two are too damn stubborn to even talk about it.”

“Who says we haven’t, Miranie?” Jeonggukie said quietly. “How could we not? I have these five bothering me every day and Jiminie has you reminding him too. We have acknowledged your concerns and we decided to be life mates. I can’t change the fact that I’m asexual unless I’m being dominant. Jiminie can’t change his inability to be submissive. We’ve decided that being life mates is the best option because we’re not sure if we want to be actual mates and we’re not ready to find out.”

“You guys don’t have to wait the typical two years from the end of puberty like most people do. I mated the second I matured. I know omegas mature slower, but Ji Min was fully grown at 17. As long as you wait until you’re both of age to mate, then it’s okay to mate. Fuck what everyone else says.”

“It’s not that, Joon. It’s the fact that we’re not mentally or emotionally ready to explore that option. We’ve known each other for only a couple of months. The only people who get mated that quickly are those who instantly recognize their mate, like you. Based on how much Jiminie can’t stand me in his rut, I highly doubt I’m his fated.”

I immediately spoke when he was finished. “Past that, I made a promise to Mi Mi that neither of us would mate until we both found mates. I have known Mi Mi since I was 10. I am not going to abandon her or my promise.”

“I told you that I’ll give you up, Ji Ji. Gukie is your alpha. I can manage by myself.” Her voice wavered. Jeonggukie and I both wrapped our arms around her to comfort her.

I squeezed her tightly. “I have told you a million times, Kim Mi Ran. You are stuck with me for the rest of your damn life.”

“Us,” Jeonggukie quickly corrected me.

“Yes, you’re stuck with us. I don’t care if Jeonggukie and I are genetically made for each other. You’re still not going to be alone. Even if he and I get together and mate and get married and adopt pups and grow old and die together, your ass is still going to be stuck with us. You will never be alone.”

“That’s my point! We will still be friends no matter what your mating status is. I can admit that I’m jealous. I’m upset that you found your alpha when I don’t have one. Part of me was hoping that we wouldn’t find them so we could just stay together. Hell, I even thought about keeping you away from Gukie once I realized who he was. I knew after he charmed you the first time that he was your alpha. I can’t do it, Ji Ji. I love you too much to let you live without him. I don’t mind not having a mate.”
Her words hurt me. I knew she wasn’t being honest with me or she wasn’t being honest with herself. Either way, this was bothering her more than she let on. “You can still find a mate. She would be an omega, but you can find a mate. Why is it okay to be in an omega-omega life mate relationship with me, but not in an omega-omega actual relationship with some else? What happened to my Mi Mi who said fuck societal norms?” I shifted off of Jeonggukie. I kept Mi Mi in my lap and laid us down, resting my head on Jeonggukie’s thigh. He put his arm around both of us as a response.

“I’m scared.” She whispered although we could all hear her clearly. “I know it’s easier to be a life mate than a girlfriend or an actual mate. We aren’t risking anything in our relationship. I can get hurt if I get involved with someone. I know you’re terrified too, Ji Ji. If you mess things up with Gukie, that’s game over. You’d probably never find another alpha with his condition, especially one who loves you like he does. Yes, Gukie, I already know. You love him and he loves you. It doesn’t matter that it’s not sexual love.”

The alphas quietly watched our conversation, unsure of what to say. They realized this was something they needed to hear without intervening. I wasn’t entirely sure how to feel about the situation I found myself in. Am I really afraid to be with Jeonggukie? Is that the only thing that’s stopping us from being actual mates? If Mi Mi never finds her mate, how could I justify being in a relationship with my supposed mate? Do I even want to be with him? Is he even my mate? And what did Mi Mi mean by love? I held Mi Mi in my arms and looked up at Jeonggukie as I contemplated my feelings. He stared back at me with a new secret in his eyes.

Chapter End Notes

Did that answer any of your questions? Did it create new ones? Any comments on Jeong Guk's experience with Hwa Young and Ji Min's reaction to it? Let me know what you're thinking and feeling about this chapter. Thank you for reading!
Competition

Tae narrowed his eyes at me. I smirked and casually walked to the starting line. Mi Mi and the pack watched as we got ready to run on the track after school. Joon stood next to the track, ready to start the race and referee the results. A week ago, Tae casually mentioned that he was the second fastest alpha he knows—that he was almost as fast as Jeonggukie. He seemed so proud of himself. I laughed and asked if that was an accomplishment. I meant it as a genuine question. I have no clue how fast Jeonggukie is. Tae immediately got offended and challenged me to a race. The first six dozen times, I declined. In fact, I still refused his offer when he started leaving notes in my backpack and textbooks. It wasn’t until he started sending Seok to challenge me on his behalf that I accepted. While we were waiting for the race to start, I heard Jeonggukie and Mi Mi arguing about who he should support. He was torn between his duties as a packmate and a life mate. I laughed at his confusion and Mi Mi’s loud attempts to convince him to root for me. We crouched at the starting line when we saw Joon move closer.

“Are you two ready?” He asked from beside us.

We signaled that we were ready by standing and getting into position. He counted down from three and shouted for us to go. I took off. I wasn’t paying attention to Tae because, deep inside, I didn’t feel like I was trying to beat him. I felt like I was racing myself. This was the first time I ever got to show off for the sake of showing off. I trusted these guys, so I felt comfortable letting myself go. I pushed harder and harder, running as fast as I could. The scenery whizzed by as I rounded the final turn. I didn’t see Tae in front of me. I must have passed him. I crossed the finish line and stopped abruptly. My opponent followed three seconds behind.

“That’s my Ji Ji!” Mi Mi screamed as she ran towards me.

“You’re pretty fast, Tae. I’ve never met anyone who could keep up with me. That was awesome!” I shook his hand and gave him a hug. He reluctantly congratulated me and hugged me back.

“Damn, Jiminnie! You are really fast. You should race me some time.” Jeonggukie said as he walked over to me.

“I’ll go right now.” I got closer to him and looked at him defiantly.

He bent down to get in my face. “Don’t tempt me, little omega. I won’t go easy on you just because you’re my life mate.”

“You. Me. Race.” I stared him down as I accentuated each word.

Amusement danced around the scarlet in his eyes so quickly that I almost lost sight of his secret. “Let’s get it.” He said confidently.

We approached the starting line and knelt. When Joon started the race, I immediately sprung from my spot. Once again, I ran hard and fast—but, I wasn’t racing myself this time. Now, I was racing Jeonggukie. I was racing my supposed-to-be alpha who is faster and stronger than me. I can’t lose this race. There is so much more at stake than my pride. If he wins, then he really is better than me. I kept pushing myself farther and farther. I moved faster than I ever have. I couldn’t bring myself to look when I turned the bend, afraid that I failed. After I crossed the line, I looked beside me. Jeonggukie was waiting for me. He beat me by four seconds. I let out an aggressive yell and kicked the ground.
“Don’t be mad, Jiminie. I’ve never had anyone keep up with me like that. You’re faster than anyone I know.”

I glared at him and spat out my response. “Spare me your pity, alpha. You won. I lost.” I tried to push past him, but he grabbed me.

“Where do you think you’re going, little omega? You’re stuck with me, no matter how mad you are. Life mates, remember?” His amused tone made me want to punch him.

“Mi Mi, please tell our life mate that I’m mad and I don’t want to talk.” Mi Mi had just joined us, having run up when she heard me yell.

“Gukie, Ji Ji is being a big baby because he’s never lost before. Please forgive him.”

“Ranie, can you please tell Jiminie that I can’t help that I won? However, I will spend the entire week of our break trying to find something he’s better at than me—if it makes him feel better.”

“Ji Ji, Jeonggukie loves you so much and he’s so much better to you than I could have imagined. Your ass better claim that.” She looked so pleased with herself as she spoke.

I rolled my eyes at Mi Mi. I looked at Jeonggukie and he smiled cautiously. “I guess I have to talk to you because our life mate is a terrible messenger. You really want to compete with me for the whole week?” We started walking with the pack to their house since Mi Mi and I were staying the entire break with them.

“If that’s what it takes.” He flashed his cute bunny smile and I smiled in spite of myself. I could feel my eyes turn into crescents, which they only did when I was really happy. He looked at me and grinned even harder.

“Why are you smiling so much?”

“Your smile makes me smile, Jiminie.” I laughed and pushed him playfully. He chuckled with me and grabbed my hand. Mi Mi held my other hand and we walked in silence.

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“So, what are you good at Jimine?” Jeonggukie asked in between bites of food.

“The only thing I’ve done consistently for the last two years is fight. I used to sing and dance before then.”

“You dance?” Seok asked excitedly.

“Yeah. My mom enrolled me in singing and dancing when I was younger to see if it would help me feel more like an omega. I actually liked dancing, so I kept going. I stopped because being Alphabet took up all of my dance time. Too many jerk alphas trying to cause problems.”

“I’m going to the studio tomorrow. Do you want to come with me?”

Before I could refuse, Mi Mi responded for me, “Yes! We will both come. It’s been too long since I’ve seen my life mate dance. He was so good! I miss it.”

I tried to quickly think of some random excuse that would keep me from having to dance. Admittedly, the one I found wasn’t great. “I don’t have any dance clothes. My tights are at home and I don’t like dancing in sweats.”
“I’ll be happy to lend you some of my extras. I’m so excited to have a dance partner who’s been trained. I usually dance with whoever I can find.”

“Can I come too?” Jeonggukie asked quietly.

“Of course, Guk. The more the merrier! I can finish teaching you that choreo you were working on.”

“You dance too?” I was genuinely surprised. It wasn’t common for alphas to like dancing—even less common for a hyper-dominant alpha.

“Sometimes. I started almost two years ago. My therapist said it would be good for me to find alternative outlets for my aggression. So, my packmates each shared a hobby with me. Jin taught me to cook, Yunie taught me to rap, Joon taught me to write songs, and Tae taught me to sing. They all help me control myself.”

“Is there anything you can’t do?” I asked sarcastically.

“We call him golden for a reason.” I rolled my eyes at Joon’s words. I could tell it was going to be a long week.

For the rest of the night, Jeonggukie and I planned our week’s worth of competitions. We thought of dancing; singing; drawing; arm wrestling; Uno; flexibility; rock, paper, scissors; and pool. I decided to head to bed after a while because I was tired from running and thinking so much—most likely exhausted from the lack of sleep my school work has been causing. Mi Mi and I visited the pack often, usually spending the night. It became a habit for me to sleep in Jeonggukie’s bed after the first movie night. Oddly enough, it wasn’t awkward. Even the times when I woke up laying on top of him or with my hips pressed into his, it wasn’t weird. I was surprised to learn that I’m not uncomfortable being that close to Jeonggukie. Right now, however, I feel uncomfortable. I’m laying in his bed and he isn’t here. I tossed and turned, trying to get situated. It had been a while since I slept in his bed alone. I wasn’t used to it. After what felt like an hour of uneasiness and almost sleeping, I got up to see where he was. I found Jeonggukie, Mi Mi, and Tae on the sofa. The alphas were playing a video game while Mi Mi was shouting encouraging remarks. She seemed to be having fun. She looked up at me and smiled.

“You need cuddles, don’t you?”

“How do you always know?”

“I’ve been with you for eight years. Plus, if you’re sleeping in someone’s bed, you start to depend on them cuddling you.”

“No, I don’t.” I scoffed.

“You remember my 14th birthday sleepover? Even though I had three other people over, you demanded I cuddle you. Just last week you made me hold you until you fell asleep. You have a thing for snuggles. It’s pretty much your only omega trait.”

“Are you gonna come lay with me or not?”

“Nope. It’s not my bed. You’ll have to wait for Gukie.”

“But he’s busy!” I whined. I’ve never really whined before, but I was really tired and frustrated. Jeonggukie stood up and moved to put his arm around my shoulder. “I’ll cuddle you, Jiminie.” He said softly.
“We’re in the middle of a game!” Tae yelled out.

“Ranie can play,” Jeonggukie called out as he led me to his room. We laid down and he wrapped his arms around me. “Why didn’t you tell me you had a thing for cuddling? I definitely would have come here.”

“I’ve never really thought about it. Mi Mi always snuggles with me and you do too. I didn’t realize it was an issue until you weren’t here.”

He chuckled and pulled me closer to his chest. “I like holding you. We fit well together.” I hummed in response and started drifting off to sleep.

I woke up to Jeonggukie’s face almost touching mine. I had my leg wrapped around his waist and his arm was draped over me. I looked at his face and smiled. I really enjoyed having him in my life. It was nice having him as a life mate. I also loved cuddling with him. He is warm and he makes me feel safe. I heard the door open and Seok call our names.

“It’s time to get up. I’m leaving for the studio in an hour.” He walked into the room when he didn’t hear a reply. “Are you sure you two haven’t had sex? Every time I come in here, you look like you’re actively fucking or are about to.”

“I’m still a virgin, Seok. I feel like your magical pervert senses would somehow detect if Jeonggukie and I were doing something sexual. Hell, you’d probably know it was going to happen before we did.”

“Jiminie has a point, Seok. You have to stop asking us every other day if we’ve had sex yet. You really do seem like a perv.”

Seok grumbled about us teaming up on him as he left the room. Jeonggukie went to use the bathroom and I changed into Seok’s tights and fitted tank top. A hush fell over the table as I walked into the room. All of the alphas were staring at me with slack jaws and wide eyes. Jeonggukie looked like he couldn’t breathe.

“You guys okay?” I looked around, waiting for a response.

Mi Mi broke the silence. “They’ve never seen you before. You’re always wearing baggy clothes.”

“Well, this is me.” I shrugged and sat on Jeonggukie’s lap.

He snapped back into reality and laughed nervously. “You look good, Jiminie.” He said in a quiet voice.

“Good? He looks hot!” Jin said unexpectedly. Joon glared at him for a moment but eventually agreed.

“He’s got really nice arms and you can see the outline of his abs in that shirt,” Seok said, cheerfully.

Tae excitedly called out, “His thighs are huge. If we painted them brown, he could pretend to be a tree!”

“Did you see his ass? May the goddess bless you for giving him tights, Seok.” Yunie stated.

I started to feel uncomfortable. This is exactly why I dress the way I do. As if he could sense my apprehension, Jeonggukie wrapped his arms around my waist. After another few comments, I had enough. To my surprise, my alpha life mate cut them off before I could say anything.
“Can we not talk about my life mate like he’s a piece of meat? We agreed that he is a part of our family and family doesn’t treat each other like this. You’re making him incredibly uncomfortable. If you don’t stop, I’ll make you stop.” His teeth were clenched and his voice was low. His anger was evident in this thick scent.

The alphas immediately ceased talking after Jeonggukie’s words. They avoided looking at me for a few minutes. I was shocked that he would challenge the others. Pack-bonded wolves tend to be passive when they’re with their pack. The link between them is tightly binding and generally calming. Even with his condition, Jeonggukie shouldn’t want to disrupt the peace in his pack. It would cause him physical pain to hurt one of his packmates and he would have to exercise extreme willpower to defy the pack alpha. I was confused and stunned when he threatened them so easily.

Joon broke the silence, “We’re sorry, Ji Min. We didn’t mean to make you feel uncomfortable or like you can’t be or dress however you want around us. Guk is right. Family doesn’t act this way. I don’t want to use the excuse that we’re just horny alphas because that isn’t good enough. We were genuinely surprised by how attractive you are, but we handled it poorly. We hope that you can forgive our outbursts and feel safe with us again. We respect you as both a person and an omega. We regret our actions.”

I looked around the table and was surprised to see their heads bowed to me. Alphas only bowed when they were regretting, respecting, or submitting. I could hear the sincerity in Joon’s voice and in their actions. I wasn’t really over it, even after the heartfelt apology, but I knew I needed to say something.

“I’m not going to pretend like I’m okay. Your reaction to my body is exactly why I dress the way I do. I don’t want to be gawked at by some thirsty alphas who can’t keep it in their pants. Jeonggukie was the only one who was respectful towards me, which is sad when you think about it. Out of all of you, he should have been the one to say something. He’s the only one who would have an excuse. I don’t care if you think something as long as you keep it to yourself and it doesn’t make you treat me any differently. I’m a person and I have feelings too. I’m more than a well-built omega in tight clothes. I’ll get over this with time, but refrain from treating me or anyone else this way in the future.” As I spoke, I could feel Jeonggukie’s arms coil tighter around me. It was a comforting and supportive gesture, but I could feel the angry glares he shot at his pack. I was sure he was saying very nasty things to them over the pack bond.

The alphas apologized again and we all finished eating. The conversation was sparse and kept to light subjects after their unnecessary comments. Seok, Jeonggukie, Mi Mi and I left the house. I felt a familiar excitement as we walked. It’s been so long since I’ve danced, but I could still remember everything. I was still enthralled by the memories. I enjoyed the hours of intense practice, the attention to detail, the immense feeling of satisfaction I got when I finally perfected a move. It made me happy. Maybe, I could start dancing again. Jeonggukie got rid of the reason I stopped in the first place. Everything has changed so much since my new life mate came into the picture. He’s honestly turned my world sideways, but I’m so happy he did. I pondered how quickly he assimilated himself into my life and carved a place for himself within it. Mi Mi was right. He was the part of me I didn’t know I was missing.
Beautiful Together

I smiled as I walked into the studio, my eyes disappearing into crescents again. I looked around to see the familiar shine of the floor and glare of the mirrors. There were a couple of girls who looked like they were polishing the last bits of their dance. They gave us odd looks as they practiced. Maybe, they’ve never seen alphas in the studio. When the music finally stopped, I could hear them whispering about Jeonggukie and Seok. It pissed me off, so I decided to say something.

“You know, if you spent less time gossiping, your routine would probably look better. Pink pants, your transitions and arm movements are sloppy. Headband, you’re slightly off beat.” I was standing close enough to them that I could see the anger in their eyes. I heard Mi Mi and Seok giggle behind me.

“As if you could do any better!” Pink pants spat at me.

I laughed and stood next to her. “I watched enough to get the general idea of your routine. Do it with me and watch me in the mirror. Even if I miss a step, I’ll make it look ten times better than yours does.”

She scoffed and walked over to start the music. We got into position and I readied myself. The choreo was easy. It consisted of some walking, steps, arm isolations, and a few body rolls. I was bored after the second eight count. I decided to inject my own moves into their dance. I popped my body to the beat and quickly stepped in time to the rhythm. I didn’t want to show off too much, so I kept it to some simple arm movements and easy footwork. When the song stopped, they just looked at me.

“Your moves were boring, so I improvised. Still looked better than yours.”

Pink pants grabbed her stuff and stormed off. Headband scribbled something on a piece of paper, gave it to me, and followed her friend. I looked at it and laughed.

“Don’t tell me she gave you her number.” Mi Mi said with an eye roll.

“Thankfully, no. She wrote ‘my friend is a bitch. She’s just mad your improv looked better than the choreo she spent a month on.’ At least she can acknowledge her friend is a bitch. That choreo sucked too. It was so boring.” I couldn’t contain the chuckle that formed in my throat.

“You looked bored, Ji Ji. Why didn’t you actually dance? You just did some really basic stuff.”

“I haven’t stretched yet and I didn’t feel like hurting their feelings that much.”

“So,” Seok interrupted, “I’m hearing we need to stretch so you can show me what you can do.” He sat on the floor to stretch, motioning for me to join him.

“You know, Seok. The best way to loosen yourself up for dancing is this.” I stood straight and bent all the way down. I slipped my head in between my calves and folded myself in half. “You hold this for about 30 seconds and you’re all stretched. Mi Mi, want to play?”

She rushed over to me and played a few rounds of rock, paper, scissors with me. We did this all the time when I used to dance. Her little pout when she lost always looked so cute upside down. When I stood up, Jeonggukie and Seok were staring at me. Jeonggukie looked like he stopped breathing again.
“Just how flexible are you, Min?” Seok asked after a few moments of long silence.

I dropped into a side split and he freaked out. I laughed and moved to sit with my legs in the shape of a V. I separated them further and rolled my hips forward, sliding into a front split. Both alphas looked like their eyes were going to pop out. Mi Mi laughed at their faces.

“That’s my amazing Ji Ji!”

Jeonggukie regained his composure first. “That’s really impressive, Jiminie. You definitely beat me in the flexibility competition. I can touch my toes, but that’s about it.”

I smiled brightly. “Flexibility is my special talent. That’s why I put it on the competition list. Well, that and beating up alphas.” He smiled at my statement and helped me off the floor.

“I can see that. I’m a little jealous. I do yoga, but I’m nowhere near that level.”

“I never would have pictured you doing yoga, Jeonggukie.” He wrapped his arms around me and hugged me.

“You’re usually asleep when I do it. It’s another one of my anger outlets.”

“You two are so domestic! Just get married already!” Seok called out. His teasing tone made me want to kick him.

Mi Mi chimed in and, before we could stop it, the two of them were planning a wedding for Jeonggukie and me. I rolled my eyes and grabbed my alpha life mate’s hand.

“Want to dance? You know, that thing we came here to do to?” I directed the last sentence toward our friends, who were too caught up in their conversation to hear me.

“Show me the dance Seok taught you. We can do it together.”

Jeonggukie nodded and plugged his phone into the speaker. When he got into his starting position, I couldn’t help my excitement. I was dancing again after so long and I was doing it with one of me most important people in my life. From the first beat, the first shift of his frame, I was captivated. Jeonggukie danced with such power, making it seem like he conducted the music with his body. Each movement was sharp and precise. He was naturally good. When the music stopped, I kept staring. He was a rather impressive dancer and I liked seeing him sweaty and out of breath—not that I’d ever admit the second part.

“Jiminie?” His voice forced me out of my thoughts.

“Sorry, Jeonggukie. I didn’t catch any of it. I was too busy watching you.”

He smiled and pulled me up next to him. “I’ll show it to you slowly. Make sure you pay attention this time, little omega.”

He broke the choreo down, step by step. It didn’t take me too long to get the hang of the dance, even though hip hop wasn’t my strong suit. After we covered half of the song, we tried it with the music. I loved the difference in our styles. While he hit every step forcefully, I was more fluid. Jeonggukie was all angles and I was rounded. We looked beautiful together. Mi Mi and Seok clapped and cheered when we finished. I had long forgotten about their presence in the room. I was having too much fun dancing with my alpha life mate.

“I think we’re going to have to call it a draw on the dance contest, Jeonggukie. We both did well, but
our styles are very different. There wasn’t a clear winner. I think I’m okay being tied with you, though.” Mi Mi came forward and felt my forehead. “Are you being sarcastic because of what I said?”

“No, I’m genuinely worried. My Ji Ji has never accepted a tie. What have you done to my life mate?” She looked at Jeonggukie inquisitively as she spoke.

“Our life mate, Ranie. I haven’t done anything to him.”

I shrugged. “I guess I’m slowly starting to accept that Jeonggukie is awesome at everything. It still makes me mad, but I’m accepting it. My alpha really hates you for that.” I playfully pushed him.

He bent down to whisper in my ear, “Your alpha may hate me, but your omega loves me.” He straightened himself and gave me a knowing smirk.

“You wish.” I had to stand on my toes to whisper in response. He laughed and grinned at me, so I pushed him again.

After a few moments of joking around, Seok decided he was going to teach us the rest of the choreography to the dance. The three of us made a badass dance group. We complemented each other so well. By the end of our session, the alphas and I were crumpled into panting heaps on the floor. Mi Mi waited patiently for us to gather the energy to walk home.

I decided to take a shower when we got back. It was probably the best shower I’ve had in my entire life. The hot water slid across my skin, loosening the tension in my muscles. I smiled, remembering how much fun I had. I’m definitely going to try to find time to dance again. Maybe Jeonggukie and Seok can be my dance partners. I turned off the water and dried myself off. I put on Jeonggukie’s baggy tee and my boxers. I found my life mates sitting on the couch. I laid my head on Mi Mi’s lap and stretched my legs across Jeonggukie. I fell asleep cuddled up to my two favorite people in the world.

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The week flew by much quicker than I would have liked. I enjoyed spending time with my new family. Tonight is the last night that Mi Mi and I will be with the alphas. It felt bittersweet for some reason. It made me uneasy. Jeonggukie grabbed my hand, subconsciously responding to my distress.

“Why do I feel anxious about going home tomorrow?” I asked, hoping he had an answer. We were cuddled up in his bed, trying to avoid sleep for a while.

“Because I won’t be there. You’re used to me being around all the time now and you’re worried you’re going to have a hard time sleeping without me.”

As his words sunk in, I knew they were true. I didn’t want them to be, but they were. “How do you know that?”

“It’s the same way I’m feeling.”

I squeezed his hand and sighed. “What are we going to do about it? We aren’t going to have as much time together from now until the end of the semester. The second half of the term is always harder. We’ll only get to see each other during study and at lunch. Maybe during movie night too. We won’t be able to spend the night as much, especially since my mom says you’ve kidnapped me and she can’t remember what I look like anymore.” I laughed even though it was true. I spent way more time with Jeonggukie than I did my mom.
“I was thinking we could keep meeting four or five nights a week for study and talk on the phone before we go to bed. I know we won’t hang out as much, but we will figure it out.”

I nuzzled into his neck and held him close. We had grown almost inseparable over the week and it caught me off guard. I know he’s my life mate, but I feel too attached to him. Before Jeonggukie, Mi Mi made up my whole world. She was everything to me. Despite that, I was never anxious about not spending time with her. I always knew that I would see her again the next day. With Jeonggukie, I feel like it’s never enough. I’d be content laying in this bed with him for the foreseeable future. I thought about my desire to stay with him, as well as the logistics of sneaking him into my house at night for snuggles. My mom would probably be all right with it, honestly. She would love Jeonggukie. Well, she already does. She hasn’t met him, but I tell my mom everything. It’s been just me and her my whole life, so I know she’s the one I can come to with anything. Thinking about my family made me wonder about Jeonggukie’s parents. I’ve never heard him mention them before. None of the alphas have mentioned their biological families. I wasn’t sure how to ask about it, but I felt it was important to discuss. I decided to mention my mom as a segue into the topic.

“Hey, Jeonggukie? I know this is kind of random, but my mom wants to meet you. She knows we’re life mates and everything, so it doesn’t have to be weird.”

He laughed at my rushed tone. “I don’t think it’s weird. I’d like to meet her. You and Ranie talk about her so fondly that she has to be an awesome person.”

“She is. She’s taken care of me my whole life, even when she was suffering through her broken mate bond after my dad abandoned us. He left when he found out about my Alphabet Syndrome. He said I was an abomination and he didn’t want anything to do with me. He said it was a sign of weakness to be born with a genetic disorder and he refused to raise a weak son.”

Jeonggukie wrapped his arms around my waist and squeezed me tightly. He was quiet for a while. I could tell he was thinking. I felt his hesitation and apprehension. I pulled his face to mine and nuzzled his nose.

“If there’s something on your mind, you can tell me. No matter what it is, you’ll still be my wonderful, amazing life mate.”

He moved his head to my neck, inhaling my scent for comfort. “My parents abandoned me too. When I was five, I was diagnosed with HADD. I started therapy at six. When I was eight, my parents got sick of waiting. They had it in their minds that two years was enough time to cure HADD. They didn’t understand how the disorder works or how therapy works. There isn’t a cure. They left me. They were like your dad in the fact that they didn’t want a broken son. Luckily, Jin’s family took me in.”

I clung to him with an iron grip. Even though I could tell he had largely worked out his emotions regarding his abandonment, I knew it still hurt him. “How did you two meet?”

“Our moms were best friends until my parents took off. His mom thought of me as her own son, so she raised me and gave me everything I needed. I always thought of her as a good mom, until she disowned Jin.”

“Why did she do that?”

“He mated earlier than she wanted, at age 17. She disapproved of his decision and his mate. Joon was only 15 when they mated and he’s an alpha.”

It took me a few minutes to process what Jeonggukie said. “Wait. What? Jin and Joon are mated?
Why did no one tell me?”

“We’re so used to it that I guess we forgot to mention it. How have you not noticed? They hold hands and cuddle all the time.”

My answer made me chuckle shyly. “Is it bad to say that I really on notice you when I’m here? Even Mi Mi kind of becomes an afterthought when you’re around.”

He flashed a bright smile and kissed the top of my head so gently that I thought I imagined it. A nervous tension spread across my chest. It made my heart beat uncontrollably. This is the second feeling Jeonggukie has made me feel that I didn’t have a name for. I looked away, not being able to handle the intensity of his gaze. His secret was on full display, burning more fiercely than the crimson that nestled in his eyes.
SKY universities are mentioned in this chapter and throughout the rest of the story. SKY stands for Seoul National University, Korea University, and Yonsei University. They are the three most prestigious colleges in South Korea.

“I’m sorry you have to miss your family movie night, Jeong Guk. I know family time is very important to you.” My mom spoke happily to Jeonggukie as she passed food around the table.

“It’s quite all right, Ms. Park. I think meeting my life mate’s mom also counts as family time.” He showed his adorable bunny smile and my mom tried to conceal her squeal.

“He’s so cute, Minie! I like your alpha already.”

“Mom!”

She laughed at my outburst and my whiny tone. “Any way you look at it, he’s your alpha. Even if it’s not in a mate sense. Mi Ran is your omega and Jeong Guk is your alpha.” I sighed because she was right. “If we look at it that way, Jeong Guk is a total playboy. That means he has two omegas. Good job, Jeong Guk! He’s definitely attractive enough to get two omegas. He’d be strong enough to handle the both of you too.”

“Mom, stop!”

She laughed maniacally as I buried my face in my hands. I felt Jeonggukie’s arm close in on my shoulders, pulling my body towards him. My head fell onto his shoulder and he placed his head on top of mine.

“I’m sorry if I seem odd to you, Jeong Guk. My way of communicating usually involves humor. I don’t mean any harm in what I say. Most of it is honestly just to get a reaction out of Minie. He’s not usually this responsive, though.” She shot a pointed look at me and continued, “I did the same thing when I met Mi Ran, but Minie probably doesn’t remember.”

“I do. I remember you showed her her my naked baby pictures and made me play dress up with her. I also remember you tried to make us bathe together when we told you we were life mates, even though I was 13 and she was 12,” I said loudly.

She tried to look innocent but failed miserably. “When you say it like that, it sounds weird. I promise it wasn’t nearly as strange as it sounds. I can guarantee you that I won’t try to get you and Jeong Guk to bathe together. What you do when I’m not here is your decision.”

“Seriously, mom? Instead of encouraging potentially sexual behavior, shouldn’t you be telling us how bad it is like a normal mom?”

She shrugged. “You’re both young and physically matured. It’s not like you two can have pups anyway. First, you’re both guys. Second, you’d have to be mated to have pups even if you could have them. And,” she paused and examined my neck for dramatic effect, “you two are not mated. As
long as you’re both safe, willing, and I’m not in the house, I’m fine with it.”

“Why is Jeonggukie the only one getting this kind of speech? You didn’t say anything about sex to Mi Mi when we became life mates. In fact, you’ve never even talked to me about sex before now.”

My mom erupted into laughter and quickly had to calm herself. “First, you’re asexual, so I’ve never had to address sex with you. Second, I’ve always known that you and Mi Ran were only friends. There is no chemistry between the two of you. Third, I know my son well enough to know that he would cut off his own hand if he ever thought about touching his lesbian life mate in a sexual way. You respect her way too much to even consider doing anything like that.”

I nodded, until her words sunk in. I could tell she was trying to make an indirect statement. “I know you well enough to know that you really mean something else. You think Jeonggukie and I have chemistry and our relationship isn’t platonic. But, we haven’t done anything. I’m still asexual.”

She smirked and eyed me sarcastically. “Like that matters. Look at you! You’ve never sat with Mi Ran like that in the eight years you’ve known her. Sure, she sits in your lap or lays on you from time to time, but you and Jeong Guk have maintained constant skinship since the moment he got here. You’re practically sitting in his lap right now.”

Again, she was right. I had my legs draped over Jeonggukie’s thigh. I was leaned into him and his arm was around my waist. “I’ll be honest, I didn’t even realize I was sitting like this. Did you, Jeonggukie?”

He shook his head. “I never do. There have been times during study when Ranie brings attention to the fact that you’re straddling me and reading a book behind my back when I had no idea. It just feels natural, like when I wake up and you’re laying on top of me. I don’t really notice anymore.”

“That’s exactly my point!” My mom exclaimed while waving her hands in the air.

After she repeated a few dozen times that Jeonggukie and I were a perfect couple, she changed the subject to more serious matters. “So, what do you want to do when you grow up, Jeong Guk?”

“I plan on being a therapist who specializes in treating patients with genetic conditions, like mine and Jiminie’s.”

I looked at him, stunned. I couldn’t think of a better job for my alpha life mate. “How is this the first I’ve ever heard of your career goals? I think that’s an amazing dream! I’m going to do whatever I can to help.”

He gave me a beautiful smile and nuzzled my cheek. “What about you, Jiminie?”

“I want to become a Professor of Omega Studies at a SKY university. I also want to become a consultant who assists in making school curricula more omega-inclusive.”

He gave me a proud look and another breathtaking smile. “I’ll do whatever I can to make sure that happens.”

How did I get so lucky to have two outstanding life mates? Jeonggukie wants to be a therapist specifically for people who have problems like ours. Mi Mi wants to open her own omega crisis center to help omegas in need. They are both so amazing. I’m inspired by them. They make me want to be the best version of myself that I can be. We continued to talk about our dreams and how we plan to achieve them until my mom yawned.

“Jeonggukie and I can clean up, mom. You should go to bed. I know you had a long day at the
hospital.”

She nodded and thanked us. “Remember, I’m visiting your aunt in Busan for a few days. I’m leaving here at 6 am tomorrow. Jeong Guk, would you mind staying here while I’m gone, or taking Minie to your house? I know he’s no stranger to fending for himself, but I would feel better if you were with him”

He nodded, a strange look taking over his face. “Of course, Ms. Park. I’ll make sure he’s taken care of.”

“Thank you. I’m going to bed now. You boys have a good night. I’ll text you when I get to the station and when I get to your aunt’s house.”

“Good night, mom. I love you.”

“I love you too, Minie. Good night, Jeong Guk!”

“Good night, Ms. Park!”

Jeonggukie and I began making idle chatter as we cleaned. “I like your mom. She’s fun.”

“I’m pretty sure she likes you too.”

“So, your aunt lives in Busan. Is your family from there?”

I nodded. “Geumjeong-gu. Where are you from?”

“Buk-gu in Busan.”

“That’s cool. We grew up like an hour away from each other. When did you move to Seoul?”

“Four years ago, when Jin’s parents disowned him. We lived with his grandparents until they bought a house big enough for all six of us. The rest of the pack followed as soon as we moved in. How about you?”

“We moved here six years ago when my mom finished her anesthesiology training. She got an amazing opportunity to work at Seoul National University Hospital, so we packed up and came here. It was nice to get away from all of her bad memories.”

We finished putting the dishes away and I was suddenly very tired. We immediately went to my room and laid down in my bed. “You’ll have to tell me how your pack got together one day.”

He hummed in response. “And you’ll have to tell me more about when you were younger too.” I nodded and he wrapped his arm around me. It took me only a few moments to fall into a deep sleep.

I woke up with Jeonggukie snuggling up to my back, his arm around my chest. I began to stretch, but his arm tightened around me.

“Don’t move,” he said with his low, sleepy voice.

“But, I want to see you,” I replied as I turned to face him and put my leg on his waist.

I looked at him and gasped. The brown in his eyes was darker than normal and the crimson was starting to glow. He put his hand on the back of my head and forcefully grabbed my hair. He brought his face close to me, his lips brushing against my exposed neck.
“You don’t understand. I somehow mixed up the days. Today is the day I start my rut and you start your heat. It’s taking all of the self-control I have to keep your clothes on.”

I was wondering why I felt groggy and disoriented. I thought it was because I just woke up, but it was actually Jeonggukie’s rut smell. “J-Jeonggukie.”

My skin was tingling where his lips touched and my body was very warm. My voice came out as a whimper, causing him to pull my hair harder. I involuntarily moaned, eliciting a growl from him. When I started to feel like I couldn’t get enough air, he pushed me away and stood up.

“I got up and took my Primatin, but my alpha wouldn’t let me be away from you. I got back in bed and tried to deal with your scent. The second you started moving, it was over for me. I’m waiting for my meds to kick in now, but I can’t be in here with you. I’m going to call Joon. If we don’t have someone here, I’m going to end up doing something I regret. I know you get clingy when you’re in heat. You can call me if you want. I’ll be in the living room. Don’t leave this room unless Joon is here or you have to pee. Do not come into the living room until Joon gets here.” He grabbed his phone and walked out the door, not waiting for a response.

I laid in my bed and tried to process what happened. Jeonggukie’s smell lingered on my pillow and I quickly buried my face into it. I was insanely dizzy, but this was more than that. My everything felt like it was on fire. I can’t breathe. I can’t think straight. This is the third feeling Jeonggukie has given me that I can’t name. It’s so strong. Whatever this is, it’s consuming. I moved around in bed, trying to find more of my alpha life mate’s scent when I brushed against myself. My dick was painfully erect. Shit. I know what this feeling is. I’m horny. Well, I have a name for it, but I’ve still never felt it before. Why the fuck did Jeonggukie pulling my hair make me horny? Why did I whimper and moan? I guess he really is seducing my omega. Why do I feel okay with that? I knew that somewhere in the back of my mind, my alpha was enraged. However, I couldn’t hear him at all. Why wasn’t he as vocal as he normally is? For the first time ever, I could hear my omega loud and clear. He voiced his disappointment at Jeonggukie’s rejection. I whimpered again from sadness. Did I really want something to happen between us? Before I could think too much about it, I decided to end my self-reflection and call Jeonggukie. I couldn’t allow myself to focus on it right now. Even if I wanted to, I was way too disoriented to fully comprehend everything. He answered his phone and I heard heavy breathing. I could tell he had me on speaker.

“What are you doing, Jeonggukie. Please tell me you’re not jacking off with me on the phone.”

“No, I’m doing push-ups,” he grunted.

“Why?”

“Working out helps keep my mind off of sex. I’ve done 50 squats, 50 lunges, and 50 sit-ups already. Once I finish my push-ups, I’m going to start over and keep going until Joon gets here.”

“Damn, Jeonggukie!” I was surprised at how much he could get done in such a short amount of time. My omega was very excited and intrigued by the thought of my alpha life mate’s muscles. “Just how strong are you?” I mumbled to myself.

“You’ll find out.” There was no amusement in his voice. It wasn’t a simple comment or a joke. It was a promise, almost a threat.

His words made me tingly again. My omega wanted Jeonggukie to follow through with that statement, but I decided to keep him at bay. I’m not entertaining any of my omega’s ideas when I can’t even concentrate. I got dressed and listened to Jeonggukie breathe heavily into the phone. I didn’t like the distance between us, but it was nice knowing he was still in the house with me. After a
few more minutes, I heard the front door open.

“Hey, Joon!” I called out.

“Hey, Min! It’s safe to come out now. Jinie and I are here.”

I hung up the phone and rushed into the living room. I couldn’t help staring at Jeonggukie, who was shirtless and covered in sweat. He was doing sit-ups on the floor.

“Quit shamelessly staring at Guk, Min. He’s like my son,” Jin said jokingly.

Joon giggled and held Jin’s hand. “Wouldn’t that make him our son?” Jin nodded and laughed.

Their cute moment and skinship reminded me that they are mated. “How did I now know that you two were together?”

“You’re too enamored with Guk to notice anything else,” Joon said matter-of-factly.

I shrugged and mumbled, “you’re not wrong.”

Jeonggukie finished his sit-ups and put his shirt back on. He stood behind Joon, making me painfully aware of the distance between us. I wanted to hug him. I wanted to be near him. My omega was crying out to jump into his lap and never leave. I contemplated taking on the two alphas in front of me to get to Jeonggukie, but I thought better of it. Only bad things would come from challenging the pack alpha and his mate, even if I won the fight. I resigned myself to being away from him with a sad look on my face. It didn’t go unnoticed by my alpha life mate.

“Don’t pout, little omega. You know I can’t cuddle you right now.” Jeonggukie seemed more like himself than he did earlier. The ruby shine in his eyes had died down and his scent was more controlled. His voice was still lower and more aggressive than normal, but I could tell he had more restraint than when I first woke up.

“Fine,” I said with a heavy sigh, willing my omega to cooperate, “but I’m going to be glued to your hip when my heat is over. You’re going to be lucky if you can go to the bathroom by yourself!” I stuck my tongue out at him and he laughed.

“I look forward to it, little omega.”

We stared at each other for a moment. I found myself entranced by the darkness in his eyes, along with the scarlet flecks and secret he always sported. I felt my omega urge me towards him, compelling me forward like a weak gravitational pull. I resisted, but I could not look away.

Jin interrupted the moment, “We’re going to take you two back to our house. We already know the rest of the pack isn’t affected by Min’s heat the way Guk is. That will make it easier to keep an eye on you and make sure nothing happens.”

We traveled in silence. I walked next to Jin while the other two alphas walked in front of us. Again I was incredibly aware of the number of steps it would take for me to close in on my alpha life mate, of how many arm lengths away he was. When we arrived, Jin mentioned that he and Joon would make some food for us and Jeonggukie announced he was going to take a shower. I asked him if he could bring me his blanket and one of his pillows when he was done. I flung myself across one of the armchairs and waited. The buzz in my skin and the dizziness that I had around him unnerved me. I couldn’t place how it felt or what it meant. There was a dull ache when he wasn’t around—something that made no sense to me.
I’ve never experienced this level of attachment to someone. Before I could think about it too much, a heap of cloth was being thrown at my face. I quickly curled myself around the pillow and bundled myself in the blanket. It wasn’t a perfect proxy for the alpha—who was now sitting on the couch at the opposite end of the room—but being engulfed in his scent made me feel better. I could sense he was having difficulty too as he began playing a video game. His leg was anxiously bouncing up and down.

“We can call Ranie if you’re feeling that clingy,” he said without taking his eyes off the screen.

“She’s busy. Her cousin is getting married today.” I groaned and shifted in the chair.

Yunie came out of his room and noticed the sullen atmosphere. “What did you do to him, Guk? He’s pouting like you stole his favorite toy and knocked his ice cream onto the ground.”

“He’s upset because we can’t cuddle.”

Yunie nodded and put his hand on my shoulder. “I’d be happy to help, but I’m pretty sure Guk would rip my dick off if I did.”

“Rip your dick off? Isn’t that a bit over dramatic?” I heard Jeonggukie growl when he looked up at me.

“Not at all. That’s a normal alpha thing, but Guk is very possessive and doesn’t like to share. In fact, that growl you’re hearing is because I have my hand on your shoulder.” He moved his hand and the growl immediately stopped—Jeonggukie’s expression changing to a happier one.

“Why his dick though? That’s harsh.”

My alpha life mate shrugged. “No one is allowed to touch what’s mine.”

My omega preened himself on the alpha’s words. A strange rumbling ripped through my chest when I replayed them in my mind. When I felt my vocal cords contract, I expected a growl to rush from my throat. I was not prepared to hear purring. Only omegas can purr. I was told that I would probably never be able to because of my alpha. My omega was so moved by Jeonggukie’s verbal claim on me that he emitted a sound I’m not even capable of making. I didn’t have time to question the implications of this discovery because my alpha life mate’s voice brought my attention towards him and stopped the purring.

“Are you purring, Jiminie?”

I forcefully cleared my throat, trying to give myself time to find my voice once more. “I… I was. I don’t know how, but I was.”

“It sounded nice. I liked it.” He had paused the game and was looking at me. The shine of his eyes seemed different in some unknown way.

“Why aren’t you guys snuggling anyway? It’s obvious that you both want to,” Yunie asked with a gruff tone. As is usually the case when I’m with Jeonggukie, I forgot anyone else was here.

“I don’t want to take things too far,” the youngest replied softly.

“Why? You guys are mates. It’s okay if you have sex.”

“Jeminie isn’t ready. His alpha and his omega are still fighting each other.” My alpha life mate said with an exasperated sigh.
The older alpha raised his eyebrow and tilted his head. “Does that mean you’re ready?”

Jeonggukie looked away and remained silent. I didn’t know what to say either. I’ve always just assumed that he acted this way because of his rut. I never thought he actually wanted to do anything with me. Questions overwhelmed me. Did he really want to have sex? Do I want to have sex? Even though I’m still asexual, why did the thought seem right? Why did it make me sort of excited? Scared? Nervous? Excited? Did I just think excited again? What the fuck is going on? Jeonggukie’s voice brought me out of my downward spiral.

“Yunie, can you hug Jiminnie for me? He’s starting to panic and I can’t help. If I try to change my scent right now, it will probably just make it worse.”

Yunie put his arms around me and hugged tightly. Jeonggukie visibly tensed at the touch. He tried to hide the low growl that his alpha emitted.

“I’m all right, Yunie. Thank you, though.” I moved away from his grasp, watching as my alpha life mate relaxed once more.

“If that doesn’t tell you that you’re mates, then you aren’t paying attention. You just told me to hug Min even though you knew it would make you angry. Then, he refused my hug to make you feel better, even though he was freaking out. I don’t know what the issue is between you two, but can you just work it out already?” As he spoke his amber and pepper scent spiked with annoyance. He sighed from frustration and walked back into his room.

I sat, staring at Jeonggukie, not knowing what to say.

Chapter End Notes

So, a lot happened in this chapter. Did you like Ji Min's mom? What do you think will happen now that Ji Min's heat and Jeong Guk's rut have started? Can I fangirl for a second about my own story? JI MIN FREAKING PURRED ASDFASJDFK! Sorry... I know I'm not supposed to get into my own story, but I am. I'm so emotionally invested in this thing it's not even funny...

Please give me any theories, questions, comments, or concerns you may have. I'll be sure to address them to the best of my abilities. The next few chapters are going to have a lot of information and a lot of dialogue. I wanted to warn you all ahead of time.
I didn’t have too much time to continue the world’s most awkward staring contest because Tae and Seok quickly came into the living room. Part of me wondered if Jeonggukie or Yunie called them in. Damn pack-bonded alphas and their ability to telepathically communicate. They sat in the chairs on either side of me and also stared at Jeonggukie. I wasn’t sure why they decided to do this, but it actually made the situation much more relaxed. Soon, Yunie sat next to Jeonggukie and stared back at us.

“As fun as a five-way staring competition would be, I think we’d have to announce the competition before we start it,” Tae said with a giggle.

“Before anyone gets into any kind of competition, come eat.” Joon’s voice came from the kitchen.

We all filed into the dining room and took our seats at the table. It was very odd for me to have to sit across from Jeonggukie, but it was nice to be able to see him. Something about having my eyes on him and being able to smell him made me feel a little more at ease. Instead of being allowed to get my own food, a plate—heaped with rice, vegetables, and meat—was slid across the table to me. I was also handed a full bowl of soup. It was strange. I’ve never been given food like this before. I’ve seen alphas give food to their pregnant or sick omegas, but I’m neither of those.

“Eat.” I heard Jeonggukie say sternly.

I looked up to see the whole pack waiting for me to take a bite. I nodded and quickly obliged, unsure of what was happening. As soon as I swallowed the first mouthful, the alphas began eating. What the fuck is going on? I decided to push it to the back of my mind and ask later. I knew I wouldn’t get any answers right now.

“Min, how did your mom like Guk?” Seok asked between bites.

“She really liked him. She wouldn’t stop complimenting him and talking about how cute we are together. It was really embarrassing.”

“I like your mom already,” Yunie said with a chuckle.

“Was your dad there too? I haven’t heard you mention him.” Tae’s innocent eyes let me know that Jeonggukie hadn’t told the alphas about my family.

“I don’t have a dad.”

“Jiminnie’s dad had the same reaction to him that my parents had to me,” Jeonggukie stated with a flat voice.

“I’m sorry, Min. I didn’t mean to bring up bad memories.”
I shook my head, letting Tae know that I wasn’t upset. “I know and remember literally nothing about him. I don’t even know his name. He left when I was two months old. Almost killed my mom by taking off because the pathetic piece of shit decided real alphas don’t have pups with genetic disorders. I don’t even care about him or the absence of him. My mom was more than enough. The only thing that bothers me is what it did to her.”

“How did she survive?” Jin asked softly.

“Really good connections and a lot of hard work. My aunt works as a researcher for Yonsei University. For the last 20 years, she’s been conducting a longitudinal study on the high number of genetic abnormalities found in pups who are born in Busan. When I was born, everyone immediately knew something was wrong with me. I was transferred to the Busan Medical Center because my aunt’s research was stationed out of there. Luckily, my aunt’s work gave us access to some of the best doctors—including those who specialize in treating Broken Bond Disease. I spent the first year of my life in and out of the medical center, getting tested and prodded.

“Mom spent the first six months after my dad left in the Intensive Care Unit at BMC. Then, the next three years in therapy, on medication, and visiting the doctor at least once a week. She’s a strong woman and she came through. She almost died at least a dozen times, but she made it. She always told me it was because she knew she had to take care of me—that no one would love me like she did, so she had to stay and share that love with me.”

I began to tear up—the emotional vulnerability of my heat affecting me more than normal. First, I was denied the affection of my alpha life mate. Now, I’m reliving one of the most emotionally painful stories I have. I wrapped my arms around myself, unable to contain the small number of tears that fell. I started into Jeonggukie’s eyes, hoping to find some comfort within them. I found pain, anger, and bright flashes of scarlet. His hands were trembling and his jaw was set. I could tell that he wanted to reach out to me so badly, but we both knew he couldn’t. It was too risky. His dominance spikes when I’m in heat and my omega is already trying to convince me that letting this alpha claim me is the best idea I’ve ever heard. If we were to touch right now, who knows where it would lead. Even though I don’t feel any active sexual desire, I’m still worried that something could happen. If we were going to make a decision like that, I’d want it to be when we’re both able to fully focus on the options and outcomes.

Being lost in my thoughts dried my tears. I looked around to see the whole pack fixated on me. I couldn’t tell that they wanted to help, but no good would come from any of them touching me. I didn’t fully understand the concept of Jeonggukie’s possessiveness. However, I understood his pack knew him better than I did when it comes to these types of issues. I felt a little embarrassed to be crying in front of them, although it was only half a dozen tears. It made me feel self-conscious to be emotional. It’s not something I’m used to.

“I’m sorry. I’m not usually like this. I get a little emotional in when I’m in heat.”

“It’s all right,” Jeonggukie assured me, placing his hand near mine on the table.

I looked up at him, lost in his eyes again. I never thought distance could be painful. I never thought that there would ever come a time in which I was physically hurt by a lack of touch. I wasn’t this way with Mi Mi. It took all of my restraint to not reach out and grab Jeonggukie—not to bury my face in his neck and myself within his arms. He stared at me, as well. I could feel the electric shock of tension between us. It sparked and danced like the ruby specks in his eyes. I tried to find something to distract myself from the building uneasiness and my mind settled on talking more.

“If you guys don’t mind me asking, what happened with your families? I’m sure it’s probably personal because I’ve never heard any of you talk about them. I know about Jeonggukie and Jin, but
I don’t know much about the rest of you. If it’s too much to ask, then we don’t have to talk about it.”

“I don’t mind sharing as long as Yunie doesn’t,” Tae said with a soft voice. I watched Yunie nod his consent before Tae continued. “Once upon a time in Daegu, I had two dads and a little sister. My sister and I were both adopted. My omega dad and my sister were the nicest, sweetest people in the world. My sister might as well have been made out of candy floss and gummy bears! My alpha dad was a total jerk, to me anyway. He was so sweet and loving with the omegas, taking care of them like an alpha in a storybook. I guess he thought I was too much like an omega. That wasn’t my fault. My omega dad raised me while the other one was at work. Alpha dad was always gone, so I was raised the best that omega dad could manage. Too bad for me, I was brought up like an omega. At first, alpha dad would just give me snarky comments about how I’m not a real alpha. Anytime I would play dolls with Tae Mi or help omega dad cook, I would get an earful. I swear he was only home to see me doing ‘omega things’.

“He never saw me defending Tae Mi at school or taking care of omega dad when he wasn’t around. After a while, he began hitting me. It wasn’t that bad when it started. As I got older, he would go farther and farther. One night, alpha dad came home and went on a rampage. He gave me a black eye, a bloody nose, and a broken arm. I’m pretty sure he was going to kill me. Omega dad jumped in and stopped him long enough for me to run. I left home and I haven’t been back since. I was 11 at the time. I found a 24-hour store to camp out in for a couple of days, but I wasn’t doing well. I was hungry and my arm was horribly swollen. People were starting to notice me. I tried to find another store to sleep in, but I ended up passing out from hunger. I was eventually planning to go back home, but Yunie found me and brought me to his house. He paid to have me treated and took me in.”

“I’m so sorry that happened to you, Tae. That’s awful.” I wasn’t sure what else to say about it. I couldn’t fathom being abused and hated by my own father like that. Sure, my dad left me when I was a baby, but I wasn’t on the direct receiving end of that animosity.

“It’s okay. I was sad for a while, but Yunie took care of me. Even though he was only 13, he treated me like my omega dad did. He also taught me the importance of family and making sure the people you love are happy. I miss Tae Mi sometimes and I often wonder how my omega dad is, but they had moved by the time I went back to check on them. I haven’t seen them since I left. Yunie and the pack became my family. Even though we were the last ones to join the pack, they never treated us like we were any different and they never loved us any less.”

Yunie wrapped his arms around Tae and gave him a big hug. The rest of the pack smiled and got up to hug him too. It was heartwarming to see them. They really were a family. I chuckled at myself for a moment. I can’t believe I was afraid of these guys. I can’t believe I thought they were a gang of horrible, jerk alphas who wanted to cause problems. They’re just a bunch of snuggly puppies.

“As you can tell, my story ends with finding Tae and the pack,” Yunie began. “Before that, I was so bored and lonely. I was the only son of a businessman and a lawyer. Both of my parents made good money, came from wealthy families, and were well-educated. I was being groomed to take over my father’s business, but I didn’t want to. Similar to Tae’s alpha dad, my parents were never home. Mom was constantly busy with some case. She was one of the first omegas in Korea to become a full-fledged lawyer, so she was always trying to prove she was worthy of the title. Dad was the second-generation owner and CEO of Min Telecommunications. He didn’t have time for a family. My parents were afraid that someone may try to harm me if I went outside—because of the social status they both held—so I was forced to stay in in the house. I had nannies and tutors, but no interactions with other people and no friends. I was just so bored all the time.

“The night I found Tae, I snuck out of the house. I really wanted to walk around and get some snacks. My parents never let me have junk food, so I decided I was going to buy my own. I came
home with a new brother. I knew when I found him lying on the sidewalk I had to help him. Luckily, Tae was small enough for me to carry him back to my house. I snuck him in and put him on my bed. I contacted my on-call doctor—because why wouldn’t a 13 year old have an on-call doctor?—and had him nurse Tae back to health. I probably should have worried about where Tae came from or my parents being mad, but I wasn’t. I knew he was in trouble and he had been hurt. Keeping him safe seemed more important. My parents were actually okay with having Tae there once they got to know him. They felt sorry for him and wanted to take care of him too. Part of me thinks they let him stay because they felt guilty that they were never home. He lived with us for a year before we found the others. Jin, Joon, and Guk were in Daegu with Jin’s grandparents for a trip. We ran into them at a store and Tae was immediately drawn to Guk. At first, Jin and I thought they were fated because of how easily they became attached to each other.”

I tried to ignore the gross sinking feeling I had when Yunie said Tae and Jeonggukie were fated. It was that same nauseous rage that I experienced once before—when my alpha life mate talked about his first experience with sex. The word fated seemed like a death sentence at that moment. I despised it more than I ever thought I could loathe a word. People often recognize their mates when they meet them, or soon after. It’s not uncommon for people to become attached as soon as they smell their mate, but fated was a different thing altogether. Fated meant they were mates that were destined to be together, no matter what. Even if a fated person gets mated to someone else, they somehow find their way into the arms of their fated. Being fated to someone is the only way that you can mate again after being mated and it’s the only non-potentially lethal way to break an existing mate bond. Most people don’t recognize their fated at first. Something usually happens between them in order for them to identify the other as their true mate. Some people say everyone has a fated, but I don’t believe that. If they did, wouldn’t everyone be with their fated eventually?

Regardless, I don’t want Tae and Jeonggukie to be fated. Even though I’m only thinking about it, the word tastes bitter on my tongue. My omega took over my thoughts before I realized it. He asked a rapid series of questions that I wasn’t sure how to handle. What if they are? Is that why Jeonggukie isn’t ready to be my mate? He said his wolf would only attach itself to his soulmate. That has to be why we’re not together. Sour, earthy tones seeped into my scent as the possibility of my mate belonging to someone else hit me. Why wouldn’t he tell me that he’s Tae’s fated? Why would he just lead me on? Why would he even come to find me if he’s fated? Tae’s an alpha, that’s why. He can’t be with an alpha, so I’m the next best choice. But, if Tae was his fated, wouldn’t his wolf make an exception? My mind was reeling from questions—something that was especially difficult to deal with because I was already dizzy from Jeonggukie’s rut.

“We’re not fated, Min,” Tae said when he realized what the problem was. “I’m just really good with scents. I’ve always said that if someone’s smell immediately effects you, then they’re going to be important to you. Whether they’re going to be your mate, your friend, or your worst enemy, they’ll matter in your life. Guk’s scent affected me immediately, so I knew he had to be important. We found out this year that he’s my cousin. When I turned 18, I went back to the orphanage I came from and found my birth parents’ names. Our moms are sisters! I must have smelled family on him when I met him and I guess he could with me too.”

I nodded, avoiding their stares. I knew they could all smell my anxiety and panic when the previous topic came up. A jolt ran through me when I felt the lightest touch on my pinky finger. It was Jeonggukie. He had brushed his finger against mine in a brief attempt to comfort me. I reluctantly looked up at him and was greeted by a beautiful smile. I couldn’t hold his gaze for long—finding it too intense and too emotionally draining. Despite my inability to keep my eyes on him, I couldn’t help the fond smile that plastered itself on my face after seeing him.

“So,” Yunie continued after being interrupted by my panic, “we knew we had to become friends with these guys after Tae latched onto Guk. We spent their whole two-week vacation hanging out
with them. We kept in touch after they left. A year later, my dad got sick and his Vice President of Sales and Marketing took over. It was supposed to be temporary, but he did something that made it permanent. I still don’t even know what it was, but my mom immediately started a lawsuit. Tae and I were basically ignored after that. The pack moved to Seoul a year after that and we followed them. My parents didn’t care about us anymore, so they didn’t bother stopping us. As far as I know, my mom got my dad’s company back and they’re happily working again. We officially became a pack last year when Guk matured, but we’ve all been in each other’s lives for six years. I’ve felt more sense of family in the last six years than I did the first 14 years of my life. These guys and their happiness mean everything to me.”

Another group hug broke out at the table and it made me smile. It was nice to hear about my new family and their backstories. While I hated hearing some of the heartbreaking details, I enjoyed knowing them better as individuals. I was eager to hear more if anyone else wanted to share.

Before I could ask, Jeonggukie got my attention. “Thank you for eating, Jiminie. I’m glad you finished everything I gave you. You did such a good job.”

I nodded and tried not to acknowledge the warmth that his praise gave me. I silently yelled at my omega for being susceptible to everything Jeonggukie says. Jin suggested we sit in the living room and get comfortable before we continue talking. We all agreed because the sofa and chairs in the living room are much more comfortable than staying in the dining room. We situated ourselves and, once again, I was left saddened by the seating arrangement. I could see Jeonggukie, but he was across the room from me. My omega demanded I be near him—insisted that I invade every fraction of personal space he has, in every way imaginable. If I tried to go to him now, it was likely the pack would try to stop me. Well, maybe not Yunie. My omega honestly questioned, for a brief moment, if I was strong enough to take down four alphas at once. I had to will him to shut up. Attacking my family is not a good idea.

“I can go next if that’s okay,” Seok said with a smile. “I was born in Gwangju. I don’t really know anything about my birth family. I was raised on the streets by an alpha who was a part-time busker and a part-time thief. During the day, I would perform with him to get money. At night, we would break into rich people’s homes and steal stuff. Hee Cheol, the alpha that raised me, was a really nice guy. That’s why he saved me when I was a baby. He said he found me in a dumpster and knew he had to keep me alive. We didn’t have much, but we always managed to make enough to eat and sometimes rent a hotel room when the rain or snow was too bad. We would always move districts every month or so to make sure we didn’t end up in jail. We eventually found our way to Seoul. One day, I saw an alpha kid with a ton of other kids around him. He was distracted, so I moved in to take his lunchbox. I was hungry and he had enough to feed all of them. I didn’t think much about stealing his lunch because I was raised to do it.

“It turns out that kid was Joon. The other kids were his younger siblings. When Joon caught me trying to steal his lunch, he didn’t get upset. He actually invited me to eat with them. After I was full, I thanked him and apologized. We became friends that day. Six months later, Hee Cheol and I got caught by the cops. He was put in jail and I was put into a foster home. I was 10 when I got my first bedroom. I ended up in the same school as Joon, although I was a couple of years behind him in classes. Hee Cheol had managed to teach me a lot of things, like how to read and write, but he couldn’t make up for a lack of formal education. After that first school year, I didn’t see Joon anymore, but he found me again a couple of years later. He came to visit me for a few weeks. We kept in touch after that and then he called me to move in with the pack two years later. I was matured, so my foster parents consented. They made me promise to stay in school, since I had finally caught up to the other kids my age. I still visit them sometimes, but they never felt like a family. Hee Cheol didn’t feel like family either. I didn’t know what that word meant until I moved in with these guys. They were even nice enough to let me have my own room because they said I had suffered
He laughed at my confused expression. “I keep forgetting you’ve never actually seen any of the bedrooms except for Guk’s. Yunie and Tae share a room because they feel more comfortable around each other. Jin and Joon share a room because they’re mated. Guk has to have his own space because his alpha would flip shit if another alpha’s scent was on his personal items, especially during his rut. That left me with my own room too. We all agreed to it when we moved in and it’s worked out really well for us so far.”

“What happens if Yunie or Tae brings someone home? Isn’t that awkward since they share a room?” I asked with a laugh.

“We tell each other ahead of time. It’s natural for people to have urges and we understand that,” Tae said nonchalantly.

Yunie continued where Tae left off. “We alert the pack whenever we’re bringing someone else in the house. They all have to agree to it, especially Guk. If he doesn’t like someone’s smell, there’s usually something wrong with them. Because his alpha is so strong, he’s basically all instinct and intuition. He’s a great judge of character. It’s almost like he can see what they’re really like just from their scent.”

Jeonggukie smiled before giving his opinion on the matter. “There hasn’t been a time when my alpha has been wrong about someone, but there have been a few times where I had to keep it quiet. Yun brought home an omega one time that I instantly hated. His smell drove me to the brink of murder. He smelled like pecans and disinfectant. Every time he came over, I had to leave the house. It turns out he was cheating on Yunie with half of the basketball team. But, I couldn’t say anything because Yunie was so happy with him.”

“His scent was actually pecans and boxwood, but boxwood kind of smells like cat pee—which smells like ammonia. I could get the whole disinfectant thing,” Joon said, laughing at the pack’s expressions.

“I honestly should have asked what Guk’s impression of him was. I know Guk wouldn’t offer his reactions to other people’s scent without one of us asking. He’s too nice to walk up to one of us and say ‘your friend smells like a dick.’” Yunie mused. “Speaking of, I want you guys to meet my girlfriend after Guk’s rut is over.”

Everyone’s heads whipped around to face Yunie. I could practically feel the pack yelling over each other through their link, asking a million questions that I couldn’t hear. Eventually, Yunie yelled for everyone to be quiet.

“She’s a 19-year-old nursing student. She’s very cute. Her personality is really different than mine, sort of like a combination of Seokie and Tae. Chae is very driven and goal-oriented. Nursing is her life and she plans on working at SNU Hospital in the Children’s Hospital. We met at the snack bar in the College of Engineering. I was taking a break from some of my homework and she was meeting up with some friends for a study group. Both of our drinks got done at the same time and I accidentally grabbed hers. We both realized they weren't the right ones when we tried them. I offered to buy her another drink and we ended up talking until her friends dragged her away.

“We exchanged numbers before she ran off. We’ve known each other for six months and have been dating for three. I didn’t want to introduce her to you guys until I was really sure I liked her and I wanted to keep her around. I think she might be my mate. She smells different than anyone I’ve ever smelled before, sweeter and more calming. I’ve never really liked the smell of plants or flowers. But,
suddenly, cotton and jasmine are my new favorite scents. I feel peaceful around her. It’s like I want to spend all of my time with her, but it’s never enough when I do. Yet, somehow, I know I’ll see her again, so I don’t worry too much about it. I can’t really explain it.”

I’ve never seen Yunie’s mouth contorted into such a large smile. Judging by the look on the alphas’ faces, they hadn’t either. It was obvious that he had some serious feelings for Chae Hyun. We were all stunned, but I could feel the overall happiness radiating from the other alphas. They all stood from their seats to swallow him up in a group hug. He tried to return the embrace but wasn’t able to. They were all piled on top of him.

“Guys, if I die because you all squished me, I can’t introduce you to Chae.” The pack immediately jumped off of him and returned to their chairs.

“Congratulations, Yunie!” I said brightly, wanting to celebrate with him while maintaining my distance. “I’m glad that you found your mate. I know that is an amazing thing. You’re lucky to have found her at such a young age. Have you guys talked about being each other’s mates yet?”

He shook his head. “I wanted to introduce her to the pack first. If there’s something off about her, I need to know before I tell her that I think she’s my mate. I trust the pack to tell me their honest opinions about Chae.”

“I’m sure they’ll love her.”

“You and Miranie are meeting her too, Min. You’re part of the family. I need to know everyone’s thoughts about her, not just the alphas. Even if you aren’t pack marked yet, you’re going to be part of the pack one day too. If she is my mate, we need to make sure you guys can be around each other. I’ve heard omegas can be sort of territorial over their family. I’d like to know now if there’s going to be an issue.”

Joon nodded and agreed. “At the end of the day, you and Miranie are the first omegas in our pack. We care deeply about your input, not just as Guk’s life mates, but as equal members.”

“Thank you.” I couldn’t manage to say more because my voice started breaking. They all wanted me to feel comfortable and welcome within their pack. They weren’t joking when they said that we were now family.

“Tae, hug Jiminnie.” Jeong Guk’s voice was strained. He didn’t like the idea of another alpha comforting me, but his blood family was the most reliable.

Tae came towards me, but I denied his touch. My omega wouldn’t let me do anything that would upset his alpha. No matter how I may be feeling, I couldn’t allow myself to hurt Jeonggukie’s feelings. I requested another of my alpha life mate’s pillows and one of his hoodies, hoping to comfort myself with his scent. After I wrapped myself in his clothes and curled myself around his pillow, his face changed. He had a peaceful smile fixed to his lips and his eyes held nothing short of adoration. A swift flash of something spread throughout my chest and quickly disappeared. I wasn’t sure what it was, but I liked it. It made me smile too.

“Anyone else grossed out by how cute Guk and Min are? Who would have thought that Guk would find his mate before half of us?” Seok said with a joking, but slightly bitter, tone.

“Why don’t you focus on finding and being happy with your own mate and leave me and mine alone?” Jeonggukie said in a tone that matched Seok’s exactly.

My omega immediately began purring at the claim the alpha placed on us. Whether I liked it or not,
my omega has recognized Jeonggukie as his alpha. It didn't matter if it was a simple slip of the
tongue or that Jeonggukie probably just forgot to say "life mate". I buried my face in the pillow and
tried to avoid the embarrassment I felt. I wasn’t used to purring and I was doing it in front of six
alphas—who undoubtedly knew I was purring because of their packmate’s words. I heard
Jeonggukie softly call my name. I looked up, trying to avoid the stares of the rest of the pack. His
eyes were like a sparkling mosaic. The crimson in them shone brightly, almost negating the beauty of
his normal dark brown gaze. If he’s supposed to be my alpha, I was glad to have such an attractive
mate. He smiled at me again and my breath hitched. I smiled back at him, causing him to scrunch his
nose. He gave me a small wave, trying to lessen the tension he knew I must be feeling. I tried to
wave back, but it was a small, sad gesture. It made him laugh. While that was only a simple moment
between us, it made my omega burst with happiness. I wasn’t sure where the future was going to
lead us, but I knew Jeonggukie would be there. For some reason, that realization made my omega
purr louder.

Chapter End Notes

So, I actually wrote this before I (and everyone else) freaked out about Ji Min purring. It
kind of works out though because there's more purring. Yay!

Any thoughts on the alphas' backstories? What do you think is going on with Ji Min?
Does anyone have any predictions on what will happen next? Let me know your
thoughts, questions, comments, or concerns! Thank you for reading!
What Do I Want?

In an effort to be considerate of my shame, Joon ignored my purring and began talking. “I guess my story is up next. I was born in Ilsan to an omega father and an omega mother. I was the eldest of eight pups. We were all a year apart. I really think my parents would have kept having pups if my mom hadn’t reached the age of infertility. At first, I loved my brothers and sisters. I was so happy when the first three of them were born. I always loved the idea of being an older brother—of being a kind, considerate alpha role model that helped mold my siblings into respectable wolves. By the time the sixth one was born, the novelty wore off. My parents worked a lot to be able to support us. We were a fairly well-off family, but money is always tight with 10 mouths to feed. I ended up becoming the caretaker for all of them. I was 9 years old when it dawned on me that I had seven pups. I was expected to be the perfect alpha son, to take care of the others, to provide support and assistance to them and my parents—all without complaining or taking a break. I broke down and ran away when I turned 11. I couldn’t handle it anymore.

“I knew I needed to take care of my family and I’m sure my parents were worried, but I had to stay true to myself and keep my sanity. I needed to be a kid. I snuck into a train’s bag storage and ended up in Seoul. I met Jinie and Guk at the train station. The Kims, Jinie’s parents, took me in when they found out that I didn’t have anywhere to stay. They were philanthropists who had more money than they knew what to do with and they had already adopted Guk. Taking in another homeless kid didn’t affect them much. I instantly knew Jinie was my fated. I always considered myself lucky for that. Most people who are fated have to go through some sort of trauma or problems with their fated before they realize that person is theirs. We hid the fact that we were fated. It was hard, but we didn’t want to upset the Kims. They were very worried about their public image. They always thought having a son in an alpha-alpha relationship would make their stocks drop somehow or make their companies worth less money. Jinie and I mated as soon as I turned 15 because we didn’t see the point in waiting. When you finally recognize your fated, you know that you’re not going to find a more viable mate. There is absolutely no reason to not mate your fated the moment you acknowledge the bond, as long as you’re both mature. Mate bonds can’t form unless both wolves are mature, so we had to hold off until I was 15. It was hard waiting four years to become mates, but it meant that we had plenty of time to get used to each other and grow together.

“We couldn’t hide the mating for long. After they found out, we got kicked out of the Kims’ house. Luckily, Jinie’s grandparents took us in. His grandparents are wonderful people. They’re just as wealthy as the Kims but way more open-minded. They were fated, so they fully understood my relationship with Jinie. They were both actually mated before they met. His grandfather’s husband died and his grandmother left her mate when she recognized his grandfather. It’s not an option to be with your fated. It’s a compulsion, a necessity. Jinie and I would have ended up mated at some point in our lives, whether we did it the day we met or 50 years later. The bond will keep pulling you together until you eventually give in. A fate bond doesn’t care if you’re an alpha or an omega and Jinie’s grandparents knew that. That’s why they bought us this house where we could start our pack.
They’re very supportive of us. They want all of us to make it through school and begin our lives with every opportunity. That’s actually why none of us work. Jinie’s grandparents pay for all of our school and living expenses. They even helped Jinie and Yunie get into Seoul National University. Jinie’s grandfather was the president of the college years ago. Don’t get me wrong, they still had to qualify to get in. It was just easier for them than it was for an average person. We’ll all go to SNU as long as we keep our grades up. It’s a matter of family pride at this point.” He laughed.

“Jiminie actually wants to teach omega studies at a SKY university. Going to SNU would basically guarantee that,” Jeonggukie said.

“Attending any of the SKY universities is my dream, but I probably wouldn’t get in. I have some of the best grades in our class, but I don’t think it’s enough. Plus, I was held back a year because of my Alphabet Syndrome. They would never consider me a good candidate.”

Jeonggukie laughed and I gave him a confused look. “You’ll get in because you’re part of the pack now. Joon basically just said it’s a pack requirement that we all go to SNU. We will do whatever we have to do to make sure you go. We can’t have our very first omega breaking tradition. You’re very gifted, Jiminie. I know you can get into whichever university you want. Plus, your condition can be used to your advantage. Not only does RHDS make you a candidate for diversity placement, but they would be stupid to turn you away. Whichever school gets to house the famous Park Ji Min will undoubtedly get bragging rights—especially if you allow them to monitor you and possibly run tests during your stay there. If you keep your grades up, you’re basically looking at a full scholarship and possibly a stipend for however long you stay. You’ll probably have to double major, like me, so you’ll be there for a bit.”

A stupid-looking grin came across my lips at his words. My omega reminded me that our alpha is very intelligent and pride swelled within me. For the first time, I started to feel a strong sense of belonging to a group. I peered around the room and realized that they all believed in me. I am practically a member of their pack. I can’t believe Alphabet actually found a pack. I was so overtaken by emotion and the possibilities that my brain shut down for a moment. I felt a lot of the pieces of my life rearrange in that time, organizing themselves into a path that my new family has set for me. It was a path that allowed me to attain all of the goals I have made for myself. I could see all of us being SNU graduates, having good jobs, and setting forth to change the world. It made me think of the wonderful aspirations of both of my life mates—which led me to consider Mi Mi’s place in all of this. I’m supposedly Jeonggukie’s mate. Of course, they’re going to extend their hospitality to their packmate’s mate. How does Mi Mi’s wellbeing factor into this vision of the future?

“What about Mi Mi?” My voice was quieter than I anticipated.

“She’s family too,” Jin said with a giggle. “I don’t think you’re understanding our concept of family or pack. Everyone’s mates will be pack, including your life mate and her mate. Your tuition will be covered, as will Miranie’s. Hell, if Miranie finds her mate before you guys go to college, she’s welcome to come to SNU with the rest of us. I’m sure I could convince my grandparents to pay for her too. Even if they wouldn’t pay for her mate’s schooling, it would still be discounted. My grandparents cherish bonds above all else. Mate bonds, pack bonds, fate bonds, that’s what is important—family, the people you love. Nothing else matters in life. Keeping those who are important to you happy and healthy is the top priority. That’s why we spend so much time together and why we always care for each other.”

I could feel the sweetness blossom in my scent as he spoke. Meeting the pack was truly a dream come true. A rapid tapping on the floor made me look up to see Jeonggukie staring at me and bouncing his leg frantically. His eyes were mostly scarlet. I could see his nails dug into the sofa in an attempt to restrain himself. Upon smelling the thick, alluring smell of his arousal, my omega tempted
me to quickly cross the room and offer myself to the alpha. I started to move forward, but something held me back. I felt the resistance take over me and freeze me in place. Heat rushed through me and Jeonggukie growled. I responded with a growl of my own, causing the pack to jump to their feet and stand between us. My alpha life mate got up and left the room. Everyone but Joon followed him.

“You all right, Min?” He asked in a soft tone.

“I’m fine, just confused. I don’t know why he growled at me.”

“Your eyes flashed red and he took it as a threat. That’s why we got between you. We didn’t want either of you to start a fight.”

“H-how? My eyes have never been red before.” I was genuinely confused and a little scared. My eyes have always been honey and brown. I didn’t even know they were capable of being red.

“Why don’t you tell me what happened right before Guk growled at you. What were you thinking and feeling? We smelled both of your scents change. Tell me everything about it.”

“I started thinking about how wonderful you all are and how lucky I was to find you. It made me happy, so my smell got sweeter. I looked at Jeonggukie and he was really tense and his eyes were glowing a little. I think the change in my aroma made him horny. My omega tried to convince me to let him claim me. I almost got up, but something stopped me. My body got really hot for a second and then Jeonggukie growled at me.”

Joon listened intently and nodded as I spoke. I could tell he was trying piece together the scenario and analyze what could have happened. He asked the one question I figured he had wanted to ask for a while now. “Why would you stop yourself from being with Guk? He’s your mate.”

“I’m not sure that’s true. I don’t really feel any sexual urges or anything towards him. It was just something my omega wanted me to do. It’s hard to explain. I just found my omega today. He’s never spoken to me before. My alpha, on the other hand, is always there in my mind. Though, I haven’t seen him since my omega came out. I am not convinced that Jeonggukie and I are mates, neither is my alpha. It’s my omega that’s the problem. I feel attached to Jeonggukie, but that’s as far as it goes. I’m assuming if my eyes flashed red that my alpha took over for a moment and stopped me from approaching Jeonggukie.”

“Have you entertained the idea of being with Guk, sexually or in a relationship?” I could tell he was trying to get me to consider choosing his packmate as my mate.

I thought for a while. I wanted to collect all of my thoughts before I tried to respond. “Not really. Today, I was horny for the first time ever and that was Jeonggukie’s fault. But, I haven’t actually thought about letting him claim me. Like I said, it’s just something my omega suggests. As far as a relationship is concerned, I don’t really know what that means. I’ve never had a romantic attachment to someone before. I’ve never had the urge to hold someone’s hand or spend all of my time with them or do anything to make them happy. At least, not in the way that you and Jin or Yunie and Chae Hyun do. I wouldn’t know where to begin with any of that. As of now, I’m not in love with Jeonggukie and I don’t want to have sex with him.”

“Sometimes, relationships don’t have to be a conscious thing. Love isn’t typically a choice or a calculated move. I know for a fact that you can fall in love with someone without even realizing it. I did with Jinie. Just because you’re fated with someone, doesn’t mean you instantly love them. Fated only means that you’re destined to be with them forever. It’s up to the mates to develop the love themselves. That’s the case with all relationships. Whether you’re mates, fated, or just dating, you’re the ones responsible for furthering whatever attraction or feelings you have. The reason I’m saying
all of this is that I want you to seriously think about what’s going on between you and Guk. I’m not only bringing it up because I want you two to be mates. Guk is a very special person to all of us. He is the most genuine, caring, selfless person I’ve ever met. He doesn’t let many people into his inner circle, but he gives every bit of himself to those who are lucky enough to get there. I’ve never seen him attach himself to someone as quickly as he has to you. It took him longer to warm up to me, Seok, and Yunie than it did you. If you need proof, he lets you sleep in his bed. None of us have ever done that. Whenever he needs comfort like that, he approaches us. We’re barely even allowed in his room.

“Even though he hasn’t really told us about his feelings for you, we all know they’re genuine. We don’t want to be pushy or bother you guys too much about whatever form your relationship decides to take. I know love can take time to develop, but this is really difficult to watch from a family perspective. I know you can’t help that you’re aromantic and asexual. However, it really hurts to feel how lonely he is without you and to see himself holding back from you. We can all feel it over the pack bond, no matter how much he tries to control it. As I mentioned, I have no idea what he feels about you. I can guess, but he hasn’t told any of us anything about it. What I do know is that he’s attached to you. I don’t know if it’s just him or his wolf too. For the sake of our family, I need you consider your feelings and his very carefully. You’ll always be family, no matter what you decide, but it would be nice to know if you could be his mate one day. If not, I’d like for him to figure that out now. He’s still young enough to have time to look for another omega that could handle his HADD. That’s been one of our main concerns ever since he matured. We know that Yun, Seok, and Tae will find their mates or fated—there is no doubt of that. We’re more concerned with Guk finding a mate.

“We won’t be able to handle one of our own being alone forever. He has you and Miranie as life mates, but you know that’s different. Even with you two, he won’t be happy if the rest of us have actual mates and he doesn’t. I’m sorry to drop all of this on you, but I felt you needed to understand why we act the way we do. The way we approach it is always in a joking manner, but we mean it seriously. What we are really saying when we ask ‘have you two have had sex yet?’ is ‘have you two figured out if you’re mates yet?’ The whole pack feels the way Jinie said before. Family is everything. If someone in our family is unhappy, then the whole family is unhappy. We know you bring him happiness, which is why we started to accept you as one of our own. We have all been hoping that you would be his mate. If you aren’t his mate, then we need to find the one who is. It’s just that simple.”

My mouth hung open as I was unable to form a response to Joon’s words. I hadn’t ever stopped to consider how Jeonggukie or the pack felt about the possibility that I’m Jeonggukie’s mate. I always assumed their insistence on the topic was from their own desires to see us together, not from a protective or tactical stance. It made sense that they would want me to understand my own feelings. It was something I hadn’t tried to do. I always figured my feelings would present themselves to me one day—that I would just wake up and feel submissive, aroused, or in love. I’ve never been one to ponder too deeply about how I feel and what is going on within myself. Sure, I ask a lot of questions, but I don’t often commit much effort to finding the answers. Most of the time, the answers come to me. If they don’t, I don’t usually bother any further. Maybe it was time that I actually thought about what I really wanted and what would be the most beneficial to Jeonggukie.

At length, I responded. “I’ll be honest with you, I’m not entirely sure what to say. I understand all of your concerns. They are completely valid points. I wouldn’t want to hurt Jeonggukie in any way. He means a lot to me, even though I don’t have anything to say past that. I’m sorry to admit that I don’t know what ‘a lot’ translates to. It could mean he’s my best friend, he’s my life mate, or he’s the love of my life. I don’t have the emotional capacity to tell the difference. However, I know that isn’t an acceptable answer. It’s not just my future I’m contemplating. I know my decision affects Jeonggukie as well. If I’m not his mate, we need to focus on finding his mate.”
I paused for a moment because the words were difficult to force out of my mouth—my omega hating every syllable of that last sentence. “I plan to be part of finding him a mate, whether it’s me or someone else. I will do whatever I can to make sure he is happy. That is part of my charge as his life mate. I am just as dedicated to his happiness as I am Mi Mi’s, but I admit I’ve been a little selfish with Jeonggukie—or maybe foolish. I’m not sure which. My current inability to feel sexual and romantic connections has blinded me to the possibility that I could develop them. I promise that I will consider all of my feelings, as well as Jeonggukie’s, to analyze the situation. I do not want to be the cause of his pain, nor do I want to keep him from finding the one he’s supposed to be with.”

Again, my omega despised the string of words that came from me. He told me that the alpha in question is undoubtedly my mate and nothing else should be considered. It was hard for me to determine if this confidence came from my heat hormones or my actual feelings. I started to feel like a terrible person as I kept thinking about the situation. How could I be so heartless? I haven’t considered Jeonggukie’s feelings in any of this. He’s immediately adopted me as his omega, in whatever capacity I’ve allowed, and I haven’t shown him any real care. I haven’t treated him like he’s as important to me as he really is. I decided to stuff those feelings down to continue the conversation. I’d have to face them eventually but now was not the best time.

“I speak for the whole pack when I say ‘thank you for considering being Guk’s mate.’ You’re the most physically fit to be his mate, but he also likes being around you. It’s one thing to be compatible with your mate, it’s another to actually care about them. You’re both for him. I don’t know if he’s in love with you, if he sees you as a brother, or he views you as just a friend, but I know he has strong feelings for you. He’s the most powerful out of all of us, but he’s still so young. He’s just barely not a pup anymore. It doesn’t matter how tall and muscular he is or how strong his alpha makes him, he’s still our pack baby. Our instincts will always be to protect him.”

I nodded, fully understanding where he was coming from. “I definitely get it, Joon. I don’t want to cause any problems for him or for any of you. I appreciate you talking to me about all of this. I know that falls on you as pack alpha, which has to suck. These aren’t easy things to talk about.” I chuckled to try lessening the tension. He humored me and smiled.

“It isn’t always easy being in charge, but my ability to have these conversations in a calm, rational way is the reason they wanted me to be the leader. I’m a good mediator. Plus, they saw how eager I was to prove myself to my new family after I abandoned my birth family. I’ll be honest with you, the guilt from that haunted me for years. Even though I knew I had to get away from them, I felt like I was a disappointment. I felt like a terrible son, a horrible brother, and a failure of an alpha. Jinie and Guk helped me overcome that pain. It’s part of the reason I’m so dedicated to these guys. I wouldn’t be the person I am today without them. From their love, I’ve learned how to accept myself. They’re my everything.”

“Thanks for talking to me, Joon. I promise I’ll do my best to figure everything out. It might take me a while, but I’m going to get it done.” I wasn’t sure how to approach or sort my feelings, but I knew it was needed. If I have to, I’ll fumble through it until I work it out. I’m Alphabet. There isn’t anything I can’t do.

“If you need help, we’ll be here. Tae is good with emotions and he’s a great listener if that helps. He’s not very impartial though. If you want impartial and logical input, Yunie and I are your best bets. Jinie is spectacular at coming up with opposing sides to your argument and Seok is amazing at making people feel better, even when they’re incredibly sad. Guk is also a wonderful person to talk to, but I understand if you don’t want to sort this out with him. I think that might be too much for both of you right now.”

I tried to absorb all of the information from the past several minutes. I thought about each of the
alphas and their different talking styles. It made me think of the various conversations we’ve had during movie nights and over meals. In turn, that reminded me of Jeonggukie’s strange behavior at the table earlier. Maybe Joon has an explanation.

“I’ll probably end up talking to at least some of you about it. I’ll need as much help in understanding my feelings as possible. I’m actually pretty bad with feelings if you guys couldn’t tell. Jeonggukie has made me feel like four things I’ve never felt and I don’t have a name for. It kind of freaks me out to be honest. Speaking of things that freak me out, what was with Jeonggukie giving me food and you guys waiting for me to eat?”

“I figured you’d ask about that. It’s kind of hard to explain. Do you remember how we said that Guk’s alpha is all instinct and intuition? It’s more than that. He’s very primal. Everything about his alpha is so in touch with his animalistic roots that he’s almost feral. His alpha is basically the wolf equivalent of a caveman. That’s why Guk had to feed you. You’re an omega in heat. From an evolutionary standpoint, that means you’re either about to start breeding or you’ve just been bred. Either way, his alpha had to care for you—his wolf doesn’t process the fact that you’re male and you can’t get pregnant. Also, if his alpha really views you as his mate, then he’s even more responsible for making sure you are fed. Alphas feel like it is their job to keep their mates and pack happy and healthy. You’re potentially both of those. As far as us waiting for you to eat, that was a courtesy thing for Guk. His alpha was worried that you would want more food, but there wouldn’t be enough. He wanted to wait for you to finish eating before we ate, but we convinced him to eat after you started. We had to remind him that there’s plenty of food and you won’t starve.”

I did my best to stop my omega from reacting to the thought of Jeonggukie feeling like he has to provide for me. It did weird things to me that I can’t quite understand. Maybe I didn’t want to understand them. I started to talk out loud, to sort my thoughts and to inform Joon of my thought process. “I think I need to wait until my heat is over to start figuring this all out. My omega is the most unhelpful thing in the world right now. He’s just telling me to go get my alpha, go check on my alpha, go be with my alpha. It’s basically just alpha, alpha, alpha—over and over again. That type of inner monologue isn’t going to help me figure out what I really want. It’s not just my omega in here. I have to come to a conclusion that my alpha, my omega, and I can live with. I’ll probably be able to think clearer once my heat is over.”

“Take your time, Min. We won’t rush you anymore. I’ll let the pack know they need to calm down with bothering the two of you. As long as you’re actively working towards a solution, we will be happy with waiting. I suggest you talk to Guk about it at some point after you’re out of your mating cycles. See what he wants. Maybe he isn’t ready to be your mate or he doesn’t see you as a potential mate. I don’t think that’s the case, but it might be. Only you guys can determine what’s best for you. I don’t want you to feel pressured to accept him as your alpha. That’s not what this conversation is about. What I’m trying to stress is the figuring it out part. If you’re not his mate, we won’t think any less of you. You’re still our packmate and our family member. We just need to know so we can plan accordingly.”

I nodded, for seemingly the hundredth time in the last 30 minutes, and thanked him again for talking with me. I needed this wake-up call. I’ve been using my own ignorance to hurt one of the most important people in my life. If I’m not Jeonggukie’s mate, then he’s already wasted three months of his time on me. I tried not to focus too much on how painful it felt to think that all of the time we’ve spent getting to know each other could have simply been a waste of Jeonggukie’s time—that he might still find a mate somewhere else. An image of a cute little omega boy curled up to Jeonggukie flashed in front of my eyes. They held hands, shared sweet kisses, and looked so happily in love. Of course, his mate would have to be a male omega. They’re naturally stronger than female omegas. A strong male omega might be able to handle Jeonggukie’s alpha. My scent became peppered with anxiety and sadness before I could control it. I wasn’t even sure what I was feeling, but I hated it. It
felt like emptiness—a gut-wrenching nothing that took over my body. My breathing became fast and erratic, making me dizzy. I couldn’t seem to stop myself from panicking. I didn’t hear a door slam open and very heavy footsteps enter the living room. I smelled anger coming from Jeonggukie before I physically saw him. When our eyes met, he was more alpha than human. His face softened when he saw me—safe and perfectly fine.

I couldn’t stop myself from running into his arms and attacking him with a hug. I didn’t care if things went too far or if he lost control. At that moment, my omega needed him—needed to eliminate the thoughts of him belonging to another wolf. Jeonggukie quickly wrapped his arms around my waist and pulled me into a tight hold. As soon as my head hit his shoulder, I was calm again. He didn’t seem to need an explanation for my sudden grief, content to hold me close. I was thankful. I refused to repeat the words that my omega was begging me to say. “Please don’t leave me”, “I can’t bear to see you with someone else”, and “you’re my alpha, no one else’s” danced on my tongue. I bit the phrases back with such force that I wondered if my lips would bleed. I can’t allow my omega to make that decision for me. Equally, I guess I can’t deny those feelings either. My omega is just as much a part of me as my alpha, even if he’s been in hibernation for 18 years.

After several calming minutes of being tightly pressed against my alpha life mate, Jeonggukie placed his cheek against my head and quietly spoke to me. “As much as I would love to keep holding you, Jiminie, I need to let you go. My alpha is liking our proximity a little too much.” His grip on my waist temporarily got tighter so that I could feel his bulge against my hip.

“Sorry,” I whispered. “I had some really bad thoughts and feelings and I started freaking out. Thank you for coming. I needed you. I’m sorry if I upset you.” I reluctantly pulled away from him, my omega crying out in pain and desperation.

“I’ll always come when you need me. I was really worried about you. Even though I know he wouldn’t do anything, I thought Joon was hurting you. It’s the only thing I could think of that would make your scent that strong. I’m not gonna lie, I might have killed him if he was.”

“You know I would never hurt your life mate, Guk. He and I were talking and then he started panicking. I don’t know what happened. I was going to try to talk him down, but you stormed out of your room so quickly that I couldn’t.” I made notice of the way Joon said “life mate” instead of omega or mate. It made me happy that he really was going to give me time to figure everything out.

“I’m fully aware you’d never hurt him. My alpha doesn’t care,” Jeonggukie said with a matter-of-fact tone and pursed lips. “He’s a real pain in the ass sometimes.”

I heard others laugh and turned around to see the whole pack surrounding Joon. I guess they came out of their rooms when they realized Jeonggukie was mad. Moving to see them made me realize how close I still was to my alpha life mate. The proximity felt nice, especially after denying my omega for the whole day. I wanted to lay on top of him and never move again. My omega wanted to climb on top of him and do worse. So, being the strong hybrid wreck I am, I walked away and sat back down in my chair. It wasn’t the time to give in to my urges. It wasn’t the time to test things or try to figure them out. I have to wait. This decision is much too important to make the wrong choice. I’m determining my, Jeonggukie’s, and the rest of the pack’s fate. I can’t fuck up.

The rest of the day melted into the pack’s attempts at keeping me and Jeonggukie entertained. We had a video game tournament, played board games, and talked about our goals for the future. Jin is studying business administration because he will be succeeding his grandfather as the owner of two of his companies. A fact, Jin assures me, that his parents will hate. Yunie is studying engineering with a concentration in urban planning and design. He wants to redesign existing neighborhoods and build new ones throughout Korea. Seok will be studying to become a veterinarian. He realized this
was his calling when he came across a sick kitten and nursed it back to health at the age of 14. Joon wants to get a degree in Ethics Education so he can help mold future generations of wolves, especially alphas, to become better people. He contemplated getting a philosophy degree but found that ethics called to him a little more. Tae wants to get a pharmacy degree, but he isn’t sure if he wants to study to become a pharmacist or a manufacturer. He said he would let us know as soon as he figured it out. It was nice to discuss these kinds of things with others. Only my mom and Mi Mi have really ever talked about goals with me.

“I’m going to double major in psychology and medicine. I have to get a Ph.D. in Psychology and at least a four-year degree in Medicine. It’s the only way to become a therapist and become knowledgeable enough about genetic disorders to specialize in them. I haven’t figured out if I’m going full medical doctor or not—probably not. I want to graduate while I’m still young enough to actually work. I also plan on minoring in Social Welfare so that I can fully understand the stigmas surrounding illness, gender, and rank. I’m going to be in school for a very long time.” I was amazed at Jeonggukie’s plan. I knew he wanted to double major, but both of those were incredibly difficult and stressful majors. The minor seemed like overkill.

“Wow, Jeonggukie! That’s impressive. I know you can do it. I’ll help however I can.” I couldn’t think of much to say to the news, still trying to process how surprising it was.

“You’ll be busy enough yourself. You’ll need at least a four-year degree in Education and a Ph.D. in Omega Studies in order to be able to teach at a SKY university. You’ll also probably want at least a minor in Social Welfare so that you can properly address the issue of omega oppression in the alpha-centric curricula. It will be a lot, but I know you can do it! I’ll be with you every step of the way.”

“By the time we graduate, the rest of the pack is going to have jobs, be mated, and have school-aged pups.”

Jeonggukie laughed at my comment and nodded. “I’ll probably be out by the time I’m 50. That gives me at least 15 years to be a therapist before I start going senile. As you can tell, I’ve thought it all out.”

I couldn’t help giggling at his exaggeration. He was right that we would both be in school for a very long time. Doctoral degrees usually take at least 8 years to finish, even longer if Jeonggukie is going to become a medical doctor. It was strange to think of the rest of my life falling into place in the span of a day. I’m only a second-year high school student. While I realize that I’ve been preparing to go to college since middle school, the reality is that I don’t graduate until next year. I’m fully aware that I haven’t dedicated the expected amount of time to finding a college and trying to meet its standards. I’ve been too preoccupied with being Alphabet and a good life mate. The possibility of me never achieving my career goals was always high because I know that my goals are incredibly lofty. It meant more to me than I could say that the pack believed in me and gave me the opportunity to do what I’ve always dreamed.

We continued talking for the remainder of the night. One by one, the pack members retired to their rooms, ready to sleep. I moved to the couch and prepared my spot. Jeonggukie disappeared into his room, returning a few minutes later. He brought me a baggy shirt, the clothes he had been wearing all day, and a pillow that he scented.

“I can’t sleep with you, but I can give you as much of my scent as possible. If you don’t mind, I’d like your clothes. My alpha doesn’t like the idea of being away from you.” He scratched the back of his neck shyly as if he were embarrassed to admit that he would miss me.

I quickly changed my clothes and offered them to Jeonggukie. He sat down next to the sofa and watched me get situated. “I can’t really touch you, but I wanted to at least sit with you for a few
minutes. Your omega will probably lose his shit when I leave, so I want to make you comfortable for a little bit.”

“I doubt I’ll sleep tonight. That might be for the best, though. It will give me time to sort some things out.”

“Stuff you and Joon were talking about?” I could tell he was curious about the conversation, but he was too nice to ask.

“Yeah. He was trying to help me figure out some stuff about myself that I’ve been ignoring. He wants me to understand my emotions and what they mean. He wants me to figure out if you’re my mate. Not being able to sleep tonight will give me some time to talk with myself and try to understand what’s going on. I’m probably going to have to wait until after my heat to figure everything out. My omega is annoying.” I didn’t see much of a point in hiding anything from Jeonggukie. He might be able to offer me some insight into the situation.

Jeonggukie’s face had a strange look on it as I talked, but he refused to address the topic I was discussing. “I’m glad you finally met your omega. What’s he like?”

“He’s very whiny and needy. I don’t like that at all. He’s also quite clingy and he really likes you. He’s been trying to tell me to hang all over you the whole day. I keep telling him no, but he doesn’t want to listen. He’s been complaining ever since you sat next to me because we’re not in your lap yet.”

I couldn’t help smiling when Jeonggukie chuckled at my words. “Tell him it’s a bad idea right now. My alpha might take advantage of him and I don’t want that. My wolf gets horny when he smells you in heat, but that doesn’t mean I’m going to let him hurt you. Technically, I get turned on too, but that’s not the point. The difficult part is that it’s only you. I smell other omegas in heat and I have zero reaction. I’m more affected by alphas in their ruts. It’s because their aggressiveness makes me aggressive, but the point still stands. You need time to sort everything out with yourself and your wolves. All three of you need to talk and figure out what is best for you. I’ll be here if you need me, but it would be best to do this without me. I don’t want you thinking about me when you make this decision. I’ve got my own stuff to work on anyway. I know the pack will help you with whatever you need too,” he sighed before continuing to speak. “I really want to keep talking with you, but my alpha is telling me that this conversation would be a lot better if we were naked. I’m taking that as my cue to leave.”

I was torn between my urge to laugh at how Jeonggukie managed to keep a straight face when he said that and my omega’s desire to oblige the alpha. That confusion resulted in my hands being wrapped around the hem of my shirt and me giggling. I didn’t move to take my shirt off, much to my wolf’s dismay. I just sat there and stared at Jeonggukie for a few moments. He smiled at me briefly, then his eyes flickered red. I could tell he noticed the change.

“Now, I must leave you. Good night, little omega. If you need anything, please come get me. Just weigh the importance of it first. I don’t want your omega waking you up at 2 am for cuddles and my alpha deciding that we’d rather do something else. I’d never forgive myself if I did anything to hurt you.”

“I appreciate that. I’ll come get you if I need anything important. Other than that, I’ll probably just stay here and yell at my omega for being a little bitch.” I laughed.

“Don’t say that. I’m sure he’s great. He’s just another part of you, Jiminie. I think all of you is wonderful, so your omega must be too.” His eyes held so much sincerity in them that I had to smile. I began purring again, despite my best efforts to keep it in.
"You have got to stop purring, little omega. I can’t take it," Jeonggukie said with an exasperated tone. "You don’t understand what that does to my alpha. Omegas only purr when they’re being taken care of and when they’re happy. You’re basically telling alpha that he’s doing a good job. It just makes him want to take care of you in other ways too. I’m seriously not going to repeat that. Just know your purring is a problem right now."

“What did he want you to say?” My curiosity got the better of me, even though I was pretty sure I didn’t actually want to know what Jeonggukie’s alpha was thinking.

“I’m not saying it verbatim because that is just too much. The general idea was that he’s pretty sure he can get you to purr by doing various things to various parts of you.” He looked away from me as he spoke, seemingly too embarrassed to look me in the eye.

“My omega had a response for you, but there is no way in hell I’m going to repeat any of that. Just know, he was not opposed to the idea. Do you know how conflicting it is for my omega to be sexually interested in your alpha but I’m still not aroused at all? I feel like that shouldn’t be possible. I think this is why the doctor said I’m asexual. My wolves fighting won’t let me be horny. My alpha still hates the idea of being with you—I can still feel him fighting even though I can’t hear him—but my omega is quite interested in testing your purring theory. Meanwhile, I’m just sitting here like ‘what the hell is going on inside of my body?’ I’ve only been horny once in my entire life. That was this morning. I didn’t even know what was going on when it happened. I seriously don’t know what to do with any of this information and it’s driving me crazy.”

“That’s exactly why you need to talk it out. Wait until your heat is done and have a very long conversation with yourself. All of you. Not just your alpha. I know he’s the one that’s usually the most vocal, but your omega deserves a say too. You deserve even more say than either one of them. It’s your future, your body, your heart. At the end of the day, what Ji Min wants is incredibly important. In my opinion, the most important.”

“Thank you,” I whispered, trying not to tear up. “You’re the best life mate, friend, alpha, potential mate, person I’ve ever met. You finding me was a blessing, Jeonggukie. No matter what happens between us, I’m going to be here for you. If you’re my mate, I’ll be here. If you’re my packmate, I’ll be here. If you’re just my friend, I’ll be here. Thank you for being here for me too.”

I wrapped my arms around him and quickly peeled myself off of him. If I stayed for too long, I knew my omega wouldn’t let him go. If I stayed for too long, I knew my omega wouldn’t let him go. “Good night, for real this time. If I don’t go back to my room right now, I’m probably going to start touching you. I hope you sleep well, Jiminie.”

“Good night, Jeonggukie. I hope you sleep well. If you need anything, let me know.”

He got up from the floor and waved to me. I watched him slowly disappear into the hallway, my omega whimpering as he left. That night, I tossed and turned without getting much rest. I couldn’t handle the absence of Jeonggukie. I was too used to him being around. I was always with him if I was anywhere near the pack. Some time around 4 am, I realized it wasn’t just my omega that misses him. I actually wanted to be near him too. Being without Jeonggukie was a special form of torture that I never would have guessed could be distressing. Perhaps, my omega was making it worse, but I actually was affected by the lack of his presence. I could still faintly smell him, making the distance even worse. I curled up to his clothes and buried my face in them. Only months ago, I hated him. Only months ago, I hated him. Only months ago, I couldn’t stand to be near him. Only months ago, I was desperately trying to convince my alpha not to rip his throat out. Now, I’m clinging to a pair of pants and a shirt that don’t smell nearly enough like him.

I thought back to last month’s rut and how much Jeonggukie’s scent bothered me. A lot of this confusion is definitely because of my wolves. If I want to kill him in my rut and can’t get enough of
him in my heat, then those feelings balance out. It’s really up to me to figure it out. My wolves aren’t
going to be able to help me with this decision because they will never agree. Shit. I was really hoping
one of them would overpower the other and I’d just go along with whatever the winner said. Now, I
actually have to figure out what I want. Do I want Jeonggukie to be my mate? Do I even want a
mate? I may actually like being around my alpha life mate, but how do I feel about him? Is that
enjoyment of his company enough for me to spend the rest of my life connected to him? Is it enough
to love him and have a sexual relationship with him? I thought more and more until I was on the
border of going mad. I finally fell asleep asking myself the only question that seemed to matter at the
moment—what do I want?

Chapter End Notes

What do you all think about this chapter? Does this explain a little more of what's going
on with Ji Min? Thank you for reading!

I wanted to let you all know that I plan on spacing out the updates more. It has been
difficult keeping up with this story, my jobs, and my AU. I want to make sure I'm not
rushing anything and creating subpar work. After this update, I'm going to change to
updating once a week, maybe twice if I've got enough time. I'm sorry if this is
disappointing or upsetting to any of you, but doing everything was starting to get to me.
I hope you all understand! Thank you for your patience and for liking this story as much
as I do.
Fighting, Talking, and Feeling

Chapter Notes

There is quite a bit of text messaging in this chapter. I changed the formatting from the last time so that it's easier to read on mobile. It's a bit harder to read on the computer, but I feel like it's a pretty good compromise. Please let me know if it's okay.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

I spent the rest of my heat torturing myself by being near Jeonggukie. I couldn’t help the strong desire to be around him. I couldn’t stand the sensation of being so close without feeling connected to him. However, it hurt much more to remove myself from his vicinity. Mi Mi was able to come over the second day and cuddle me, but it didn’t help much. We were all talking in the living room—Mi Mi was in my lap and I was staring intently at Jeonggukie, who was staring back at me with equal fervor—when I realized that Mi Mi was little more than a warm body at this point. My omega didn’t want her. It was the first time I can ever recall my omega life mate not being able to help me. I wasn’t sure how I felt about that or what to do about it. Mi Mi has always been there for me, has always been able to comfort me. My omega didn’t hate her. He just wasn’t appeased by her the way my alpha and I typically are. Mi Mi isn’t my omega’s mate, Jeonggukie is. Why does this have to be so complicated?

By the third day, Jeonggukie and I were both restless. Being stuck in the house with each other for two days, without being able to be too close, was driving us crazy. The alphas decided that we would all go out to the park for a picnic. I was grateful that the pack chose to use their cycle days during our mating cycle so they could keep us apart. Because of the unbearable nature of rut and heat, all schools and employers were required to permit three mating cycle absences each month. No one ever kept up with them at our school. I could take three days off for my cycle now and then take another day or two in two weeks. As long as it wasn’t excessive and you never had more than five days in any month, no one really cared. I never took cycle days, but this time I decided it was for the best. Neither my rut nor my heat had ever been bad enough for me to need to separate myself from the public. The emergence of my omega was changing that. I couldn’t imagine being in school while my omega was crying out for his alpha.

When we arrived at the park, we immediately picked a shady spot to set up in. Tae insisted that we play all sorts of games after we were settled. Other people didn’t play with me when I was younger, so it was slightly embarrassing when they had to explain the rules of some basic games. Despite that, it was so much fun doing things that I didn’t have a chance to do when I was a pup. By far, my favorite activity involved Mi Mi and I painting our faces in war paint and battling Tae and Seok’s rival pack. It was just a silly pup’s game that Tae suggested, but I haven’t had that much fun in a long time. By the end of the game, Mi Mi and Tae ended up getting captured as prisoners of war. Jeonggukie sat and watched us, knowing that his participation in either side would be an unfair advantage.

I could hear Mi Mi and Tae cheering as Seok and I cornered each other. We clashed in a friendly wrestling bout that was vastly different than the battles I normally have with alphas. He was a strong opponent. It was actually pretty nice to have a challenge since most alphas never put up much of a struggle. Somewhere in the middle of the match, the atmosphere changed. I don’t know whose alpha took it as a real fight first, but we both noticed the spark in aggression. I was surprised to hear from
my alpha while I was in my heat, but it was a welcome dose of normalcy among the madness of the last couple of days. Seok threw a punch at me and I dodged it. I threw one as well, connecting with his jaw. He growled and lunged at me.

I let him push me onto the ground so I could gauge how strong he really was. Whenever alphas think they have the upper hand, they usually show their strength. I was pleased with the punches he delivered to my chest and stomach. He really was stronger than the other alphas I’m used to fighting. I smiled as I wrapped my legs around him and moved to get some leverage. Goddess, do I love a challenge. I grabbed his arms and rocked us back and forth, eventually flipping us over. He bashed into my face a few more times before I managed to get a good opening. I unleashed a barrage of hits that mostly connected with his head and chest. I could tell I’d have some bruises in the morning, so I made sure I gave Seok a few more than he left me. He was still fighting but he was slowing down now. I could tell that he wasn’t going to last much longer. As I was about to punch him one last time, I felt a hand stopping me.

“You have to stop, Ji Ji! They can’t hold Gukie anymore.” It was Mi Mi.

What did he mean they couldn’t hold Jeonggukie? I looked behind me to see four alphas physically restraining my alpha life mate. “Get off of him!” I cried out, running toward him. My omega couldn’t stand the sight of him being held down and struggling.

As they moved, I sat on top of Jeonggukie and curled into his lap. I immediately released pheromones to try appeasing his alpha. After a few moments, he stopped growling and wrapped his arms around me. “You got hurt,” was all he said.

“I’m fine, Jeonggukie. I’ve fought alphas before, even when I’m in heat.”

“He shouldn’t have touched you.”

“It was a misunderstanding. We were just playing around and took it too far. It’s okay. I’m okay.” I clung to him and continued to calm him with my scent.

Seok couldn’t meet my eyes when he apologized. I could tell he felt ashamed of his behavior. “I’m sorry, Min. I don’t know what came over me. I think my alpha got pissed that an omega was able to fight against him. Plus, I’m due to start my rut tomorrow. I know that isn’t an excuse, but I’m so sorry.”

“It’s fine, really. My alpha was probably the one who escalated to begin with. He’s too much of a showoff. I hope I didn’t hurt you too badly.”

“Just my alpha’s pride. Although, I will say it’s pretty awesome you beat me. I’m the third strongest in the pack. I’ve never lost a fight before. I’m probably going to have some nice bruises for a few days.”

I gave him a knowing smile and uttered a phrase that I never thought I would say. “I’m sorry you had to lose to an omega.”

“I didn’t lose to an omega. I lost to my family member, to my future packmate. I’m not ashamed of that. I wouldn’t expect any less from Guk’s mate.” Seok walked off, followed by the rest of the pack and Mi Mi. They decided to start the picnic without Jeonggukie and me.

“Are you okay, Jeonggukie?”

“I’m fine.” His gruff voice let me know that he was lying.
“Talk to me.” I tightened my arms around him and held him close. My omega was back now, having pushed my alpha completely out of my mind.

“The second he grabbed you, I was uneasy. But, I was about to kill him when he hit you. Tae immediately grabbed me and called for Joon, Jin, and Yunie. Even Ranie tried to stop me. It was all I could do not to jump on him and forcibly remove him from you. I’ve never wanted to actually hurt one of my packmates, but I was ready to go for his throat.” His eyes were almost completely red as he spoke.

I could tell that it was all right for me to be near him for the moment. He was much too angry to be horny. My omega took advantage of the situation and forced me to straddle him. I wrapped my body against him and nuzzled his nose. I wanted to calm Jeonggukie more than anything, but I also wanted to appease my omega. He’s been such a pain in the ass over the last two days. Jeonggukie wrapped his arms around me and stuck his nose in my neck. I could sense the tension lessen as he inhaled my sweetened scent. I was happy to be able to make him feel better. I knew that I was the only person who could at that moment. For some reason, that filled my omega with a sense of pride. He preened himself on the fact that he could take care of his alpha. The concept felt different to me than the idea of taking care of Mi Mi. With my omega life mate, I felt like I had to provide for her because she wasn’t able to provide for herself. I had to mold and shape her to be able to withstand the life of an omega. With my alpha life mate, I wanted to do things for him because he does things for me—as a show of gratitude and how much I care for him. I wanted to take care of him because he’s important to me. Huh. I guess I care for Jeonggukie more than I thought.

“I know that you two were just fighting, but words can’t describe the rage I felt when I saw another alpha on top of you and your legs wrapped around him. And now you smell like him,” he said as he buried his nose deeper in my neck. He nuzzled the side of my face, my jaw, my neck—everywhere that wasn’t my scent gland. My omega urged me to bare my throat, but I refused.

I have never been scented by an alpha before. It felt nicer than I wanted to admit. There are two types of scenting. The first consisted of doing exactly what Jeonggukie was doing—rub your nose and face on the other person’s nose and face. It’s not as strong as the other method, it doesn’t last as long, and it can be washed off. The second way is what’s traditionally viewed as scenting—where you rub your nose and face on the other person’s scent gland. It usually involves some sort of kissing or licking and it’s usually done by mates. Sometimes family members will scent young children this way, without the licking and kissing. Traditional scenting lasts a few days and can’t be washed off. It also creates a temporary emotional attachment to the person who scented you and makes the recipient scent drunk. My omega whined in frustration every time Jeonggukie came close to my scent gland but refused to touch it. The alpha chuckled when he heard the annoyed and disappointed noises.

“It’s not funny, you jerk! I told you my omega is clingy and whiny. You’re giving him anxiety. He thinks you don’t want to scent him because you don’t like him. I know you’re trying to get Seok’s scent off of me, but you have to stop. It’s making me panic.” My voice was much more frenzied than I would have liked as I wiggled around in exasperation.

Jeonggukie immediately ceased moving and put his head on my shoulder. “I’m sorry, little omega. I’m not properly scenting you because I don’t want to manipulate you. Your omega is very susceptible to my alpha’s scent. I don’t want to make you attach to me under false pretenses and I don’t want to make you scent drunk while your omega is vulnerable. It’s also the reason I haven’t tried to calm you with a scent change. I’d probably charm you on accident and who knows what either of us would do if I was controlling you. I need you to keep your mind as clear as possible while you’re in heat. We can’t risk anything happening. I wouldn’t do anything on purpose, but I’m barely keeping my alpha at bay right now. I’m sorry I got so carried away with scenting you. I couldn’t stand smelling another alpha on you. It’s bad enough when Ranie’s fragrance is on you and
“I get it,” I said while rubbing my nose on his cheek. “Things will be better tomorrow when we’re both more like ourselves. Our mating cycles have us in very weird mindsets right now. It will be ok.”

He nodded and hugged me tightly one last time. “I’m still mad he hurt you. I don’t care if you beat his ass. He shouldn’t have touched you.”

Jeonggukie stood up, with me still in his arms, and carried me to the rest of the pack. He placed me next to Mi Mi and sat on the opposite side of the blanket. My face still tingled from the drag of his nose across my cheek. I could almost feel his scent on me. It mingled nicely with my own. My omega was not fully satisfied with the scenting, but he was pleased that we smell like his alpha. I rolled my eyes at the thought. Jeonggukie handed me a plate of food and I began to eat. I noticed that Mi Mi kept checking her phone and laughing. I decided to ask her about it later. I feel like it’s been forever since she and I talked even though it’s only been a few days. I know we’ve been growing apart lately. I suppose that’s inevitable. You can’t introduce six new people to your relationship and expect nothing to change. I couldn’t tell if it was a good change or a bad change, though.

“Can we talk later?” I asked in a quiet voice.

“Sure,” she said with a giggle, looking at her phone again. “I’m sorry. I have a group project with a few omegas from my literature class and we’ve started talking about non-school stuff. They’re absolute idiots, but very funny idiots.”

It made me happy that she made a few new friends. It wasn’t fair that I was the only one who was around her all the time. I know the other omegas don’t care for me. I get it. I’m not really one of them. No matter how much of an omega I look like, I’m still an alpha too. Mi Mi is such a bright and bubbly person. She’s feisty, energetic, and the sweetest girl I’ve ever met in my life. Everyone should be friends with her. I’ve always felt rather guilty that being my life mate meant that she wouldn’t be able to have other people in her life. I was very pleased that she was moving past that isolation.

“Why would you apologize? I’ve always wanted you to have other friends so you wouldn’t feel as lonely. I think it’s really wonderful, Mi Mi. Maybe you can introduce us whenever they know you a little better. I wouldn’t want to scare them off.”

She giggled and shook her head. “Two of them actually want to meet you. You probably don’t remember Sun Dae Jeong, but he’s the first omega you saved from Jae Seok. He never really got a chance to thank you for rescuing him. The other one you sort of know. Do you remember Sung Ji Ae?”

“Ji Tae’s twin? I hope she’s nicer than her brother. I still want to punch him for the last time he tried to hit on you, but he ran like a little bitch.”

“She’s definitely nicer than him. Ji Tae’s such a dick. He’s one of those sad alphas you know isn’t ever going to get any, so he feels like he has to try to take it from other people. He’s so gross, but I think he gets it from Jae Seok. Ji Ae says he wasn’t like this until he starting hanging out with the king of the dickbag alphas. I don’t even get why he’s friends with Jae Seok. The fight when Gukie stopped you was because Jae Seok and his friend cornered me and Ji Ae. Jae Seok’s literally groped Ji Ae before and Ji Tae doesn’t care.”

“Ji Tae is a dumbass and a total asshole. The only omega he’s ever nice to is his sister and apparently he doesn’t even care about her,” I said with an eye roll. “I don’t know how she puts up with him.”

Mi Mi noticed that I avoided talking about Jae Seok. He was a trigger for me. I would rant for hours
if I said anything about him. I really hate him.

“She usually just avoids him from what she says. I was really curious about how she tolerated him, so I asked her.” Mi Mi turned to look at the rest of the pack, who were listening to our conversation intently. “Do you think that she and Dae Jeong could eat with us tomorrow at lunch? I’d love for them to meet you all. They don’t have to, but I thought it might be nice.” She looked eagerly at the alphas.

Joon looked at the other alphas before agreeing. “Of course, your friends can join us for lunch. The only thing that we ask for is respect if Guk doesn’t like their smell.”

“I can definitely respect that. I already know his alpha is great with judging people,” Mi Mi said.

“Why am I the last one to know about this?”

“Ji Ji, did you forget that Gukie and I talk? He told me about his alpha’s personality testing abilities a couple of weeks ago.”

“I feel so betrayed!” I called out in an overly dramatic tone. “The horror! To think I have been let down by my own pack. I’m gonna go be alone and cry now!” I turned away and began to fake cry. Mi Mi and Jeonggukie’s laughter rang through the false sobs.

Mi Mi punched me, telling me to quit being such a baby. I pushed her and she yelled about how that isn’t fair. I laughed and pushed her again. She jumped on top of me and began playfully trying to slap and claw at me. It’s been years since we pretended to fight. Usually, I’m in defense mode when it comes to her. Ever since she hit puberty—at the age of 13—our relationship changed. First, we went from playmates to life mates. Then, I went from friend to protector. Sure, we chase each other around from time to time, but we aren’t like we used to be. I began to slap back at her, resulting in a string of insults coming from her. She flailed on top of me, occasionally hitting my chest or shoulders. The happy look in her eyes let me know that she was thinking the same thing I was. She missed how we used to be before alphas, hormones, and Alphabet.

“Guk, control your omegas!” Tae said with a giggle. I could tell that he knew we were playing, but it also made him feel a bit uneasy. I don’t think the pack knew how to handle fake fights because they almost always turn into real ones when alphas are involved.

Jeonggukie walked over to us and pulled Mi Mi off of me. Then, he grabbed us both and forced us to hug. “Behave,” he said with a huge grin. He knew it was all a joke, but he had to do something to make the pack feel comfortable.

“Our alpha is a punk, Ji Ji.” A giggle broke through her words.

My omega had a very strange reaction to Mi Mi calling Jeonggukie our alpha. On one hand, he agreed. Jeonggukie is our alpha and, yes, he was a punk for breaking up the scuffle. On the other hand, he’s my omega’s alpha, not Mi Mi’s. Our alpha refers to my, my omega’s, and my alpha’s alpha—not hers. An uncomfortable amount of possessiveness boiled inside of me. I stuffed it down and decided to contemplate it when my omega wasn’t trying to control my thoughts. Mi Mi could smell a difference in my scent after she spoke, immediately releasing calming pheromones to appease me. My omega wasn’t affected by the scent like he normally was. Usually, Mi Mi can take my anxiety from the highest amount to nonexistent very easily. Now, it went from a 7 to a 5—if it were measured on a 10-point scale. Jeonggukie shifted next to me and placed his hand on my shoulder. The touch dropped my worry from a 5 to a 0 instantly. I decided to add this reaction to the growing amount of things that I have to make sense of after my heat is over. For now, I grabbed Jeonggukie’s and Mi Mi’s hands. I wasn’t sure how, but I knew that this would all work out.
“I’ve gotta go sit over there, little omega. I’ll be able to be closer to you tomorrow. I’m sorry.” Jeonggukie pulled his hand away and sat next to Tae and Yunie. I eyed him, my omega discontented with the distance.

Even with Mi Mi in my lap, I still stared at Jeonggukie and pouted for the rest of the picnic. It was late when we left, so Mi Mi and I decided to go back to our houses. Jeonggukie and Tae walked with us. It was obvious that Tae was there to keep my alpha life mate from doing anything he might regret. We didn’t talk much on the way. My and Jeonggukie’s feelings weighed us all down, making it impossible to ignore the awkward discomfort. That mass all but killed the ability to have a normal conversation. We all said a quiet goodbye to Mi Mi when we reached her home. After we dropped her off, Tae walked in between Jeonggukie and me. It increased the already too large space between us. After a few more minutes, we arrived at my place. I decided to give my alpha life mate a quick hug before I left. I hoped it would be enough to calm my omega. I eventually managed to break away from him and will myself inside, parting from him with a small wave and a sad smile.

I greeted my mom when I got in, but she could tell I wasn’t feeling well. She dismissed me and I immediately ran to my room. My bed has never felt as empty as it does at this moment. My pillow still faintly smells like Jeonggukie, but it isn’t enough. I stared at the wall and counted the seconds as they passed by. My mind was a strange mixture of hormones, feelings, thoughts, and desires. I could feel my heat subsiding, yet my omega was still clinging to the forefront of my mind like it was his place to be there. Now that my omega was free, would he be my dominant wolf? Would my alpha be silent like my omega always has been? Will I always feel this crazy draw towards Jeonggukie that I can’t help? Is my omega going to control me as much as my alpha has, or even more? The thoughts were making me feel uncomfortable, so I grabbed my phone. I hadn’t heard from Jeonggukie yet. I wanted to make sure he got home in one piece. It’s possible I was looking for a reason to not think.

Me: Did you get home safely?

Jeonggukie 😊: Tae and I just got back. We stopped to get some groceries for dinner. How are you?

Me: Not so good. I’m just staring at the wall and counting. It’s driving me crazy being away from you. My omega hates this so much

Jeonggukie 😊: My alpha isn’t doing any better. He hates this too

Me: Does that mean your alpha thinks I’m his omega?

Jeonggukie 😊: He’s very attached to you. He’s telling me I have to be near you and that not being near you means you’re not safe and that I’m a failure of an alpha

Me: Tell him that’s not true! I’m perfectly safe sitting in my bed and you’re the best alpha I’ve ever met in my whole life! My omega wants to say that you’re the best alpha ever, period
Jeonggukie 😊: My alpha thinks you’re the best omega ever, period. If your omega thinks that about my alpha, does that mean your omega sees me as his alpha?

Me: He does

I waited for a few minutes for Jeonggukie to respond, but he never did. I wasn’t sure what that meant. For some reason, my omega felt rejected. It didn’t take me long to focus solely on that feeling of sadness and start to dwell on what it could mean. I was completely out of it, my mind numbed, when my phone vibrated.

Jeonggukie 😊: Sorry I didn’t respond right away. Jin put me on cooking duty since he has a huge test he needs to study for. I can’t keep a pack of hungry alphas waiting for long. It makes my alpha happy to hear your omega sees him as your alpha.

Me: I’m really glad you got back to me. My omega thought you ran off when I said he sees you as his alpha. He thought you were rejecting us. I’m worried about tomorrow. I can’t help wondering what’s going to change.

Jeonggukie 😊: I would never just disappear on you because you confessed something to me, especially if it was something important like you telling me I’m your alpha. Even if I didn’t share the same feelings, I wouldn’t just run off. Why are you worried about tomorrow?

Me: You know I’m not normally like this. What will be different when I’m not in heat? Am I still going to be controlled by my omega? Will my alpha be pissed about how close I’ve gotten to you and take over? Am I even going to feel all of these things tomorrow?

Jeonggukie 😊: We’ll have to see. I’ll be here regardless of what happens. I know you are worried about your wolves, but that is all right. Whoever you are tomorrow, you’ll still be my life mate.

Jeonggukie 😊: As for us getting closer, that may or may not actually mean something. I’ve heard of people’s wolves attaching to other wolves, but not as a mate. So, even if you see me as your alpha, you may not see me as your mate. Kind of like how your alpha sees Ranie as his omega, even though you guys aren’t mates. You’ll have to figure that out.
Me: I’m ashamed to admit that I don’t know how to figure it out and that I’m scared of what I might find.

Jeonggukie 😊: I get it. We’re both new to this. I don’t know feelings either, so this is just as scary for me as it is you. We both have things we need to sort through.

Me: Would you be mad if I asked Tae and Yunie or Joon for help? Joon said he and Yunie are impartial and Tae is good with feelings. I think I need both of those things.

Jeonggukie 😊: Whatever helps you, but I would maybe steer clear of Tae. He’s got a big mouth. Anything you tell him will definitely get back to me and maybe the whole pack. I don’t mind hearing about your feelings, but I think it would be best if I heard them from you without his interpretation. I’d also rather hear about them when you’re ready to tell me.

Me: Thanks for the advice. So, could you give Yunie and Joon my number and ask them to text me when they have time to talk? I know I need help with these feelings. I’m really bad with self-reflection.

Jeonggukie 😊: I’ll give it to them tomorrow. They’ve already gone to bed for the night. Yunie has an early class and Joon wanted to cuddle with Jin.

Jeonggukie 😊: Luckily we have time to figure everything out. I’m willing to try to be whatever you want me to be. If you want to stay life mates, I’m ok with that. If you want to try dating, I’m ok with that. If you decide that you think we’re mates, we can try that too. Not mating immediately, of course, but dating with the intent to mate. That’s courting, right?

Me: That’s what it’s called when you date only with the intention of mating, not of being a couple and then maybe mating later. But that usually involves going on a lot of dates and you giving me presents to win me over and stuff. No offense, but I couldn’t picture you trying to woo me and that’s what you’re supposed to do when you’re courting someone.

Jeonggukie 😊: I’m actually kind of offended you don’t think I’d be good at courting you. I would woo the fuck out you if that’s what you wanted, little omega. My alpha actually started growling a bit at that. I don’t really know why, but you totally just insulted his ability to court an omega. I know you didn’t mean to, but I’m a little upset now.
Me: I definitely didn’t mean it like that. I meant more that you don’t seem like the type to show up with flowers and candy to get someone to like you. Then again, I’m not really the type to like flowers and candy, so maybe that would work in your favor. I meant that I couldn’t picture you trying to court me, not that you wouldn’t be able to court me. You’re very sweet and thoughtful. I’m sure you’d figure it out if you needed to. Tell your alpha that I’m sorry. Great, now my omega’s upset because your alpha’s upset

Jeonggukie 😊: You’re right about the flowers thing. At least not a whole bouquet of flowers. I think it means more if you find one really pretty flower to give to someone because it shows that you put thought into picking the right one. Anyone can just grab a bouquet of flowers. Maybe I would show up with candy if it was your favorite or something. It’s not really something I have to worry about right now though. If you do decide you want me to court you, then I’m up for the challenge

Jeonggukie 😊: Also, thanks for explaining it to me. It really helped me understand what you meant. Tell your omega that it’s ok. I’m fine now. You didn’t do anything wrong

Me: I have a question for you. Do you like me in a romantic way? You seem too willing to do whatever I want for you not to like me in a romantic way. I know you wouldn’t tell a normal friend “I’ll date you if you want” so I feel like there’s something you’re not telling me

Jeonggukie 😊: I’m new to this whole feelings thing too. I know that I like being around you and I don’t like it when you’re not here. I think you’re a cool person and being near you makes me happy. I don’t know if that means I like you romantically, but I’m willing to find out

Me: How?

Jeonggukie 😊: Take dating for example. Let’s say you decide you want to date. We date, try being a couple, cuddle more than we already do, maybe kiss, maybe have sex, support each other more than normal, and do whatever the hell couples usually do. The absolute worst thing that will happen is that we find out that we’re not good as a couple. You’ll still be my life mate, my packmate. Then, we both know that we’re not each other’s mates and we keep looking for the one who is. Same thing if you decide that you think we’re mates. If you don’t think that will work for us, then we don’t try those things. I’m just as curious to figure all of this out as you are, but I feel like the only way we’re going to do that is to just try something and see if it works out
Me: How are you so chill about all of this? I’m literally deciding your future and you’re just like “it’s cool, whatever”

Jeonggukie 😊: Yes, I’m freaked out about it. But I know you’ll make the right decision because you’re going to make the decision that is best for you. Let’s take the dating thing again, but let’s say that I said I wanted to date and you weren’t ready. Then, we’re in a relationship where you’re not happy. A relationship like that is doomed to fail. But, I’m up for dating you if it means we figure out what we are. So, you’re not going to make the wrong decision.

Jeonggukie 😊: I’m fine if we stay life mates and I’m fine if we try to go further because I don’t know what the hell any of this means anyway. I’m just barely mature and I’ve never felt anything you make me feel before. That could mean you’re my mate or that I’m just experiencing new emotions outside of the only three I’ve ever felt my whole life. So, again, you can’t make the wrong decision. That’s why I’m so calm about it.

Me: You just always know how to make me feel better, don’t you?

Jeonggukie 😊: What do you mean?

Me: Ever since Joon and I talked on the first night of our cycles, I’ve been stressed about this decision. I’ve been freaking out because I’m terrified that I’m going to ruin your future and the pack will hate me and that I’m going to pick the wrong thing. But, you somehow managed to make me feel like it’s ok to take my time and figure it out and that no matter what I choose it will all turn out fine. Now you made me purr because of how happy and relaxed you made me feel.

Me: Fuck you. I’m not even supposed to be able to purr and I’ve purred like 4 times in the last 3 days. I’ve never been an omega before now. I don’t know how to feel about this

Jeonggukie 😊: Not sorry for the purring. I like the way it sounds and that you’re happy. I hate to break it to you, you’ve always been an omega Jiminie. Even though your RHDS has locked away your omega, he’s always been there. All my alpha did was poke him and tell him it was time for him to get up. I don’t know if your omega will be around more now that he’s woken up or not. I mean, you still haven’t submitted, so I don’t think you’re going to function like a typical omega. If your doctor was right, you’ll still have to submit before he starts coming out regularly.
Me: I don’t want to submit to anyone

Jeonggukie 😊: Then don’t

Me: But, if we’re going to be mates, wouldn’t I have to submit to you? Or anyone really

Jeonggukie 😊: I guess you would have to eventually but it doesn’t have to be soon. You should probably figure out if you think we could be mates before you start freaking out about having to submit to me. Again, you won’t make the wrong choice. If we are going to be mates, then we would date first and see how that goes. It’s not like we’d have to mate tomorrow. If we were mates, I wouldn’t want us to mate until we were in love anyway. By then, I’m sure you would have made peace with the fact that you’d have to submit to me.

Me: I think the submission thing is only for sex though

Jeonggukie 😊: Same concept. I wouldn’t want us to have sex until we are both comfortable with it. By then, you’ll have time to be ok with submitting

Me: But what if my alpha won’t let me?

Jeonggukie 😊: We’ll figure it out if it comes to that. There’s no sense in you getting all worked up over something we’re not even sure is going to be an issue. If we decide we want to have sex, whether it’s because we’re dating, mating, or we’re just horny, we will figure out the submission thing

Me: But I can’t feel horny if I don’t submit. And would you really want to have sex with me if we weren’t dating? You don’t seem like the friends with benefits type

Jeonggukie 😊: It was honestly just for the example. I wouldn’t really want to fuck someone I wasn’t with in some capacity. I felt really disgusting after I did that the first time. Also, you can feel horny if you haven’t submitted. You were horny the first day of your heat and you didn’t submit to me. I was just being dominant with you
Me: I don’t get any of this. My doctor told me that I couldn’t feel sexual or romantic attachments without submitting. Being horny shouldn’t be possible.

Jeonggukie 😊: Your doctor may have said that, but you have the first documented case of RHDS ever. They don’t have years of scientific research and tons of case studies to work off of. They’re just giving you their best guesses. You can’t take everything they say as 100% fact. There’s stuff they still don’t know about my HADD and I’m not the first person to have it.

Me: You’re right. It’s just a lot for me all at once. I’ve been told my whole life that I’ll never find a mate, that I’ll never be a normal omega, that I’ll never be able to feel love the way mates do, that I’ll probably never know my omega. In the last 3 months all of that has completely changed. I met my omega, I got horny, you’re a potential mate, it’s possible for me to fall in love. It’s so much for me to process.

Jeonggukie 😊: I know it’s a lot, but it is ultimately a good thing! Yes, you’ll never be a normal omega, but that’s for the best. No offense to normal omegas, but they’re kind of boring. I think you’re way better. I never know if I’m going to get a cuddly clingy Jiminie, an angry wants to rip my throat out Jiminie, or just normal Jiminie and that actually amuses me for some reason.

Jeonggukie 😊: I know what the mate thing feels like. It’s crazy to think that the stuff you’ve known to be true your whole life isn’t. I always thought I’d be mateless too. The fact that you’re here and trying to figure out if we are mates means that it’s actually possible for me to have a mate. Even if you decide we aren’t mates you still thought about it, which means someone else could also think I’m their mate. It’s a lot to deal with but it’s not bad. Try not to be overwhelmed. I’ll be here with you every step of the way.

Me: Stupid alpha being a stupid good alpha, making me cry and shit.

Jeonggukie 😊: You’re crying?

Me: ...yes

Jeonggukie 😊: Don’t cry, little omega.
Me: Then stop being so sweet!

Jeonggukie 😊: You cry when you’re happy? That’s adorable

Me: It’s my omega’s fault! You were being really sweet and supportive and he got all emo because he says you’re the best alpha ever and we should be grateful for you

Jeonggukie 😊: Well, I’m glad that your omega likes me. I like him too, what I got to see of him anyway

Me: I’m grateful for you too, Jeonggukie. I don’t want you to think it’s just my omega. I really am glad that you found me

Jeonggukie 😊: Me too! As much as I would love to keep talking all night, we both need sleep. I’ll see you tomorrow, in whatever form you take. No matter what, you’ll still be my life mate. Good night and sweet dreams!

Me: Good night and sweet dreams! I’ll see you tomorrow.

I locked my phone and smiled stupidly to myself, my face still wet from the small trickle of tears that came from Jeonggukie’s words. It was stupid to cry, but I felt so relieved. Despite all of the pressure I felt from myself, Joon, and the rest of the pack, Jeonggukie had faith in me. He wasn’t giving me a hard time or rushing me. He wasn’t trying to impose his thoughts and feelings on me. He was giving me all of the space, time, and encouragement that I needed in order to make the best decision for both of us. It made me feel a lot better to know that he’s just as lost as I am. He doesn’t know what any of these weird feelings are either. I remembered his comment about only having felt three emotions in his life and it made me laugh. That might be the most relatable thing he’s ever said. Before Jeonggukie, I only felt angry, happy, or sad. That’s it. Now, I’ve been horny, had nauseous anger, felt a nervous tension, experienced empty pain, and wanted to happy vomit. I don’t know what any of those things are.

I thought for a while about what names I could put to those feelings, about whether or not I even knew enough names of emotions to guess. I ended up looking up a list of emotions and tested each of them with what I felt in the past. I gave up after several frustrating minutes, finding it too ridiculous to continue. There was no way I was going to magically be able to read how I’m feeling off of a list and know that’s what this emotion is. I need help from someone who actually knows what feelings are. Maybe, it would help to ask people who have mates or are dating how they realized they wanted to date or mate their significant other. If I’m trying to figure out potentially romantic feelings, wouldn’t that be beneficial? The only people I know that have felt these feelings are Jin, Joon, Yunie, and my mom. I refused to ask my mom about her feelings regarding my worthless father. It looks like the alphas are my best choice. Maybe they will have a little more
insight into this since I’m typically an alpha anyway. I know alphas are usually emotionally constipated. Somehow, being Alphabet makes that worse.

Chapter End Notes

What do you all think about the chapter? Are you excited to see what will happen when they're no longer in their cycles? What do you all think about how supportive Jeong Guk is? I think we all need an alpha like Jeong Guk in our lives, even if he's just a friend. What about the fight? As always, feel free to leave me any questions, comments, or concerns. Thank you for reading! I'll see you all next time!
I woke up to the sound of my mother walking through the hallway and silence. I took a deep breath and exhaled, excited by the fact that the three-day-long chant of “alpha, alpha, alpha” was no longer in my mind. I couldn’t hear my omega, but I also couldn’t hear my alpha. It was strange not having either of my wolves clawing at my conscious mind. I felt oddly refreshed. It was earlier than I planned on getting up, yet I knew going back to sleep wasn’t an option. I quickly got dressed and went downstairs to talk to my mom. It feels like it’s been too long since we’ve had a decent conversation.

“Hey, Minie! You’re up early. Couldn’t sleep?” She sounded concerned. I’m sure she was still a little worried because of how I was when I came home.

“It took me a while to get to sleep, but I slept fine. I just had a really rough weekend. My heat hit, Jeonggukie’s rut hit, and I met my omega.”

Her eyes grew wide at that statement and she immediately rushed to my side. “What was he like? Did he take over? Did Jeong Guk claim you? Please, tell me about it.” Her voice was so frantic that she almost didn’t sound like herself. I knew she was excited. She loves me just the way that I am, but she’s always wanted me to be at least somewhat normal. If I were a normal omega, then life would be much easier for me. As a mother, she didn’t want to see me suffer through a difficult life as a half-alpha, half-omega freak. Knowing my omega made me one step closer to being more socially acceptable.

“He is really clingy, whiny, and needy. He also thinks Jeonggukie is his mate. He didn’t take over, although it seemed like he really wanted to. I wasn’t claimed. Neither one of us wanted to go that far, but our wolves did. I had a lot of weird thoughts and feelings over the last three days. I got horny for the first time!”

“Oh my goddess, that is amazing, Minie! Wait! Does that mean you submitted to Jeong Guk?” Her eyes looked like they were going to explode.

“No. He was being dominant with me, though. I was trying to cling to him and he was having a hard time keeping his alpha in check. I hadn’t realized that we both started our cycles. He grabbed my hair and pushed up against me and apparently that’s all it took for my omega. He smells so different when he’s in rut, but still the same somehow. My omega really likes it. I don’t know how I feel about it though. It makes me dizzy. It was weird. All I could think about was Jeonggukie. My omega just wanted him, in every way possible. I don’t know what to think about any of this. I don’t know if that’s how I really feel or if it was just my omega.”

“That’s normal,” she said, putting her arm around me. “When you’re in heat, all you want is an alpha. Since your omega has attached himself to Jeong Guk, he’s the only thing you could think of.
It doesn’t necessarily mean that you actually want him, but it could. Before I mated, I had an alpha friend that would help me through my heats and I’d help him through his ruts. I didn’t have any romantic feelings towards him at all, but he was the only thing that filled my mind when I was in heat. Afterward, we were back to just being friends. When I mated, I felt the same way. I know that doesn’t help, but I’m just trying to show you that it’s possible you only felt that way because of your heat.”

I sighed and leaned back in my chair. “That’s what I figured.”

“I can tell there’s something on your mind, Minie. What else happened?” Her scrutinizing gaze could always see the parts of me that I tried to keep to myself.

“I talked to Joon and the pack wants me to figure out if Jeonggukie and I could be mates. I’ve been avoiding my feelings about everything, but he made me realize that’s not fair to anyone. I don’t want to keep Jeonggukie from finding his mate by wasting his time with me. So, I’ve been trying to wrap my mind around the idea of relationships and mating. Could I actually see myself with him? How do I feel about him? Would we work as mates? They’re all willing to wait for me to figure it out, but I’m worried. You know I suck at feelings. My first response is to hit anything that makes me feel uncomfortable. I could hit Jeonggukie, but he’d probably just laugh at me and it wouldn’t solve anything. So, I’ve been trying to understand emotions in general, as well as what I’ve been feeling. It’s hard. I’ve never felt a lot of this stuff before.”

I paused for a moment and closed my eyes. I’m putting too much pressure on myself right now. If I let my mind go down this stressful path, I’ll never figure anything out. I have to keep what Jeonggukie said in mind. I can’t make the wrong decision as long I pick what’s best for me. “I’m stressing myself out about it, even though Jeonggukie told me that it will be okay no matter what I pick. He says he’s completely open to whatever I choose. He thinks that the only way we’re going to figure it out is if we try an option and see if it works. For some reason, I can’t bring myself to do it. I think it’s my alpha. Even when I was in my heat, he kept me from going to Jeonggukie when my omega almost got me to. My eyes flashed red and everything.”

She nodded for a moment, silently contemplating all of the events over the last few days. “It makes sense that you’re worried about this choice. Picking a mate isn’t an easy thing. It’s hard to find someone that both you and your wolf agree on. It becomes even harder when you’ve got two wolves. Jeong Guk is right. You need to take your time and figure out what works for you. The best advice I can give you is to find out what’s important to you. What is it that you would want in a mate? I know you’ve never really thought about this kind of stuff before, so I’ll tell you how I always approached it. I had a list in my mind of the things that I wanted. Do I like his company enough to be tied to him forever? Could I see myself raising a family with him? Would he support me, even through difficult times? Those were the types of questions I asked. I also wondered other things that weren’t quite as life-changing. How would I feel if he was with another person? Would it hurt? Would I be jealous? Would I care at all?

“A big question for me was would I be okay without having him in my life? Any time I was with someone and it got sort of serious, I would always imagine a scenario in which I woke up one morning and he wasn’t in my life. Would I miss him? Would I feel like my whole world had shattered? Would a piece of me be missing? I know it’s a lot to think about, especially considering it’s only been three months since you and Jeong Guk met. Then again, wolves tend to move quickly. I think the longest dating I’ve ever seen before mating was a year and two months. It’s a little different for the two of you. He has to find a very specific type of omega to be able to handle him. You also have to find a specific type of alpha to be able to handle you. So, the pressure feels more real for you. It’s not like either of you can just move on to the next person and be equally as likely to mate them. Try to keep my list in mind as you’re figuring out what to do. It might make things a little
easier. I’ll help you in any way I can.”

I gave her a big hug and thanked her profusely for her help. “I didn’t really want to talk about this stuff with you because I was worried it would bring up bad memories. I don’t want you to have to think of your ex-mate if you don’t have to.”

“You’re so sweet, Minie,” Mom said with a smile. “Don’t worry about it. It’s hard to think about sometimes, but it’s been 18 years now. A lot of the pain left when the bond was finally broken. I still feel it occasionally, but it’s not that much of a big deal anymore. You’re the only thing that got me through it. That means I’d do anything for you, even if I have to think about the alpha that donated his sperm to make you. No matter what happened in the past, having you was worth it. I want you to find an alpha and experience the wonderful feeling of completion that only comes from finding a mate. I want you to know what it’s like to be so connected to someone that you feel as though you’re sharing a body. There aren’t any words that can describe it, Minie. I want that for you. I also want you to make the right decision. Mine was rushed and I didn’t get as much time thinking about it as I would have liked.

“I never told you this—because I didn’t think it would ever matter—but I was sort of forced to mate. I was born with a lower egg count than other women. It’s not something that’s common and most women don’t know they have it until they have a hard time getting pregnant. The only reason I found out about it was that I didn’t have my first heat until I was 16. My parents thought something was wrong with me, so I went to a specialist. The main symptom of low egg count is delayed heat, so they tested for it. My count was really low. The doctors told me that I would have to have kids by 23 if I was going to have them. The normal age of infertility is 34. It cut back on my time to find a mate. I was 22 when I met my mate. We both wanted kids, we thought we were in love, and I didn’t have much time. He and I knew each other for seven months when we mated. We waited for my next heat to try having a baby because the doctor said I’d be more likely to conceive.

“A month later, I found out I was pregnant. I don’t regret my decision to mate because it gave me you. However, I do wish I would have had time to choose a better mate. Hey,” she said while giving me another big hug, “don’t make that sad face. I didn’t tell you all of this for your pity. I told you so that you would be able to learn from it. Don’t rush the choice to mate. I know that it would take a long time to find another alpha for you and omega for him if you decide not to be together. Don’t let that scare you. You’re young and you have time. He’s going to end up with a male omega and you’ll end up with an alpha, so you don’t have to be concerned about getting too old to reproduce. The only things you need to worry about are how you feel about Jeong Guk and how he feels about you. At the end of everything, that’s the only thing that matters. Forget the pack, me, Mi Ran, and anyone else. If you and Jeong Guk end up mated, you’re only mated to him. You’re not his pack’s mate, you’re not my mate, you’re not Mi Ran’s mate. You’re his and his only. You and Jeong Guk are the only ones who matter. Do what you feel is right.”

I clung tightly to my mom and nodded. She usually gave me really good advice, but this was some of the best I had ever received from her. Not only did she give me some things to ponder as I think about my relationship with Jeonggukie, but she also put mating into perspective for me. She’s right. I may be part of the pack, my mother’s son, Mi Mi’s life mate, and Alphabet, but none of that matters in a mate bond. If I’m mated, then I’m a mate before I’m all of those other things. Even though the talk wasn’t expected, it helped me more than I could have hoped for. After realizing how late it had gotten, I quickly ate and rushed out the door. I ran up to Mi Mi’s house and apologized for being late. I wasn’t in the mood to deal with the wrath of an obsessively punctual omega.

“I know I’m late, but I was talking to my mom. If we go now, instead of you yelling at me, we can still make it on time.”
Mi Mi glared at me, unable to argue. I could tell that she was itching to be able to scream at me about how important it is to be on time and how much of an impact it could have on our lives if we’re even one minute late. My omega life mate is one of the nicest people I’ve ever met until she’s late. Whenever that happens, she turns into a demon. I laughed to myself at her misery. We are usually on time, but I always have to hear about it when we aren’t. This was the first time I managed to shut her up. I was proud of myself—probably prouder than I should be. We rushed to the school and ran to our classes. I was slightly disappointed that I didn’t get to see Jeonggukie. I had told him not to wait because I was running late. I managed to sit down, gather my materials, and get ready before the teacher walked in. I was surprised at my ability to pay attention in class. Usually, when I have something on my mind, I’m not able to participate as much as I’d like. I happily assumed that was a good sign and kept taking notes. The day flew by because I was much more enthralled by my classes than I can remember being in recent months. I actually like school. I enjoy learning and expanding my knowledge. That’s why I want to be a teacher. Lately, it’s been hard to find the same focus on my classes. Between being Alphabet and meeting the pack, my mind has been occupied with so many other things. Even my alpha has distracted me in the past. It felt nice to have a moment of clarity. As I was leaving my last class before lunch, my instructor called me to her desk.

“Yes, Ms. Kang?”

“I just wanted to make sure that you’re all right because you were out Saturday and Monday. The secretary said it was for your cycle, but you’ve never taken cycle days before. I just wanted to check in with you,” she said with obvious concern, eyeing my bruises.

“I appreciate that, Ms. Kang. It actually was for my cycle. I had a particularly rough time and I thought it would be best if I stayed home.”

“I understand. I’m glad to see you’re doing well. Here is the work that you missed.” She handed me a folder and dismissed me.

I walked quickly to the cafeteria, hoping that I hadn’t missed too much. Today was the day that we were going to meet Mi Mi’s new friends. I knew she’d be mad that I’m late—again—but I had a valid excuse. Sometimes that makes a difference and sometimes it doesn’t. If I’m lucky, she won’t yell at me because she doesn’t want to look bad in front of Ji Ae and Dae Jeong.

“Finally!” Mi Mi’s voice cried out as I walked up to the table. She wasn’t facing me, but I knew she could smell I was close.

“Sorry! Ms. Kang wanted to make sure I was okay because I missed class.”

I looked around the table and found no empty seats. I was about to go grab one when Jeonggukie grabbed me, pulled me onto his lap, and wrapped his arms around me. He was about to speak when he noticed the bruises on my face. He touched them softly and glared at Seok.

“Whose ass did you kick this time, Ji Min?” Dae Jeong asked enthusiastically.

“That would be mine,” Seok said with a laugh. He showed the evidence of our scuffle with pride. “We were wrestling and we ended up getting into an actual fight. Why did you assume he won though? I could have won.”

Dae Jeong shook his head and chuckled. “People don’t beat Alphabet. It doesn’t matter if you’re an alpha or omega, no one is stronger than him.”

“As much as I love your confidence, there is actually one person who is stronger than me. Other than him, you’re right.”
“Who the hell is stronger than you? He must be terrifying! I don’t think I’d want to meet the alpha who can beat Alphabet.”

I tried my best to stifle a laugh, but I was unsuccessful. I felt Jeonggukie chuckle slightly, as well. “I wouldn’t exactly call him terrifying. Physically, he’s not that scary. He’s kinda cute actually. I also think he’s cuddly, but maybe I’m a little biased. He’s a really nice guy, super patient and supportive. I’m sure he can be intimidating, but I haven’t seen it yet. I don’t really think I’m doing him any justice by making him seem like he’s not a threat. Do you have anything to add?” I turned to look at Jeonggukie. I wanted to give him a chance to defend his alpha if he wanted.

“No. My alpha’s offended that you don’t think I’m scary, but I think the rest of it was pretty accurate.” His smile was bright and it made me smile too.

“You’re the alpha that can beat him? Why are you two all cuddled up, then? Is he your alpha? I thought you and Mi Ran were together. What the hell is going on?” Dae Jeong’s words ran together because his mind was moving faster than he could speak.

“Jeonggukie is my alpha life mate and Mi Mi is my omega life mate. Yes, he’s the alpha who can beat me. He’s roughly twice as strong as I am. We’re cuddling because he’s really cuddly and that’s just how we are.”

“Plus, I recall a certain omega threatening to give me zero space after his heat was over. I think your exact words were that I’d be lucky to go to the bathroom by myself.” Jeonggukie raised his eyebrow.

“Fair point. I’m not one to take back a threat,” I said as I wiggled closer to him.

“Does anyone else feel like they’re interrupting something?” Dae Jeong asked, looking around the table.

“They’re always like this,” Mi Mi said. “We’ve gotten used to it.”

“So, how old are you guys?” Yunie directed the conversation to the two new omegas.

Dae Jeong answered first, which didn’t surprise me. He was very outgoing. “I’m 16. I’m a first-year here.” He was a cute, excitable omega with wide eyes and light reddish-brown hair. He smiled a lot when he talked and tried to make eye contact with everyone.

“I was in the locker room visiting my brother. He accidentally took my science notebook with him to school and I needed the report that was in it. My brother wasn’t in the locker room, but Jae Seok was. Luckily, you were also there. I don’t want to think of what would have happened if you didn’t stop him.” Dae Jeong’s rosemary and ylang ylang scent changed to reflect his anxiety.

Before any of us could react, Tae grabbed Dae Jeong and hugged him. Lavender filled my nose as the alpha released calming pheromones to soothe the omega. “You know,” Tae said as he pulled away from Dae Jeong, “you smell like happy.”

The omega’s face lit up. “You smell like home.” Tae’s smile brightened at his words.

“What about you, Ji Ae? How old are you?” Jin asked quietly.

She shifted uncomfortably in her seat when we all looked at her. She was typically quiet, but she seemed even more uneasy around us. “I’m 18 and a third-year. I graduate in June.” Unlike Dae Jeong, she kept her head down when she talked. She was also cute, but it was hidden because she
didn’t want to look at anyone.

Mi Mi could tell something was wrong with Ji Ae, so she excused herself and the other omega. I watched them walk away, worried that something might happen to them. I couldn’t trust that the alphas really were going to leave them alone. At any time, one of them might attack. My protective senses seemed to be in overdrive for some reason.

“They’re safe. You can relax. I’ve got Ranie’s scent pinpointed and she’s fine.” Jeonggukie’s voice instantly calmed me. “How are you today, by the way?” He was speaking quietly so that we didn’t interrupt the conversation the alphas were having with Dae Jeong.

“I’m good. I’m myself again. How about you?”

“My alpha isn’t trying to convince me to jump on you, so I think we’re good. How are your wolves?”

“I haven’t heard from either one of them. It’s like they’re both asleep now. I can feel them, but they’re not bothering me. It’s actually nice to hear my own thoughts after my omega didn’t shut up for three days.”

Jeonggukie laughed and hugged me tightly. “I missed talking to you without all the added subtext. You’re one of my favorite people to spend time with. It’s hard to do that when my alpha keeps saying obscene things about you.”

“I understand completely. I found out that my omega is quite perverted. Is it weird that we’re completely calm about it now? We had to have five alphas babysit us for three days so that we wouldn’t have sex. Now, I’m sitting in your lap like nothing happened. I feel like that should be awkward, but it isn’t. I’m just as comfortable with you now as I was before all of the hormones.”

“I wouldn’t say it’s weird. I think it’s a good thing. It means we have a good friendship. We understand that our hormones can change how we act, but we’re still who we are. You’re still Jiminie, whether you’re a clingy and perverted omega or an aggressive and violent alpha. It doesn’t change my opinion on who you are. The things my alpha wanted to do to you doesn’t affect how I feel about you as a person at all.”

I smiled and nodded, glad that we shared the same opinion. I sat on Jeonggukie’s lap and ate my sandwich, only half paying attention to the conversation around us. My mom’s words played in my head. Do I like his company enough to be tied to him forever? I admit that the question wasn’t one I’ve really considered. I really enjoy his company. He’s one of my favorite people. Is that enough to link me to him for the rest of my life—mind, body, and soul? I don’t know. We haven’t spent much time away from other people for me to fully understand how he is outside of the pack and school. I doubt his personality would change much. I’m pretty sure he’d be exactly the same way he is now. Maybe we should do something sometime, just the two of us. Does that count as a date? Did I really just think about asking Jeonggukie out on a date? My alpha growled at the idea, while my omega scoffed—two loud voices objecting for different reasons. My alpha says there’s no way in hell we’re going on a date with another alpha because we’re not being with someone stronger than us. My omega says there’s no way in hell we’re asking an alpha out because that’s the alpha’s job. I guess two out of three votes says no to spending time with Jeonggukie. I think I liked it better when my wolves were quiet. I still think it’s a good idea. Maybe I should just say screw what my wolves think and do what I want.

“What’s on your mind, little omega?” Jeonggukie whispered into my ear.

“Thinking about us spending time together and how we’re usually with the pack or Mi Mi.”
“Do you want to spend some time with just me? We could do something on Sunday since we don’t have classes or study. I think it would be nice.”

I nodded and smiled at the idea. It would be nice to get away from everyone and hang out with just Jeonggukie. It could give me a little more insight into being with him. After all, if we mate it will be just us. “I’d like that.”

“Then, it’s settled,” Jeonggukie said with finality.

While trying to ignore the input of my wolves, I couldn’t help wondering if this outing was a date. Do I want it to be a date? The more I thought about it, the more I realized I don’t care either way. If it’s a date, cool. If not, cool. I’ve never been on a date. What do people do on dates? Are we supposed to flirt? Hold hands? Kiss? Are TV shows and movies accurate representations of how people act on dates? If not, I’m screwed. I thought about the most recent movie I’d seen with a couple in it. The girl was so coy—acting shy, fluttering her eyelashes, and pretending to be helpless. My omega perked up at the thought, wondering what Jeonggukie’s reaction to blatant flirting would be. The thought of being that brazen made me feel oddly feminine, something my alpha immediately disliked. I’m not that type of omega. I’m not shy and I’m definitely not helpless. I know that Jeonggukie likes me as a person, so I don’t have to pretend to be like that. But, do people act differently on dates than they normally do? Is it an expectation that I should be like that? Why is this so complicated? Do people do different stuff and act differently if it is or isn’t a date? If I think the word date one more time, I might actually scream.

I felt Jeonggukie’s hand grab my own and squeeze it tightly. “Don’t overthink it, little omega. It’s only a date if you want it to be. Let me know by Saturday night if you do, so I can plan accordingly. I’d like it to be at least a little special if it is. It would be my first date, your first date, and our first date together. I think that calls for something a bit different than just hanging out.”

“How did you know that’s what I was thinking?” I asked in disbelief.

“I know how your brain works. Plus, I was thinking the same thing. How can we not think that, given the circumstances? Like I said, let me know. If it is, I want to try to make it special for both of us.”

I laid my head back, onto Jeonggukie’s shoulder, and rubbed my cheek against his. “It means a lot to me that you’d be willing to do that. I don’t know anything about dating, other than what I’ve seen in movies, but I know a first date is a milestone. I appreciate that you’d try to do something different for it. I have no experience with or reference for dates. I don’t know what I’m doing.”

He chuckled and nuzzled my cheek. “I don’t either. We can figure it out together if it comes to that. We can always just hang out too. It doesn’t have to be a date.”

“Can you two seriously stop or go somewhere? You’re making me feel painfully single,” Dae Jeong joked. “I know you say he’s not your alpha, but that’s not what it looks like. Which is kinda fucked up since Mi Ran is sitting right there.”

“They probably forgot that we were here again. It happens every time they’re together. I think it’s cute. Ji Ji is especially bad about it.”

I looked at Mi Mi, who had returned with Ji Ae, and blankly stared. She was right. I hadn’t even noticed that any of them were around. She just laughed at me, knowing that I was guilty. “See? Ji Ji’s wondering when the hell I got back to the table and how he managed to forget the existence of five alphas and three omegas.”
I shrugged. “Happens every time and somehow it still surprises me. I don’t even have anything to say about it anymore. Jeonggukie and I talk and I forget everyone else. I don’t know why, but I do.”

“Why do you think it’s cute, Mi Ran? Are you guys in an open relationship? That’s cool if you are. I’m just curious.” Dae Jeong’s wide, inquisitive eyes reminded me of a pup—always seeking to find the answers to his questions.

I looked at Mi Mi again and silently asked her if she trusted these two omegas. I hoped that our bond was still strong enough for her to understand. She stared back at me, contemplating the outcomes. After a long pause, she nodded.

“If I tell you two something, you have to promise not to tell anyone. If you do, it could cause a lot of problems for Mi Mi.” I waited for Ji Ae and Dae Jeong to nod before I continued. “Mi Mi and I aren’t dating and we never were. She is my best friend, my life mate, and my spunky omega sidekick. She’s not my girlfriend.”

“Sidekick, my ass!” Mi Mi cried out with a huge smile. “I’m the brains, he’s the brawn. He’s my sidekick.”

Jeonggukie laughed and chimed in. “If anything, you’re both my sidekicks. Ranie is the distraction, the cute one that gets into trouble on purpose to lure the bad guy. Jiminie is the eager one that wants to kick the bad guy’s ass and immediately jumps into the fight. I’m the one who sits back and finishes the job if they can’t.”

I wanted to protest his description, but Seok interrupted me. “What does that make us then?”

“You can also be my sidekicks,” Jeonggukie said with a laugh. The pack looked less than amused. “Hey, it’s not my fault that I can take you four on at once.” He pointed to Tae, Seok, Yunie, and Jin. “The only reason I can’t take Joon at the same time as the rest of you is that he’s the pack alpha. I probably could if it was necessary.”

“Are you fucking serious?” The other male omega’s jaw was open from disbelief.

“He really can. Every year, we test how strong he’s gotten by trying to fight him. Last year, he beat me, Tae, Yunie, and Seok. Fighting all five of us at once was a little too much for him, but he’s gotten stronger since then. I wouldn’t be surprised if he beats us all this year.”

“Isn’t that hard because of the pack bond?” I was curious if fighting them was an accurate representation of Jeonggukie’s strength.

“We’ve come up with a really good way of getting around that,” Joon said with a combination of a smug smile and a slight wince of regret.

“They wear my clothes while sitting on my bed, during the first night of my rut. It pisses off my alpha, so he tries to take over. The pack is able to ignore the bond because they’re defending themselves.”

“Have you guys done the test for this year?” I was suddenly very curious to see Jeonggukie fight the rest of the pack. I’ve never seen him in action before. I know he’s stronger than me, but I wanted to see how strong. My alpha mentioned that the only way to gauge the other alpha’s strength is by taking him on myself. I quickly dismissed the idea. I may hate the fact that my alpha life mate is stronger than I am, but it’s still true. I can’t deny facts just because I don’t like them.

“Not yet. We do it during the break in July. You can watch if you want, but you can’t participate. I’m not going to be responsible for hurting you, little omega.”
“I still can’t believe you’re stronger than Alphabet. It’s just not possible. My mind seriously cannot accept it.”

I looked the other omega in the eyes as I spoke, trying to get him to understand that this was real. “That’s what I said when I found out, Dae Jeong. Unfortunately for me, he is a lot stronger than I am.”

“Prove it.” Dae Jeong looked at Jeonggukie with a challenging look in his eyes. “Show me what you’re made of, alpha.”

“I can as long as Jiminie is okay with it. If not, I won’t do anything. Him being comfortable is more important than me proving how strong I am. I’m not the type of alpha you can just coax into doing something you want, but it was very omega of you to try. My omega is my priority,” he said looking at me and then to Mi Mi. “Both of them.”

Dae Jeong smiled and nodded, obviously hating the fact that he couldn’t trick Jeonggukie into showing how much of an alpha he is. I could tell that Mi Mi’s new friend knew how to play the omega game very well. “I’m impressed. You’ve already proven that you’re stronger than over half the alphas in the school. Most of them would have fallen for that.”

Jeonggukie shrugged and leaned forward to whisper in my ear. “Is it all right if I show him how strong I am or do you want me to tell him to fuck off? In a nice way, of course. We don’t want to insult our life mate’s friend.”

His words made me giggle. Part of me really wanted to see how strong my alpha life mate really is. The other part of me wasn’t comfortable with putting on a show for Dae Jeong. Something about him seemed a little off to me, although I couldn’t figure out what it was. My omega is on edge around him, but my alpha is intrigued. I’ve never been around another male omega. I guess that had something to do with it. I refused to entertain my weaker wolf’s concerns that he might be interested in Jeonggukie, our alpha. Somehow that didn’t seem like the case. My other wolf suggested that he might be interested in me. That didn’t seem quite right either. Maybe, he’s just a mischievous pup who likes to mess around.

“What’s the verdict, little omega? Get yourself out of your head and tell me what you want.”

I glared at Jeonggukie and smiled. “Can you read my mind and never told me? Or are you just really good at guessing what’s going on up here?” I pointed to my head for emphasis.

“I can’t read it yet, but I feel like I’m close. You’re not very hard to read, Jiminie. Others just haven’t been paying enough attention. Now, what’s your answer?”

“In the words of our newest omega acquaintance, ‘show me what you’re made of.’” I whispered into his ear.

Jeonggukie immediately pinned my arms behind my back with one of his hands. He also wrapped his legs over mine, locking them to the legs of the chair we were sitting in. He placed his other hand on my leg to show that he wasn’t using all of his available resources.

“Try to break free, little omega.” His voice was low, but loud enough for the table to hear.

I tried to casually pull myself out of his grasp, but he didn’t move at all. A little more determined, I wiggled harder to release myself. Still, Jeonggukie didn’t budge. I moved my shoulders, my torso, my hips—trying anything that might give me some leverage. I twisted and writhed in his hold. Nothing worked. The alpha’s grip never weakened, never faltered. Feeling desperate, I thrashed as
much as possible on his lap. Even though I knew he was stronger than I am, I was hoping to put up a better fight than this. My alpha was furious that this was so simple for Jeonggukie. He couldn’t stand that we were so strong, but our life mate was on another level. My omega was impressed. He acknowledged Jeonggukie as someone who could take care of us, protect us, and even keep us in check if needed. I contemplated both of those feelings as I struggled to get loose. All of the effort was exhausting. At length, I decided to conserve my energy and give up.

“I can’t do it,” I said with an exasperated sigh and a strange look on my face. I couldn’t tell if I was surprised, angered, or amused by the situation.

Jeonggukie released me and immediately rubbed my arms. “I hope I didn’t hurt you. I didn’t think you were going to try that much, so I had to tighten my grip halfway through.”

I shook my head and smiled. “It will take a lot more than that to hurt me. I’m not fragile, Jeonggukie.” I hugged him and instantly felt overwhelmed by his scent. He was aroused again. Of course, his alpha would enjoy that a little too much. Luckily, the lunch period ended before anyone could comment on the awkward moment.

“You good?” I asked my alpha life mate after everyone else had left.

“I’m fine. It’s an instinct thing and a dominance thing—kind of hard to ignore. Whether you’re talking about survival or mating, alphas are predators. I know Joon told you about my alpha being incredibly primal. To him, that situation was completely different than how we saw it.”

“What do you mean?” I asked with a tilt of my head. I knew we should be walking to class now, but I wanted to understand.

“Please don’t get mad at what I’m going to say. I don’t actually see you like this, but I can’t control what my alpha thinks.” He waited for me to nod before he continued. “It’s hard not to get turned on when I’ve got an attractive, unmated omega flailing around on top of me—completely helpless and defenseless in my grasp. Every bit of wolf in me saw that as an invitation to devour you, especially considering you’re a potential mate.”

I wasn’t taken aback by Jeonggukie’s words, per se, but I wasn’t sure how to feel about them. My alpha protested that we aren’t helpless or defenseless and my omega practically drooled at the chance to have the alpha claim us. I stood somewhere comfortably in the middle. I know he doesn’t really think I’m weak, but I also understand that he’s much more powerful than I am. The context and subtext of the word “devour” also was a cause for thought. I wasn’t offended by what he said, surprisingly. It felt nice to have a stable enough relationship with Jeonggukie that I didn’t have to overthink everything he said. Even if I did sometimes, I didn’t have to. I know he means well. Although his alpha may be instinctual and perverted, the human that the alpha belongs to is a good person.

“I’m not mad, Jeonggukie. My alpha’s pissed that you said I’m helpless, but I kind of am compared to you. I don’t want that to be the case, but you’re so much stronger than I am. I have to accept that. I’m only defenseless when it comes to you.” I kept my eyes closed as I spoke, trying to come to some form of peace with the truth I hadn’t wanted to admit for so long.

“It’s a good thing you can trust me, huh?” Jeonggukie said with a smirk. I rolled my eyes and scoffed. “I’m just messing with you. I actually like that I’m the only one who’s stronger than you. It means that you can take care of yourself if I’m not around. It also means that I’m special. I always hated that word when I was younger. Special just seems like a nice way to say strange and different. I know you understand how that feels like a death sentence when you’re a pup and all you want to do is fit in. As I’ve gotten older, I feel like special isn’t horrible. You’re special and I think you’re
pretty awesome. So, special must not be that bad.” His bunny smile, accompanied by a shy look, let me know that he wasn’t entirely comfortable sharing these feelings. Still, he wanted me to know them.

I smiled back at him and gave him a quick hug. I was vaguely aware of us walking towards our classes, but not sure when that happened. I’ll never understand how everything seems to fade into the background when he’s around. “You are special, but that’s a good thing. If you were just like all the other alphas, you’d be nothing more than another dickbag on my list with claw marks on his face. You’re the second person to befriend me and the first alpha. You’re largely responsible for making me think that not all alphas are complete assholes. I’d say that makes you pretty fucking awesome.”

Jeonggukie’s face lit up, causing mine to do the same. In that moment, I realized that he truly is someone special to me. Whether he is my mate or not, he’s here for me and he’ll be with me for the rest of my life. Somehow that felt peaceful. It was nice to know that I had a solid support system filled with the people who are closest to me. Maybe, this is what pack is supposed to feel like. Maybe, this is what family really is. My family has always just been me and my mom. Then, Mi Mi became part of it. Perhaps, I’m allowed to have more than just two people who love me. I shook myself from my thoughts as Jeonggukie nudged me. We had arrived at my classroom. I was late—which may or may not be punished, based on how my teacher felt today—but I didn’t care. I felt like this candid moment with my alpha life mate was worth the risk. We said our goodbyes and I went into my classroom. Luckily, my teacher didn’t care too much that I was tardy. I slipped into my seat and began writing. The rest of the day melted into a blur of slideshows, lectures, and notes.

Our after-school study was exhausting but completely necessary. I was used to the 16-hour days, but it didn’t mean that they weren’t hard. With a revived dedication to my studies, I was determined to make it through this session. I happily marked my textbooks and scribbled in my notebook. Somehow, things were clicking more for me than they had in a while. I noticed it earlier in my classes, but it was still nice. If I tried hard and was dedicated, maybe I could actually make it to SNU with the pack.

“You’re awfully chipper, Ji Ji,” Mi Mi said with a smile. I know she hasn’t seen me like this in some time.

“I remembered how much I like school.”

She rolled her eyes. “Nerd.”

“You still love me, even if I am a nerd. So, what does that say about you?”

“I like doing charity work.”

“I’ll remember that next time you need help on your assignments,” I retorted with a smirk.

She narrowed her eyes and pursed her lips. “You wouldn’t let me fail. You’re too worried about my success and us going to the same college.”

“You’re right.” I shrugged. “I wouldn’t let you fail, but I might not help you get a good grade either.” I gave her a challenging look and she returned it just as fiercely.

Jeonggukie stood up and walked between us. “Am I going to have to separate you two? We should be studying, not bickering. Even if it’s a joke, we’re just wasting time. I’d like to see if we can get done with our work early. I’m kind of sleepy and I’d like to go home.” I looked up at him and saw the exhaustion written on his face. He wasn’t angry, just ready to leave. He didn’t look this tired earlier. I wondered what happened, but I knew it wasn’t the time to ask.
I knew Mi Mi wanted to argue, she was always one to keep pressing a joke until the moment just before it was too much, but I shook my head. “You’re right, Jeonggukie. Let’s just get this done. We can argue later.”

We returned to our books and assignments, ready to finish the tasks. I tried to push the idea of something being wrong with Jeonggukie out of my mind. I didn’t like thinking that he wasn’t all right. It was harder than I thought it would be. After 15 minutes or so, I couldn’t concentrate. I needed to make sure it wasn’t anything serious.

Me: Are you ok? I’m worried about you

Jeonggukie 😊: I’m fine, just tired

Me: What happened? You weren’t like this earlier

Jeonggukie 😊: My alpha has been restless and trying to come out. I’ve been fighting him all day and it’s draining. Some days it’s easier than others to keep him in check

Me: Why is he restless?

Jeonggukie 😊: It just happens sometimes, especially if I’m stressed or there’s a lot going on. I think it’s because of all the school stress and everything from our mating cycles. It took a lot out of me to control myself like that

Me: I can imagine. It was hard enough for me to keep my omega under control and he’s not nearly as strong as your alpha. If there’s anything I can do, please let me know

Jeonggukie 😊: I will. I think I just need some sleep, some food, and a day off

Me: We can cancel Sunday if you’d rather just stay home and rest. I know it’s our only real day off and even that is usually spent doing work

Jeonggukie 😊: I didn’t mean it like that. I meant that I needed a day off of school. I think hanging out with you will be a nice change of pace. It will help me a lot to just get away from everything and pretend like our coursework isn’t two full-time jobs
Me: Then I will be the best distraction ever! Whatever we end up doing Sunday, I will make sure that you have so much fun

Jeonggukie 😊: Thank you, Jiminie. Now, get to work. I want to go home

Me: Ok

I handed Jeonggukie a granola bar and kept working. It was all I could manage to do for him in the moment. I understood the need for rest. Even though it hadn’t been too long since our midterm break, school was exhausting. It was hard to maintain good grades and attendance on less than five hours of sleep a night. They tell us it will be worth it when we get into a good college and get a good job. I hope that’s true. I see the long hours my mom works and I wonder if she’s really happy with her career path—if it really did pay off for her. She seems to enjoy it. I tried to push the thoughts away, knowing that they weren’t helping me finish what I was doing. I refused to be the reason that Jeonggukie couldn’t get extra sleep. We managed to complete our assignments 45 minutes before our normal time. It may not seem like a lot, but an extra 45 minutes of rest can go a long way to someone who hasn’t been getting much. We walked home, happily chatting about anything that wasn’t school related. As I laid in my bed, I felt relaxed. I was never overwhelmingly stressed, but I still appreciated the moments when the tension was less than normal. It was nice. Things felt like they were falling into place.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you all liked it! How do you all feel about Dae Jeong and Ji Ae? What do you think is wrong with Ji Ae? Are you excited that Ji Min and Jeong Guk might be going on a date? Let me know your thoughts, feelings, questions, and comments!

Also, I know that you all are really excited about the potential date. The next chapter is NOT going to be the "date?" I know that's disappointing, but there are some story things that have to happen first. Because I'm super awesome and I understand how exciting it is that their relationship might be moving along, I'm going to update in a few days with the non-"date?" chapter. I'm still really busy, so future updates are still scheduled to be weekly. I just know that once this chapter drops, you're all going to be anxious for what's to come.
The week flew by in a flurry of long nights, homework, and stolen moments of serenity—usually in the form of our group lunches. Dae Jeong and Ji Ae decided to keep joining us, much to my surprise. Ji Ae didn’t seem like she enjoyed herself when she was around us. Mi Mi swears it’s just because she’s shy, but I didn’t think that was the case. Something seemed off about the way she would shift her eyes around and move uncomfortably in her chair. She looked scared. Dae Jeong was just as social as the first day we met. I was grateful that he didn’t bother me or Jeonggukie anymore about our strength. He wasn’t actually as obsessed with it as he appeared. It turns out, he was just a very curious person. My alpha life mate indicated that both of the new omegas would probably be around for a while. He seemed happy about it, but offered no explanation. I decided not to ask. I knew he wouldn’t tell me.

Today, there was excited energy among the pack. It was Friday, the day we meet Yunie’s girlfriend. Mi Mi and I arrived at the alphas’ house right after school, everyone opting to skip any educational obligations for the night. It was important for us all to meet her. It was a big step in a relationship to formally introduce your significant other to your pack. We decided to split up the tasks that needed to be finished before Chae Hyun arrived. Knowing that I couldn’t cook very well, I opted to assist Yunie, Tae, and Seok in cleaning the house. It wasn’t particularly messy, but I understood the desire to make a good impression. That left Jeonggukie, Mi Mi, Jin, and Joon in charge of the food. We were done before they were, so we set the table. A few minutes after the food was finished, there was a knock at the door. Yunie scrambled to answer it, a bit of anxiousness in his scent. I had never seen him affected by much, but I knew this had to be nerve-wracking, even for him.

If Chae Hyun didn’t get along with the pack, or if Jeonggukie’s alpha determined that something was wrong with her, then Yunie would most likely have to break up with her. It was the sad truth of being in a pack. Unless they were mated or fated, the pack’s opinion on Yunie’s girlfriend could determine whether they stayed together or not. In the hierarchy of bonds and relationships, pack bonds were the third strongest. They even topped normal family relationships, which is why many people choose to form a pack with their family. Of course, the bonds between parents and children can outweigh a pack bond. However, other family isn’t as close. You’d choose your pack over your cousin in a heartbeat. The only things more important than pack are mate bonds and fate bonds. If Yunie was already mated to Chae Hyun when he joined the pack, they would have to accept her. That’s just the way it works.

The rest of the pack filed into the living room as Yunie went to get Chae Hyun. They were also nervous, worried that their packmate’s potential mate might not fit in. It was a tense moment when she walked in to face us. Chae Hyun was a very pretty girl and you could tell she knew that. She had obviously come from her classes, still dressed in scrubs. Her blonde hair was tied into a tight bun. She had a soft, round face that was adorned in subtle makeup. From first looks, she seemed nice enough. Chae Hyun stood behind Yunie as the pack lined up to meet her. It was a ceremony of sorts, a tradition that wolves in a pack followed when they meet a potential member. Yunie must introduce her to everyone individually, showing how important it is for each member to know her. Joon, the pack leader, greets her first. The rest of us are lined up by rank and age. Chae Hyun moved down the line from Jin to Seok to Tae. When they approached Jeonggukie, I could see Yunie freeze for a brief moment. Our youngest alpha has undoubtedly made his decision on how he feels about the omega. If he bows his head and shakes her hand, then he’s accepting her as the others did. Yunie looked directly into Jeonggukie’s eyes and introduced Chae Hyun.
My alpha life mate smiled at the omega, bowed, and shook her hand—copying his packmates’ previous actions. There was no hesitation or rejection. Yunie released a long breath and moved on to me. Mi Mi and I both greeted her in the customary fashion. The alpha led his girlfriend to the dining room, knowing the hardest part was over. Now, she just had to get along with the rest of us. This part of the test wouldn’t be accomplished in a day. Anyone could be on their best behavior for a few hours. We would have to be around her for a while, as a group and individually, before we would know if she was genuinely compatible with us. Regardless, tonight would give us a decent idea of her core personality. We all sat and passed food around, eager to see where the night would lead. It was expected that Chae Hyun would tell us more about herself and address us individually after we ate. Dinner was over quickly, no one really pausing to talk. We were all eager to see what the omega was like. The pack went into the living room and sat down, waiting for our guest to speak.

“Okay, so,” she began as she looked around at us. “I want to start off by saying that I’m terrible with names. I promise that I will call you by the wrong name at least twice before I get it right. I thought Yun’s name was Yun Hee for like a week and that his parents were really mean for giving him a girl’s name. Please correct me when I get it wrong. If I ask you any weird questions, I don’t mean to. I’m a nurse. I tend to think like a nurse before I think like a person. I also talk a lot and tend to change subjects a lot when I’m nervous. I’m nervous right now, just a warning.” She chuckled before turning to Joon.

“Nam Hoon, was it?” She said hopefully.

“Nam Joon,” he corrected.

“Sorry! I take it you’re the pack alpha. That’s really cool. I don’t think I could take on a big responsibility like that. Oh! You’re mated? You don’t look very old. Did you mate recently? Is your mate here? These omegas aren’t mated.” Words were coming out of her mouth quickly and you could almost see the thoughts jumping around in her brain.

“My mate is Seok Jin,” Joon interrupted, pointing to Jin. “We’re both alphas and we’re mated.” His tone was matter-of-fact and the implication of his voice was clear—if you don’t like my mate, get out of my house.

“That’s so cool!” Chae Hyun exclaimed, eyes wide. “I’ve never met alpha-alpha mates before. I’ve met a few omega-omega couples, but alpha-alpha ones are rare. Do you find that it’s difficult to work together or does the mate bond nullify your alpha senses? Is there a more dominant alpha between you two? How do your ruts work? What—”

Yunie put his hand over Chae Hyun’s mouth to prevent her from talking. “I’m sorry for her. She’s a nursing major, psychology minor, and way too curious for her own good. Chae, you can’t just ask people those questions. It might be more appropriate to ask after you’ve known them for longer.” He was mildly embarrassed by his girlfriend’s outburst, hoping it wouldn’t change our opinion of her.

“We work very well together. Part of that is because we sort of grew up together and part of that is the mate bond. Neither of us are particularly dominant, but we take control of a situation based on our individual abilities and experiences. We’re usually medicated during our ruts, so they don’t really affect us.” Jin answered with a laugh. I could tell he thought the omega’s curiosity was amusing.

Chae Hyun thanked Jin for his response and asked “Seok Ho” about his dancing. She seemed to already know a little bit about each of us. “I really love dancing as a stress reliever. I don’t usually get a lot of time to dance, but I like to do it whenever I get the chance. I mostly do hip hop.”

“I did ballet for a few years before I started high school. I loved it, but I had to stop because classes took up too much time. I’d love to watch you dance some time if that’s okay.” Her cheerful
Seok nodded, mentioning that he would enjoy the company. The nurse was pleased to have something in common with at least one of us. Chae Hyun and Tae didn’t really talk. They seemed content to stare and make funny faces at each other. No one was surprised by Tae’s participation in this strange form of communication, but we were impressed that the omega seemed to speak his language. After a few minutes of the weird face contest, they fist bumped and nodded at each other. I assumed that meant they reached some sort of understanding. Yunie did mention that she was like a mixture of Tae and Seok. It was starting to show. Chae Hyun faced Jeonggukie and seemed unsure of what she should say. It made me wonder how much she knew about him. It wasn’t hard to sense that my alpha life mate had a more intense presence than other alphas. However, it wasn’t possible to tell how strong he really was or why he was that way just from his aura or his smell. If she didn’t know about Jeonggukie’s HADD, the nurse was likely to believe he was just a stronger than average wolf.

“Yunie told me you’re stronger than other alphas, but didn’t tell me what that means exactly. Is it rude of me to ask you? I don’t want to overstep my boundaries more than I already have. I don’t want to be even more intrusive, but I’m also really curious.” Her eyes were hopeful, yet I could tell she was preparing herself for disappointment.

“I have Hyperactive Alpha Dominance Disorder.” The quiet reply wasn’t as shy as when he told Mi Mi and me about his illness, but he was still hesitant. I’m sure it was a sensitive subject for Jeonggukie regardless of how long he’s been dealing with it.

Chae Hyun’s eyes were wide again, even more than before. Her jaw was slack for a moment before she got a huge smile on her face. She was happy about Jeonggukie’s HADD. What an odd reaction. “I know you don’t really know me very well, but I was wondering if you could help me with something. I have a project on how various disorders affect the maturation of wolves. As part of it, we have to find someone with a disorder, interview them, and run some tests. Would you please let me use you for my project? It’s completely anonymous and no one will ever know it’s you. I was actually just telling Yunie how stressful it was trying to find someone with any kind of disorder. They’re not exactly rare but people don’t really want to tell you they have one either. You definitely don’t have to do it, but I would be super appreciative if you did.”

Jeonggukie was quiet for a while, contemplating the potential outcomes of each choice. He didn’t seem sure of either answer. A minute or two later, he started asking questions. “What kind of tests? Are they invasive? When is the project due? When would you want to do the tests? Are you researching physical maturation or psychological maturation? Will I get to see what your report looks like before you turn it in?”

“They’re not invasive. I would have to do basic things like check your temperature, blood pressure, and heart rate. I’d have to measure how tall you are and how much you weigh, as well as things like arm span and muscle size. I’d also have to perform manual strength assessments of your upper and lower extremities. That might be the most uncomfortable part because I have to use myself as the counterweight. The project focuses on physical maturation and delves into sexual maturation too. In addition to demographic questions and information about your disorder, I’d have to ask you some general questions about your ruts, your urges, your sex life. It’s nothing too personal, I promise. It’s really just stuff like ‘are you sexually active? If so, when is the last time you had sex?’ and ‘if you use Primatin during your ruts, are your ruts controlled well by the medication?’ The project is due a week from now.

“I really waited too long to find someone, but the research part took forever. We had to talk about the various types of disorders and the impact they can have on maturation. It was a nightmare. I’ve got
Certainly, I can help you with that. It seems like you're describing a scene from a medical or scientific setting, in which a patient is being evaluated by a healthcare provider. The patient seems to have some form of a developmental disorder, as indicated by the references to symptoms and diagnostic measures. The provider, who appears to be a nurse or medical student, is conducting a thorough examination, including consultations and measurements, to determine the patient's condition and needs. The context suggests a collaborative effort between the patient and the healthcare provider to ensure the accuracy of patient files, possibly to prepare for a project or assignment. The provider is also ensuring that the patient's information is accurate and up-to-date, which is a crucial aspect of patient care. The conversation between the patient and the provider, as well as the provider's actions, reflect a focus on precision and thoroughness in medical evaluation. Is there something specific you need assistance with regarding this document?
“I’ve only had sex once, a year ago. My first rut was when I was 14. I take two Primatin a day when I’m not in my rut and two twice a day when I am. I don’t get sexual urges often because of my disorder.”

She took his temperature and asked him to stand up. The omega carefully grabbed Jeonggukie’s arms and measured their length. She wrapped the tape measure around his biceps, while they were relaxed and flexed. Chae Hyun diligently moved to various parts of him to gather as much information as possible. As I watched her hands travel over him, I felt a little uneasy. He seemed so comfortable with her touch, only serving to make me more on edge.

“These measurements are ridiculous. Alphas aren’t supposed to gain this type of muscle mass until they’re 20. That’s very impressive. I could not have asked for a better subject for my project. Thank you so much!” The omega was incredibly animated as she wrote down all of her findings.

“I’m happy to help.” Jeonggukie replied, giving her a smile. I didn’t like that for some reason.

“Now, I need to do the muscle tests. Stretch out your arms for me. I’m going to ask you to move in a variety of ways. Based off of the position, I want you to either not let me move you or to move me. I’m going to rank that movement on a 1-5 scale. 1 means that you were not able to complete the task at all and 5 means you did it perfectly.” She waited for Jeonggukie’s agreement before she continued. “I’m going to push down on your arms. Don’t let me push them down.”

My alpha life mate completed the request with no effort. It looked as if Chae Hyun wasn’t even trying to move him. She had him shift his arms into other positions and repeated the exercise, eventually testing his fingers and wrists. Each time, he didn’t budge. She grabbed his hands and interlaced their fingers. Something instantly felt wrong inside of me. The sight made me sick and angrier than I would like to admit. The nurse tried to push and pull him before letting go of his hands. The distance made me more comfortable, but not by much. Jeonggukie laid down and continued the tests with his feet and legs. No matter how hard Chae Hyun tried to push his legs down or force his knees together, the alpha was immovable. The more she touched him, the more twitchy I felt. I’m sure my scent changed, but I couldn’t tell. No one else seemed to notice or care if it did.

“There has to be at least one of these you can’t do perfectly. You’re not supposed to get 5’s on everything!” It seemed like she took it as a personal offense that he was so stable. “I’ve got one. Sit on this chair and keep your back straight. Raise your leg up a bit and I’m going to try to push your leg down. No one can do this one without moving at least a little.”

He nodded and did as the nurse instructed. Her hand rested on his thigh as she waited for him to indicate that he was ready. She pushed down with one hand and wasn’t able to make him move. The omega huffed and placed her other hand down, trying with more of her weight. When Jeonggukie still wasn’t bothered, she shifted to the tips of her toes and used every bit of leverage she had. We could all tell that she was trying her hardest to get him to slip even the tiniest bit. As she tried one last time, with everything she could muster, Chae Hyun lost her balance and started to fall. In order to save her, my alpha life mate grabbed her and pulled her close to his chest.

“Whatever you’re trying to prove probably isn’t worth hurting yourself over. You should be more careful.”

The laugh in Jeonggukie’s voice—coupled with the sight of my half-naked potential mate with his arms around another omega, who was cuddled up to him—seemed to break something inside of me. My mom’s words played in my head again. How would I feel if he was with another person? Would it hurt? Would I be jealous? Would I care at all? Well, I definitely care. I care more than I feel like I should. I didn’t like the idea of someone else being near him, touching him, cuddling him. My omega kept screaming that Jeonggukie is our alpha. My alpha. Mine. Did it hurt to see? Yes, but it there was
something else behind it. Was I jealous? Did I want to be in Chae Hyun’s position right now? Yes. Well, fuck. I guess I’m jealous. That’s what this crazy, nauseous rage is? The word “mine” kept echoing in my mind. It’s definitely jealousy. I didn’t even register that they weren’t touching anymore. I was too lost in my spiraling thoughts. I didn’t notice that Jeonggukie was now sitting in front of me, holding me tightly. His floral and tangy scent surrounded me, blocking out the sour notes of my own. It wasn’t until a few moments after coming to my senses that I realized I was growling.

“We’re done here. I hope you got enough for your report. If not, we’ll continue tomorrow. I have to tend to my life mate,” Jeonggukie said as he scooped me off of the chair and brought me to his room.

He sat down on the bed and laid back, pulling me with him. My head was on his shoulder and he put his arms around my waist. “Better, little omega?” His voice was gentle, almost cautious.

“You smell like her,” was my only response.

Jeonggukie chuckled and moved his arms. “Fix it then.”

It was a simple request that was filled with so many undertones. I’ve never scented someone before. Although I’ve gently rubbed my face against both Jeonggukie and Mi Mi, it’s never really been enough to give them much of my scent. It was never an intentional scenting. At that moment, my inexperience and trepidations didn’t matter. I needed to take away this jasmine and cotton stench and replace it with orange blossom and balsam. I slid my face across my alpha life mate’s chest, paying special attention to where Chae Hyun landed. Neither of us talked as I dragged my cheeks and nose up the side of his neck and onto his face. It wasn’t enough because I could still smell her. No matter how much I rubbed my skin on Jeonggukie’s, that smell wouldn’t leave. My omega suggested that I scent our alpha properly, indicating that it was the only real way to eliminate the other omega’s aroma. I thought about it very hard. My body was itching to inch closer to his scent gland and take care of the problem for good. I refused the urge. Nothing good would come of it if I did. After a few more minutes, I stopped. I was satisfied enough with the amount of my scent that I could smell on him.

“Feel better now?”

“It’s still there, but I was about to properly scent you if I didn’t stop.” I wasn’t as ashamed to admit it as I thought I would be. Something about this situation made me more comfortable with expressing my feelings.

“You want to talk about it?” He wasn’t pressing the issue, merely suggesting a conversation. It dawned on me that I will probably be forever grateful for his patience with me.

“I didn’t like that at all. She had her hands all over you and then she was on top of you. It made me think of how I felt when you talked about having sex for the first time or when Yunie mentioned you and Tae being fated. I really hate that feeling.”

“Did you figure out what it is yet?” He seemed almost amused.

“I was jealous. I don’t want Chae Hyun to touch you. Apparently, I’ve decided that only I’m allowed to do that. Now, you’re informed. Nobody but me can touch you.”

He laughed at my statement and turned his bedside lamp off. “Noted. Now, let’s get some sleep. I know it’s early, but we’ve both been fighting our wolves a lot lately. We need to rest.”

I slid my pants off and turned to my side. Jeonggukie curled behind me and put his arm over my
waist. It made my omega very happy. It made me happy too. So far, I’ve managed to contemplate how much I enjoy being around my alpha life mate, as well as the fact that I can’t stand the thought of someone else touching him. I also identified one of my feelings as jealousy. I feel like that’s a huge improvement from a few days ago. While things seem to be happening fast, they didn’t feel rushed to me. I don’t feel like anything I’m experiencing is sudden and out of nowhere. That’s so strange. Have I always had these feelings? Is there other stuff that I’ve missed? The thought worried me.

“I said sleep, Jiminie, not keep thinking.”

“How did you know I was thinking? Seriously, you can read my fucking mind, can’t you?”

“You get so absorbed in your thoughts that your body reacts to them. Your breathing and your heartbeat keep changing. I usually fall asleep after you, so I know what they feel and sound like when you’re asleep versus when you’re awake.”

It made me happy to know that Jeonggukie paid so much attention to me. For some reason, I liked that. I avoided focusing on this information, not wanting to get myself lost in thought again. Instead, I concentrated on the warm feeling of the alpha’s chest on my back. I noticed how well his body conformed to mine and how peaceful I felt in his hold. It didn’t take me long to drift off to sleep once Jeonggukie took over my mind.

I woke up to a strange coldness, noticing that my life mate was not in the bed with me. It wasn’t unusual for this to happen. Jeonggukie followed a morning routine that typically involved him waking up earlier than me. He was always nice enough to be quiet and not wake me when he left to get ready. It was surprising that I felt cold. I wasn’t usually cold in the mornings and the pack always maintained a comfortable temperature in the house. I shrugged it off and grabbed some clothes out of Jeonggukie’s closet. I didn’t anticipate spending the night, so I didn’t bring any of my own. As territorial as he is, I knew he wouldn’t mind. He lets me wear his clothes whenever I’m here. I looked at the time and noticed I had some unread messages.

Unknown: Hey, Min, It’s Yun Ki. Is everything ok? Chae was worried that she did something and she got really scared when you started growling. It took me a while to calm her down. When you get this, I’d like an explanation

Mi Mi: Tae and Seok are taking me home, so don’t worry about me. I hope you’re ok

Unknown: It’s Joon. Come over after you get out of school. I think we should talk

I decided to respond later and went to find Jeonggukie instead. He was warming up leftovers for breakfast. There was no sign of the rest of the pack. Everyone was either gone or in their rooms. I sat down with a sigh, thinking about how I’ve probably made the pack think I have a problem with Chae Hyun. I’m sure they’re contemplating whether or not Yunie has to break up with her now. Why couldn’t I just keep myself in check?

“What’s got you bothered this early in the morning?” Jeonggukie said as he placed a plate of food in front of me.
“I got messages from Yunie and Joon saying we need to talk. They probably think I hate Chae Hyun. I’m just mad at myself.”

“It will be ok, little omega. They want to make sure you’re all right and that Chae Hyun didn’t do something wrong. That’s all. Everything will be fine. Don’t worry.” Jeonggukie’s arms were around me before he finished his sentence. He sweetened his scent and nuzzled my cheek.

I placed my arms over his and squeezed him tightly. He was so good at calming me down when something’s wrong. “I’m still going to worry, but you’ve made me feel better. Thank you.”

“I’ll always help you, Jiminie.” His smile was sweet and sincere.

After we ate, we gathered our bags and walked to school. I was worried about Mi Mi making it by herself, but she insisted that Joon, Seok, and Tae were taking her. I really hope they’re not mad at me. Chae Hyun seemed like a great girl and Yunie seems happy with her. I don’t want to do anything to mess that up. Jeonggukie walked me to class and gave me one last warning not to think too much about what happened last night. I sat at my desk and lost myself in thought. How could I not worry? What if they hate me now? What if I’ve messed everything up for Yunie? What if they want to kick me out of the pack? A vibration in my pocket brought me out of my trance.

Jeonggukie 😊: I thought I told you not to worry

Me: How the fuck?

Jeonggukie 😊: I’m in the class across the hall. I can smell you. Seriously, I can’t read your mind

Me: I’m beginning to doubt that

Jeonggukie 😊: I really can’t, but that’s not important. Stop thinking about it. You said you got messages from Yunie and Joon. Why don’t you message them back and tell them we’ll talk after school? That should put your mind at ease

Me: Ok

Jeonggukie 😊: They don’t hate you

Me: How do you know?
Jeonggukie 😊: The pack bond makes me mentally connected to them. I’d know

Me: So you can read their minds?

Jeonggukie 😊: It’s not quite like that, but sort of. It’s more like I can feel a little bit of what they’re feeling and we can talk to each other telepathically. The best way I can describe it is like a mate bond, but weaker. I can’t feel their heartbeats or everything they’re feeling, but I feel little bits of it and I’m always aware of them

Me: That’s pretty cool

Jeonggukie 😊: Now that I’ve distracted you from your anxiety, message Joon and Yunie

Me: ...whatever

I smiled in spite of my frustration at Jeonggukie’s ploy to calm me down. He knew I liked learning new information and he used that against me. I wasn’t mad. It thought it was nice that he knew me well enough to be able to talk me out of being upset.

Me: Hey Joon! I’ll be happy to talk to you tonight. I’m sorry about everything. I think it would be easier to explain in person

Joon: I think so too. We were worried and wanted to make sure everything is ok

Me: It’s fine. I'll ttyl. I’m in class

I messaged Joon first because I knew he would be more understanding. To be honest, I was a little afraid to message Yunie. He wasn’t the type of person to get upset about much and he seemed bothered in his previous message. I know how important last night was for him. He’s probably been worried all day that he would have to break up with his girlfriend. I’d be pissed off at me too. I took a deep breath and opened his message. The sooner I get this over with, the sooner I can stop worrying.
Me: Hey Yunie! Can we talk about everything tonight? I’m sorry about what happened, but it will be easier to explain in person. I hope you’re not mad at me. I didn’t mean to scare Chae Hyun.

Yunie: We can do that. I’m not going to lie. I was a bit mad because of how upset you made her, but I’m sure there’s a reason. We’ll talk tonight. Bye Min.

I decided to dedicate my attention to my classes, trying to distract myself from the dread I was starting to feel about this conversation. Before I knew it, lunchtime had arrived. I was uneasy sitting with the pack. Jeonggukie promised that everything was fine, but I couldn’t help being concerned. I saw that our newest female omega was feeling the same and it gave me an idea.

“I’m going to talk to Ji Ae and figure out what’s up with her. I’ll be back,” I whispered to my alpha life mate.

“Hey, Ji Ae? Can I talk to you for a bit?” I motioned for her to follow me when she nodded.

I led her to another table in the far corner of the room. She visibly relaxed when we were alone. “I’ve noticed you’re not comfortable around us. Mi Mi says it’s just because you’re shy, but I know that’s bullshit. Tell me what’s wrong. I want to help.”

Ji Ae’s eyes widened at my words. I could tell she wasn’t expecting me to be so straightforward. “I’m fine.”

“Bullshit.”

“I’m really fine.”

“Tell me.”

We went back and forth for a few minutes. She kept insisting that everything was all right, but she quickly learned that I wasn’t going to give up. “Look, I want you to feel at ease with us. Mi Mi really likes being around you and that makes us want to be around you too. We can all tell that something is wrong when you’re with us and I want to try to make it better. I’m not a fan of my friends feeling uncomfortable.” I smiled at her, trying to let her know that I meant what I said.

“I don’t want you to be mad at me,” the omega said quietly.

“Why would I be mad?” I tried to keep too much curiosity out of my voice.

“It’s about your alpha.”

“What about Jeonggukie?” After what happened with Chae Hyun, my mind immediately jumped to the thought of Ji Ae liking my alpha life mate. It took all of the self-control I had not to get upset. If she really did have feelings for him, then she obviously felt terrible about it.

“He scares me.”

The words took a second to sink in. I blinked a few times and made sure that I heard them right.
Jeonggukie scares her? How? He’s never been anything but nice to her. I couldn’t help asking for clarification. I needed to know.

“There are two reasons. One, I’m really sensitive to alphas that I don’t know well. It makes me jittery to have more than two or three of them near me. I’ve always been like that. It’s hard enough to be around the pack, but just Jeong Guk’s presence is like having multiple alphas around. It makes me nervous. Two, I watched him beat up my brother.” The entire time she spoke, Ji Ae avoided eye contact with me.

I decided to remain quiet for a few minutes, giving myself time to fully think about what the omega admitted. Alpha sensitivity makes sense. It’s an instinct to be uneasy around them. It’s supposed to remind us that they’re superior. All omegas have it to a degree. I couldn’t blame her for feeling that way, especially around Jeonggukie. He really was like multiple alphas combined into one. The second confession is what bothered me. When did my alpha life mate and Ji Tae fight? Why did I not know about this? What happened? Was Ji Tae hurting someone and Jeonggukie stopped him? I had so many questions. Right now, only Ji Ae could answer them.

“When did they fight?” I asked cautiously. I didn’t want to upset her more by digging too deeply.

“It was a few months ago. Jeong Guk approached Ji Tae and told him to leave the omegas in the school alone. My idiot brother refused and tried to punch Jeong Guk. I blinked and Ji Tae’s face was covered in blood. A few hits later, he gave up and said he’d be good. I’ve never seen anyone hurt him that easily. Jeong Guk didn’t get hit or anything. It was terrifying. I think the scariest part was that Jeong Guk didn’t even look upset. He was completely calm. It makes me wonder what he could do if he was upset, which makes me even more nervous around him.”

I put my arm around Ji Ae’s shoulders and gave her a gentle hug. As much as I wanted to analyze what she told me, I knew helping her was more important. Cardamom filled the air, muting the normally dominant vanilla tones of her scent. She was anxious. I released calming pheromones and held her until she relaxed. I had an idea to make her more comfortable around Jeonggukie. It might not work, but I had to try something.

“I want to try to get you used to being around Jeonggukie. I know being with him and the pack is a lot. Maybe it wouldn’t be so bad if it was just him.” I waited for her to look at me before I kept speaking. “Is it okay if I go get Jeonggukie and Mi Mi? I know you’re comfortable around Mi Mi, so I thought she might offset how uneasy you feel around Jeonggukie. If you don’t want to, that’s fine.”

Ji Ae thought for a few minutes before agreeing. I could tell she wanted to run away from the situation, yet she also wanted to get used to spending time with us. She told me that she really enjoyed our company and hoped to be friends. That was all the confirmation I needed. I retrieved my life mates and led them toward the skittish omega, quickly explaining my plan. Jeonggukie watched as Mi Mi and I sat next to Ji Ae. He waited until we were comfortable and asked if he could get closer. He approached her as if she were a frightened animal that he was trying to tame. The alpha sat across from her and began to ask her questions. He seemed to instinctively know how to interact with her. It was endearing to see him be so soft and gentle. Many alphas would find pride in the fact that an omega was afraid of them, some even going as far as instigating more fear. Jeonggukie, on the other hand, was doing his very best to make sure Ji Ae was comfortable in his presence. At first, she was reserved and quiet. Her responses were only a few words long. After a while, she began opening up more. My alpha life mate found out about the omega’s love for playing the piano and they immediately bonded over it. Apparently, Yunie plays and has been teaching Jeonggukie. I couldn’t help the smile that spread across my lips as I watched his face light up. They were both so excited. It made me happy to know that Ji Ae was growing comfortable with him. By the end of lunch, they looked like they had been talking to each other for weeks. I was proud that my alpha life
mate was so good with people. It would serve him well as a therapist.

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After school, I sat on Jeonggukie’s lap and stared at the rest of the pack. They eagerly awaited the explanation for my behavior. How do I tell them that I was jealous of something so stupid? It’s not like anything was even happening. Why would it bother me that she was touching him for a medical exam? It shouldn’t matter that he was mostly naked and that she was basically lying on top of him. It shouldn’t matter that she’s pretty and he seemed really comfortable with her touching him. It shouldn’t matter—

“Go ahead and tell them, little omega. They’ll understand,” Jeonggukie said with a chuckle.

I took a deep breath and began talking. “I got really upset because I was jealous that she was touching Jeonggukie and that she fell on him and I didn’t realize I was growling. I’m sorry and I don’t hate her.” The words rushed out and part of me was hoping that they wouldn’t understand what I said.

The room was silent for a few, very long moments. I couldn’t tell if they were talking with each other over the pack bond or if they were just thinking to themselves. After a while, I heard laughter.

“I told you guys he was jealous!” Tae exclaimed with a wide smile.

“I didn’t think he’d admit it,” Seok said nonchalantly.

“I’m proud of Min for actually telling us. I thought he’d try to deny it.” A hint of laughter mixed with Jin’s voice.

“Quit picking on him,” Jeonggukie said quietly.

I turned to face my life mate and wrapped my arms around his neck. I didn’t want to see the pack making fun of me anymore, so I buried my face in Jeonggukie’s shoulder. They were still laughing a little. I wasn’t sure how to feel about their amusement.

“It’s really okay, Min. We all kind of knew that’s what was going on. No one thinks any less of you for being jealous that a pretty omega was touching your potential mate. I’d be so mad if someone had their hands on Joonie. I probably would have bitten her to be honest.”

The rest of the pack agreed with Jin’s statement, trying to make me feel less embarrassed by my reaction. After a few minutes, they could tell I was more comfortable with the situation. Moments later, I heard the majority of them leave the room and go back to their own. I could still smell Yunie and Joon.

“Thanks for explaining, Min,” Yunie began. “I thought that might be the case, but I didn’t want to assume anything. Chae even mentioned something about it after she got home last night. She apologized and said she wasn’t trying to take your alpha. I think her exact words were ‘I’ve already got one. I don’t need his too.’ I didn’t have the patience last night to explain your relationship to her. She would have kept me up for the next three hours asking questions. She got scared because she was worried she offended you or did something that would make the pack want to break us up. After we talked about it some more, she realized that you weren’t upset by what she was doing. You were upset about who she was doing it to. Everything is fine now, so don’t worry that we’re mad at you or
anything.” He quietly left the room after I thanked him for talking to me.

With Jeonggukie’s arms wrapped around my waist, I waited for Joon to speak. I could almost hear his mind working. I knew that he would have something impactful to say about the situation. His insight has already helped me figure out a lot of things. Despite this knowledge, I wasn’t ready for what he said.

“When Guk finds a mate, what you saw last night is going to happen every day. It will actually be worse because they’ll be kissing, holding hands, and having sex. At that point, it won’t matter how jealous you are. Keep that in mind, Min.”

I froze as he left the room. I hadn’t thought of that. My heart felt like it was trapped in freefall and plummeting toward the bottom of a canyon. Joon’s right. I would be faced with the sight of my alpha life mate’s arms around someone else every day. I could hardly handle seeing another omega’s hands on him. How would I be able to deal with seeing them cuddle or kiss? If he found a mate, we wouldn’t be as close as we are now. We wouldn’t sit together like this, share a bed, or scent each other. That would be his mate’s job. My omega was devastated by the thought. No matter what I or my alpha think, my omega has recognized Jeonggukie as his mate. There is no way he would be all right with seeing another wolf take his alpha away. Even past what my omega thinks, I don’t know that I would be comfortable with it either. I like the way things are now. I like his company, his attention, his touch. All of that would go away if he found someone else. Whatever vague and frail claim that I have on Jeonggukie would disappear. I may not be sure of exactly what my feelings for him are, but I know I don’t want anyone coming between us. The alpha’s previous words about figuring out our relationship seeped into my mind. It was then that I knew what I needed to do.

“I want to try with you, Jeonggukie. I’m still unclear about my feelings, but I want to try.”

He immediately lifted my head and grabbed my face. He was frantically scanning my eyes to see any signs of hesitation or fear. “Are you sure, Jiminnie? I don’t want you to feel rushed or pressured. It’s okay that you felt jealous. That doesn’t automatically mean we’re mates.” His voice was soft and caring.

“I know, but I thought about what you said. We’re never going to know if we don’t try. Last night made me realize I’m not ready to see you with someone else. If I can’t let you be with another person, then I might as well try to be with you and see where it goes.”

He nodded and scrunched his nose. He looked proud of my conclusion, proud that I had really thought about everything. I stared back at him in awe. His eyes were glittering with crimson flecks and the secret that I had all but forgotten. They were very beautiful, as was the sweet smile on his face.

“I guess there’s only one thing left to clear up.” He chuckled when I tilted my head in confusion. “Will you go on a date with me tomorrow, little omega?”

I felt the corners of my mouth rising on their own and I could smell my scent blossom from my omega’s excitement. I wasn’t expecting to have such a strong reaction to that question, but it made me happier than I thought it would. Somehow this felt like the right decision. I nodded and quickly confirmed. “I’d like that a lot.”

Chapter End Notes
So, what did you think? I had to add this before the date because something had to convince Ji Min that the date was a good idea. Thank you for reading!

Who's excited about the date? What do you think will happen?
I could get used to this

Chapter Notes

I would like to thank my friend, Sarah, for putting up with my craziness while writing this chapter. I'm sure I annoyed the hell out of her, but she was always more than willing to read my changes and help me figure out what I needed to add. I am lucky to have her. I love you, Sarah!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

I was awakened by my mom knocking on my door. I felt that strange coldness again and wondered what it meant. I didn’t have much time to think about it because the noise continued. When I told my mom to enter, she looked like she was going to explode from excitement.

“Your date is today!” She practically yelled at me.

I couldn’t help laughing at how happy the thought of me going on a date made her. I know my mating situation has always made her upset. Dating was just one step closer to a normal life in her mind. “I am. Why are you more excited about it than I am?”

“Because you’re going on a date! What are you going to wear? What are you guys going to do? Did Jeong Guk tell you anything?”

I cut her off before she could keep asking questions. “I was planning on wearing my normal clothes. I have no idea what we’re doing. After I agreed to the date, Jeonggukie pretty much kicked me out because he had to ‘figure out what people do on dates.’ He also mentioned something about having to pick me up at home since that’s what happens in movies.”

“That’s so cute!” My mom squealed at the thought of Jeonggukie using movies as a guideline for our date.

My phone vibrated and I checked it quickly. I didn’t know when Jeonggukie was planning on picking me up, so I wanted to make sure I didn’t miss that information. I noticed a few messages in my inbox.

Jeonggukie 😊: I’m going to pick you up at 11. Wear something that isn’t sweatpants and a t-shirt. Yes, you have to. Apparently, you’re supposed to put at least mild effort into your appearance for dates. I had no idea.

Jeonggukie 😊: You don’t have to dress up. We’re not doing anything formal. Maybe something like what you wore when you and Ranie matched? I don’t think that’s too much.

Jeonggukie 😊: We’re going to be out the whole day, so tell your mom not to expect you back until late.
Jeonggukie 😊: Don’t eat

Jeonggukie 😊: I’m paying for everything, so don’t get any ideas

Joon: Guk would kill me if he knew I sent you this, so please don’t tell him. Be patient with him. He’s a wreck right now. He spent like 6 hours watching romantic movies and another 2 hours online trying to figure out a plan. He made a list and everything. He put so much effort into this. Try to have fun even if he’s a little anxious. He just really wants this to be special.

I laughed at the messages. I hadn’t expected Jeonggukie to be nervous about the date or to put this much effort into it. It made my omega happy that his alpha would go through so much trouble to make the day memorable. I also thought it was pretty cute that he did so much research. I updated my mom on the situation and she started squealing again. I rolled my eyes at her antics as I started to find clothes. I looked through my closet for something that wasn’t a t-shirt and found only two things. One was the striped shirt I wore to match Mi Mi. The other was dark blue with short sleeves and buttons. I’d never worn the blue shirt before because I don’t wear short sleeved shirts. They show off too much. I was going to grab the striped shirt, but my mom stopped me. She insisted that I wear the blue one. I went to take a shower after I found the horrible abomination that is my pair of skinny jeans. When I got out, I walked downstairs to find my mom with her phone, ready to take pictures. Luckily, there was a knock at the door before she could take more than one.

I opened the door to see Jeonggukie dressed in almost the same outfit as me. The only difference was that his shirt had blue and white stripes. I was surprised by the coincidence, but I was even more taken aback by how different he looked. It’s not a secret that my alpha life mate is handsome. I’ve told him that on a few different occasions and we’ve both caught omegas staring at him in the hallways. However, there was something about seeing him wearing clothes other than sweats and a t-shirt that accentuated how attractive he is. His wavy hair only made it worse. It was parted to the side and fell into his eyes, drawing my attention to them. They were, by far, my favorite of his features. They’re beautiful and annoyingly captivating. I also took a few moments to appreciate how well Jeonggukie’s clothes fit. I’ve seen him shirtless enough times to know that he has a nice figure but seeing his body outlined by tight jeans and a tight shirt somehow feels different. He seemed to be just as enthralled by my choice of clothing. His eyes slowly scanned over me, not wanting to miss any detail. It made me a little embarrassed, but in a good way. For the first time ever, I liked having someone’s attention on me. A weird mixture of heat and excitement filled me. Neither of us spoke for a while, opting to stand in the doorway and shamelessly stare at each other.

“Hey,” Jeonggukie eventually said with a wide smile.

“Hey.”

“You look great, Jiminie.” His shy admission made me smile even more.

“So do you.”

He didn’t seem to expect my response, his face showing signs of surprise. He took another moment to stare at me before he spoke again. “You ready?”

“Yeah.” I felt a little nervous under his gaze, but my omega was pleased. As he motioned for me to
follow him towards our destination, I felt the first flashes of anticipation take hold.

“Where are we going?” I asked when we halted at a bus stop.

“The first stop is breakfast. I found somewhere I thought you’d be interested in.” A glimmer of hope shined in his eyes.

We sat at the bus stop with an awkward space between us. Given the circumstances, it felt odd to sit like we normally do. However, neither of us were used to this kind of distance and it showed. It was almost uncomfortable how uneasy everything felt. We aren’t like this. We don’t have long silences and unpleasant energy. I could faintly smell his anxiety when he stood to board the bus. I wrapped my arms around him and gave him a big hug. I never thought the word date would have the power to transform a normal interaction into something this tense. When we sat in our seats, he pulled me into his lap.

“Sorry,” he whispered as he put his head on my shoulder.

“It doesn’t have to be perfect, Jeonggukie. I’m going to have a good time no matter what because I’m spending time with one of my favorite people.” He relaxed at my words.

“I just want this to be special. I know I keep saying that, but it’s true. In theory, this could be the only first date you ever have. What kind of alpha would I be if I took you on your only first date and didn’t put in any effort? If it’s not your only first date, I’d like to make sure the next person has a lot to live up to.”

“You’re such a sweet alpha, Jeonggukie.”

“Only to the people I care about.” Had my life mate not been so close to my ear, I might have missed his response. My omega jumped in excitement. If I was completely honest with myself, his words made me happy too.

We exited the bus and walked toward the restaurant. The atmosphere was calmer after our conversation. Perhaps, we’re both overthinking this whole thing. Maybe a date doesn’t have to change our dynamics. We walked in more comfortable silence, occasionally pointing out an interesting structure or sign. Jeonggukie stopped in front of a building and held the door open for me. When I walked in, I was met by a large pair of green eyes and a set of fluffy ears. It took me a minute to understand what I was looking at. It was a cat. There was a cat sitting on a perch in the front of the restaurant. I instantly smiled and reached to pet it.

“That’s Nabi,” a tall alpha said from the counter. “She absolutely adores new people.”

As if on cue, Nabi raised her head to my hand and rubbed herself against it. Her loud purrs almost drowned out the light hum of people talking. I vaguely picked up on Jeonggukie speaking with the other alpha, but I was too absorbed in Nabi’s cuteness to make out what was being said. The tabby was using her paws to guide my hand, making me scratch her in the places she wanted to be scratched.

“Come on, little omega. Bring Nabi with you.” Jeonggukie’s voice cut through my daze.

I picked up the cat and cradled her in my arms. She seemed content nestled against my chest. When we sat down, Nabi decided to lay on the table next to me. I was worried that she would cause some trouble. My life mate laughed when I voiced my concern.

“Jiminie, we’re at a cat cafe. They’re allowed to go wherever they want.”
I looked around, shocked that I hadn’t noticed the dozen or so cats walking around and playing with the other customers. They were all adorable and full of life. “This place is so cool. I’ve heard about cat cafes, but I haven’t had time to actually visit one. I’ve always wanted a pet, but my mom is allergic to pretty much all animals. Cats and dogs are my favorite.”

“I know. I overheard you talking to Ranie one day at lunch about a dream you had where you started a farm that was made up of kittens and puppies. I think you said something about that being your plan for retirement.” He smiled, obviously amused by the idea of me being a cat and dog farmer.

It took me a few minutes to remember what he was talking about. When it finally came back to me, I was in disbelief. “I had that dream before I even knew you. That was like a week after you transferred here. How do you even remember that?”

He shrugged. I was going to ask him more questions, but the server came to the table. Jeonggukie didn’t waste any time ordering for both of us. It was something I had never experienced before. Even when my mom and I would go out to eat when I was younger, I would always tell the server what I wanted. I think the most surprising thing was that he ordered exactly what I would have if I had picked for myself. My omega was pleased.

“Was that all right?” He asked after the alpha walked away. “I don’t want to overstep my boundaries, but every movie I’ve ever seen says the alpha ordering for the omega is a date thing.”

I smiled at his caution and nodded. “It was a little weird, but I don’t mind. How did you know what I would have gotten? We didn’t even look at the menu and you knew exactly what was there.”

“I may or may not have looked up the menu ahead of time and spent 30 minutes figuring out what you would want to eat.” Jeonggukie averted his gaze as he spoke.

Of course, my life mate would do something like that. Joon did mention that Jeonggukie had done a ton of research and made a list for the day. That just proved to me what a spectacular person he really is. To me, the shyness he was experiencing made it even better. He started to get a little anxious again, probably worried that I would think less of him for all of the time he spent on this. Before I could respond to his change in scent, Nabi crawled into his lap and began purring. I already adored her, but the smile she brought to Jeonggukie’s face made me love her even more.

The food arrived and we quickly divvied up the plates, deciding to share our meals with each other. Nabi was surprisingly well-behaved as we ate. This wasn’t any different than the countless meals we’ve had together, but somehow it carried a different weight. I suppose the word date really does have an impact. Suddenly, this wasn’t breakfast with Jeonggukie anymore. It was sharing food with someone who is a potential boyfriend, lover, spouse, and mate. I looked at him and tried to see what this type of future would be like. My thoughts were stopped by the alpha’s eyes looking into mine and then quickly darting away. A small smile played on both of our lips. We seemed to be thinking the same thing.

After we finished eating, an orange kitten wandered over to our table. The kitten was so jealous of the attention we were giving Nabi that we had to take turns playing with them both. We stayed at the cafe for a while. Our conversations about the cute cats and wishes to take them all home were simple and easy. Before we left, Jeonggukie took a picture of me laying with Nabi and the orange cat. He smiled and showed it to me as we walked towards our next destination.

“Based on what I’ve seen, I’d say you have a very bright future as a cat farmer. I’m not sure about dogs, though. Next time, we’ll have to go to a dog cafe to see.” The alpha bit his bottom lip, realizing what he said. He gave me a quick, apologetic look and kept walking.
“We have to do this at least five times, right?” I asked, trying to show him that I wasn’t bothered by his assumption that we would have another date. “Most of the movies I’ve seen have involved at least five dates before they decide whether or not they want to keep seeing each other—unless the first one is terrible. So far, you’ve fed me and took me to cuddle cats. I’d say it’s been pretty good.”

He smiled again and I could tell that he wasn’t as nervous anymore. It meant so much to me that he wanted this all to be perfect. Whether this is my only first date or the first of many, I knew I would always cherish this outing and the amazing alpha who planned every little detail. While we walked, we talked about how crazy school has been and how nice it is to have a day to ourselves. Jeonggukie kept stealing glances at me and trying to look away before I saw. The only reason I noticed is that I was doing the same. This felt so easy, so natural. Even with the added pressure of romantic context, we managed to seamlessly get along.

“That is a really big mall,” I said, staring at the building we were about to enter.

“Believe it or not, the rest of our day is going to be spent here.”

“I’m not big on shopping.”

“Neither am I. Good thing there’s a lot more to do here than that, huh?” He chuckled and led me toward one of the infinite walkways.

After passing what seemed like a million stores, we entered an annex that had paintings and sculptures. I wasn’t expecting to see an art space inside the mall. I began looking at the closest painting. It was a bright field of flowers in front of a lake. I was impressed by the amount of realism the artist managed to portray. I could almost feel the breeze and smell the flowers. I started to walk to the next painting, but Jeonggukie stopped me.

“If you want to look at the pieces, we can do it after our next activity. We’re going to be late if we don’t go now.” He put his arm around my shoulders and walked me further into the gallery.

What could we possibly be doing in an art space that didn’t involve looking at the art? My question was answered as we walked into a classroom filled with easels and chairs. Each station was equipped with anything you could need for painting. I stared at him with wonder and confusion. There’s no way he knew I used to paint as a kid. I only did it for a year, to keep my mind off of missing school because of my disorder.

“Maybe your mom showed me the paintings she has in her room,” Jeonggukie said when he realized I wanted an explanation. He seemed pleased with my stunned silence.

He led me to the middle of the room and motioned for me to sit. There were a few other people waiting for the class to begin. Some teens our age quickly filed in before the instructor stood at the front of the room. He was a petite male omega with thick-rimmed glasses. He looked completely comfortable in front of a room full of students and art supplies.

“Welcome, everyone! Thank you for coming! Today, we are going to do a quick still-life painting.” He pointed to a cupcake and a glass of wine sitting on a table. I couldn’t help wondering why he chose these two items to be the subject. Most of the still-life works I’ve seen are of fruit or flowers.

“I want you guys to paint this however you see it. Your interpretation can be hyper-realistic, a caricature, or a finger painting. The point of this class is to get over your fear of the blank canvas and your fear of messing up. Painting is a lot like life. I promise you’re going to make mistakes. It’s how you choose to proceed that either makes or breaks your masterpiece. Another part of this class is learning how to solidify your own vision. For those of you who came with someone, try not to get
their input. I know it’s hard, but this is your piece. Good art should change the viewer, not the other way around. Your idea of how it’s supposed to be shouldn’t be dictated by someone else. That’s not to say you can’t be social and talk amongst yourselves. Just try to avoid talking about how you should paint.” He paused to make sure his words sunk in.

“I’ll be going around to help with the physical painting part. If you’re not sure how to accomplish what you’re going for, please ask me. Between the two of us, I’m sure we’ll figure it out. I’m here for any questions you may have, but the art is your own. I can only guide you in your journey. I can’t complete it for you. For the next three hours, I want you to focus on portraying these objects to the world.” The class immediately set to work after he finished talking.

“Ever since he mentioned it, I’ve been thinking about doing a finger painting,” Jeonggukie whispered to me.

I couldn’t help the chuckle that escaped my lips. “It might be a little hard to paint a cupcake with your fingers, but I think you can manage. If anyone could figure out how to do that, it would be you.”

Again, he seemed surprised by my words. It made me laugh even more. “You’re good at everything, Jeonggukie. I feel like you’d be good at art too, even if it’s a finger painting.”

His shy smile and immediate avoidance of my eyes were endearing. I’ve never really seen him like this. Usually, he’s so composed. I tried my hardest to focus on the task at hand, finding it difficult to not watch my life mate. The amount of attention and care he gave to a finger painting amused me. I picked up a brush and dipped it into the brown paint. I wanted to outline the table before I did anything else. It would give me a scale for the cupcake and wine glass. The whole room was mostly silent, only the chatter of the instructor and a few students could be heard. After I finished the table and tablecloth, I looked over at Jeonggukie’s work. He started with the cupcake, making it the main focus of the piece. It was surprisingly detailed for something done without the proper tools. I looked at his paint-covered hands and realized he was using his claws for the lines and shadowing.

“That’s really clever. I wouldn’t have thought of using my nails.” I was impressed by his ingenuity.

“I’m good at improvising and working with what I’ve got,” he responded with a nonchalant tone.

I nodded and set my sights back on the table. I enjoyed painting again, although it’s not something I’ve actively thought about since I was younger. I avoided getting caught up in thinking about the past by continuing to paint. Eventually, I was faced with a fully-formed pastry on the canvas. If I had several hours to focus on this one object, it would look more realistic. However, it looked enough like a cupcake for me to be satisfied with the work. A loud sigh made me look towards my date.

I started giggling when I saw the problem. Jeonggukie’s hair had shifted and it was obstructing his vision. He couldn’t move it out of the way because of the paint on his hands. I watched him fail miserably at trying to use his forearm to get the job done. “Let me help,” I said after a few moments.

“Thanks.”

I was about to respond when I realized I had smeared white paint on his forehead. I started to stare at it and then looked down. Apparently, I had a little paint on my hands as well.

“I’m guessing you got some paint on me?” I nodded and tried to wipe it off for him, only serving to make it worse. I couldn’t help laughing at the situation.

“You’ve got some on you too.” He smirked and wiped his thumb across my cheek. I could feel the
wetness of the paint he put on me.

I narrowed my eyes and grabbed a brush laden with color. I quickly lunged at him, aiming the paintbrush at his nose. He caught my arm and held me back, making me drop the brush. He laughed at my frustration. “I believe you’ve got a wine glass to paint, little omega,” Jeonggukie said with a cocky smirk.

I turned back to my easel and saw small splotches of purple littering the white frosting of my cupcake. I glared at my life mate. “You messed it up, Jeonggukie.”

“No, I made it better. Now your cupcake has sprinkles. Sprinkles make everything better.” I sighed and rolled my eyes when he chuckled. I couldn’t be mad at him, even if he made my painting less realistic. The spots did look like sprinkles and it wasn’t a terrible addition. I added a few more to make it look intentional.

“Hey,” the alpha called to me. I looked at him and he cupped my chin in one of his freshly-cleaned hands. With the other, he gently wiped the paint off of my cheek using a damp towel. “All gone,” he whispered quietly, eyes wandering over me.

I felt my body heat up and a smile spread across my face. It reminded me of that cliche moment in movies where the alpha grabs the omega’s face and kisses them. The scene always plays out in slow motion, both people leaning in until their lips meet. Then, they kiss until they both look starry-eyed and completely in love. It made me wonder what that moment might feel like. It’s not a secret that I hadn’t had my first kiss and the situation had me pondering whether or not Jeonggukie was planning on taking care of that too. I kept staring up at him, noticing how he avoided looking at my lips. He was definitely thinking the same thing. For some reason, that made me excited. Since I already agreed to my first date being with my life mate, I guess I wouldn’t mind my first kiss being his too. Not right now, of course, but eventually. Kissing him now seemed a little rushed, but my omega was begging for it. He relished the idea of his alpha being all of our firsts—and lasts. A sudden movement on my face brought me out of those thoughts. Jeonggukie softly ran his thumb over my cheek and smiled at me. After a moment, he quickly let me go and turned back to his canvas.

I couldn’t tell whether his sudden movements were because he realized the position we were in or because the instructor was coming to check on our progress. The male omega seemed impressed by the work Jeonggukie produced with his claws. He told us that he always made the finger painting joke to lessen the tension, but my life mate was the first person to actually do it.

“I like the sprinkles,” the omega said with a laugh. “I saw you two get into a paint fight and I was curious if there was any damage. I think you managed to make this mistake work for your masterpiece.”

“There’s almost nothing that you can’t make better with the right outlook and enough effort.”

The instructor seemed surprised by Jeonggukie’s statement. To cover his lack of response, he nodded and went to another student. I laughed at his reaction. I imagine it must be strange to encounter such a grounded and self-assured 16-year-old in a random art class. A few months ago, I wouldn’t have believed someone like my alpha life mate existed. I tried not to think too much about how he’s impacted my life—about how much he means to me. Instead, I focused on getting the right color for the red wine in the glass. The rest of the class was spent in silence. Occasionally, I would glance over and check Jeonggukie’s progress or watch his face tense with concentration. Before I knew it, the class was over. I didn’t get to add the level of detail I wanted in the allotted time, but I was pleased with the outcome. The instructor collected our paintings and set them out to dry completely. He said we could come to pick them up tomorrow afternoon. We decided to wander around the art
space and look at the various works. Eventually, we both got hungry again. My life mate and I looked around at the options and finally decided on a place that serves American food. We ordered fried chicken, a pizza, and french fries.

“Have you had a good time so far?” Jeonggukie asked while we waited for the food to arrive.

“I really have. Although, I will say I’m disappointed Nabi can’t join us for this meal too. I could get used to having her around.”

“We’ll go visit her again. The guy behind the counter told me that she’s the owner’s cat. All of the cats are up for adoption, except her. She’ll definitely be there next time we visit.”

“I’d like that,” I said quietly. The promise of another date made me excited.

“Next Sunday?” Although he was more comfortable than earlier, nervousness still seeped into his voice.

“Yeah. Next Sunday sounds great.”

We were both trapped staring at each other, with stupid smiles on our faces, when the food arrived. We immediately started eating. It seemed like we both wanted to avoid the implications of our shared looks. A comfortable silence fell over us as we stole slices of pizza and fries from each other’s plates. I was content sitting close to him, our arms sometimes brushing as we reached to grab something. I noticed how easy it was to be here with him and how much I enjoyed his presence. I kind of like this. If this is dating, I could get used to it. I ate as I thought about what could change if we started dating. Even though we’re going on dates, we’re not dating. Who decided to call those the same thing? There’s a huge difference between going on a romantic outing with someone and being their significant other. I didn’t allow myself to think about Jeonggukie becoming my boyfriend. We’re not there, I’m not ready, and I didn’t need my omega trying to convince me that I should change that. I can do dates for now. I don’t know how much more than that I could handle.

“Jiminnie?” The whisper brought my attention back to my life mate.

“Yeah, Jeonggukie?”

“Can I tell you something? I hope you don’t get mad, but I feel like I should tell you.” His words and tone worried me a little, but I didn’t feel the need to be too concerned. He didn’t look guilty or anything.

I nodded and he continued. “I hope you don’t get upset when I say this, but you’re really pretty. I know you’re not usually supposed to call guys pretty, but you are. You’ve got pretty eyes, pretty hair, pretty lips. You’re just pretty.” His face had a strange combination of relief from saying something he had been hiding and worry about how I would react.

It took me a moment to process how I felt about being called pretty. That’s not something boys usually hear. It didn’t make me angry like I thought it would. It didn’t strike me as feminizing or emasculating, probably because I knew Jeonggukie would never say anything to make me feel that way. It was… nice? Past my omega’s instant excitement at the alpha’s words, I think I like my life mate calling me pretty. I attempted to ignore the nervous tension that spread across my chest. I didn’t want to think too much about everything. Just for today, I wanted to enjoy the moment and try not to overanalyze what I’m feeling. Jeonggukie anxiously awaited my reply. He didn’t relax until he saw me smile a little.

“Thank you.” I wasn’t sure what else to say.
“Thank for not getting mad. I was scared I would offend you or your alpha would get pissed off.”

“I’m not offended. I thought it was nice and it made my omega happy. I don’t know about my alpha, though. I haven’t heard from him all day.” The absence was curious, but I decided to ignore it for now.

“Let’s worry about that later,” he said as we were walking about of the restaurant. “Right now, I wanted to take you somewhere I think you’ll enjoy.”

We walked side-by-side, navigating the walkways and stores. I felt the warmth of his hand on mine as he gently laced our fingers together. We’ve held hands to comfort each other before, but never for the sake of holding hands. It was nice. I liked how warm his hand was and how well it fit into my own. I know most male omegas are small, but I’ve always been a little self-conscious about my tiny hands. I didn’t mind them so much when they were nestled inside of Jeonggukie’s. The way his fingers held onto mine, firmly but sweetly, made me feel that happy vomit feeling again. I turned my focus to walking and my stomach flipped in excitement when I saw where we were headed. It was the most massive bookstore I’ve ever seen. There were sitting areas all over, with groups of people enjoying a good book.

“You really went for it, didn’t you, Jeonggukie?” The amusement was evident in my voice.

“What do you mean?” He led me into the bookstore and motioned for me to go wherever I wanted.

“You brought me to see cats, you took me to a painting class, and now I’m looking at the biggest collection of books I’ve ever seen. You took a lot of the things that I enjoy and decided to combine them into a date.”

He smiled, happy that I noticed what he was trying to achieve. “All of the movies I saw and the things that I read had one common theme. Dates that were well thought out and had emotional meaning were the most memorable. I wanted this day to be special. I wanted you to always feel good when you think about your first date, whether we end up together or not. I figured doing something like this would be the best way to accomplish that.”

I couldn’t stop the huge grin from spreading across my face, making my eyes disappear. I couldn’t put into words how much it meant to me that he put this much effort into everything. While I’m not good with romantic feelings and I’m still not sure if I have them towards Jeonggukie, it was touching to know I had someone this thoughtful in my life. I am so lucky to have such an amazing, wonderful life mate.

“It’s been great, so far. I can’t even imagine what else you could to do make it better. This has been such a fun day already.”

“You’re an awesome person, Jiminie. You deserve to have someone be this way with you, whether it’s me or another person. I wasn’t lying when I said that I was trying to set a standard. Whoever is taking you on dates better do these types of things for you, always. If they don’t, they’re going to have to deal with me.” Towards the end of the sentence, his voice faded to little more than a low growl. I could tell the thought of someone mistreating me bothered him greatly.

I ignored the nervous-tingling-happy-vomit-stomach-flopping nonsense that invaded my whole body at Jeonggukie’s words. I didn’t want to think too much about the heat that rushed through me or the way it was slightly harder to breathe now. I completely refused to acknowledge the strange melty sensation I felt. My omega swooned and I seriously wondered if I was about to do the same. For my own sanity, I pushed it all aside and responded to the frustration my life mate was feeling.
“Hey,” I said while pulling him into a tight hug, “let’s not think about that today. Right now, I’m on a date with the best alpha I know and he’s treating me very well. That’s all we need to worry about for now.” He put his face up to my neck and I could feel him grow calmer. After a few moments, we broke the embrace. I grabbed his hand again because I disliked how cold I felt without it. My mind linked the uncomfortable coldness I’ve been experiencing with the absence of Jeonggukie. I moved that to the back of my mind and continued speaking.

“Plus, you act like I wouldn’t introduce you to someone before I decided to do anything other than have a basic conversation. I know you wouldn’t even let me be friends with an asshole, let alone date one. I trust your judgment, Jeonggukie. If you tell me to stay away from someone, then I’ll never speak to them again.” I liked the way his eyes sparkled after I finished speaking, probably more than I should have.

He tightened his grip on my hand and we continued walking through the Omega History section. I was ashamed to admit that I don’t know as much about my rank history as I should. If I want to be a Professor of Omega Studies, then I need to know everything humanly possible about omegas. We both scanned through the books to see if anything interesting jumped out. We didn’t talk again for a while. I think we were both worried that we would end up saying something that might make the other think too much. We both knew we could try to understand everything another time.

“I’m getting this for you,” Jeonggukie said abruptly.

He showed me a very thick book titled Our History is Our Own: Dispelling the Alpha Gaze. It was a side-by-side analysis of historical documents, accounts, and events that delved into the differences between what actually happened and what was reported in history books by alphas. It went through all of the major time periods and discussed all of the turning points in the fight for omega rights. It was written by four omegas who were experts in omega studies, history, psychology, and social welfare. It was the perfect book to plunge myself into learning more about my rank. My alpha life mate somehow always managed to do the most situationally appropriate thing at the perfect time. It made me feel kind of squishy inside. I didn’t even bother trying to make sense of what that meant. There were more important things to address.

“Okay, it’s official. You can read my mind. I don’t care what you say. There is nothing you will ever be able to say or do that can convince me otherwise. I was just telling myself that I needed to learn more about omega history.” I stared at him, willing him to give in and admit what I was already convinced was the truth.

“I cannot tell what you’re thinking, little omega. Do you remember when we talked about our career goals with your mom? You mentioned that you needed to learn more about omega history. I saw this book and it seemed like a good choice.”

I pursed my lips and thought for a moment. I didn’t think he was lying. However, the number of times he’s done this was starting to be too many for it to be a coincidence. I trust Jeonggukie. Though I met him only months ago, I wholeheartedly trust him. If he says he can’t read my mind, then I have to believe that. That sounds completely insane. Who seriously contemplates whether or not someone can hear their thoughts?

Jeonggukie grabbed my other hand, getting my attention in the process. “I know it seems like it, but I can’t read your mind. I promise. Even if you have a hard time believing me, know that I would never break a promise to you. I’d never forgive myself if I did.” The scarlet in his eyes shined with sincerity, making me nod my head in agreement. I believed him.

We continued to walk around for a while before we decided to move on to the next part of the plan. I could have easily spent the rest of the night looking around, but I didn’t want to ruin what my life
mate worked so hard for. I knew that it was important to him that I experience this date in its entirety.

“An arcade?”

“You didn’t get to go to an arcade with friends as a pup. I wanted to fix it.” He shrugged. “Pick whatever you want to play. Since this is a date, I’ll go easy on you.” His smirk let me know that he was trying to push my buttons. It worked.

“I’ll kick your ass in anything we play!”

“Bring it on, little omega.”

The playful banter and insults that we hurled at each other made me realize how comfortable Jeonggukie makes me. I seem to be understanding my emotions more and more as the night goes on. That thought gave me hope that I would eventually know exactly how I feel. I enjoyed that he would periodically pause his taunting to make sure I was okay with him picking on me. It was heartwarming to see how badly he wanted me to enjoy myself.

"Don't go soft on me now, Jeonggukie. I'm just lulling you into a false sense of security so my victory will be that much sweeter,” I called out while we were playing the basketball game.

“Dream on, Jiminie! I’m going to beat you at this like I beat you at everything else.”

“I outlived you in Time Crisis and I had a higher score than you in the shooting gallery and Tetris. I think you need to rephrase that.”

“Look,” he said as he kept making basket after basket, “I’ll give you Tetris. I know I suck at Tetris. But, I saved your ass in Time Crisis. You survived because I sacrificed myself to kill that guy who was sneaking up on you. I’ve beaten the game by myself before.”

“What about the shooting gallery then?” I asked, missing another shot.

“You’re actually really good, but my hair was in my eyes.”

“Why didn’t you move it?”

“I wanted to let you win.” He shrugged and shot again.

I was torn between my anger that he took pity on me and my omega’s satisfaction that his alpha would let us win. Jeonggukie wasn’t openly competitive like most alphas, but I noticed the look in his eyes change whenever he was going against someone. To alphas, everything can be a competition. However, direct rivalries are given more attention. I’ve seen the shift in my life mate’s features when one of the pack challenges him to a game or says they’re better than him at something. I knew it was a huge deal for him to forfeit a triumph.

“Why?” I stopped playing and looked at him. I needed to understand why a hyper-dominant alpha would give up winning for me. Beyond my own curiosity, my omega had to know if his alpha was losing to please us.

“I like it when you’re happy. Seeing you all excited because you beat me is worth more than my alpha’s pride. At the end of the day, it’s just a game. If my alpha’s ego is so fragile that he’s getting upset over a shooting game, then he’s got bigger problems than losing.”

The buzzer sounded, but I couldn’t bring myself to look at the score. I was frozen staring at Jeonggukie. My omega began purring because of his admission. With much effort, I stopped the
noise from coming out. I managed to avoid embarrassing myself by purring in public, but I couldn’t resist temporarily indulging in my wonder. How is he so mature? How is he so perfect? It was getting harder and harder to deny that my life mate was the perfect alpha. Most alphas would say he’s flawless because of all the physical and personality characteristics that his HADD gives him. Those are the qualities that alphas cherish. However, I think he’s so great because of how he handles those traits. He’s strong enough to charm any omega, beat any alpha, and do pretty much anything he wanted. Yet, here he is, going on a date with me and letting me win an arcade game. I couldn’t help feeling special when I thought about it. I didn’t know how to respond to everything, so I just kept staring. This was the hundredth time today that I tried not to place too much importance on anything that I was thinking or feeling.

“Do you want me to teach you how to win at this game?” He said, moving behind me. It was a welcomed attempt to break the silence and tension.

I nodded. I don’t know why I felt so strange all of a sudden, but I didn’t trust my voice not to give me away. He grabbed my hips and pulled me away from the machine slightly. I tried to focus more on his words than the warmth I felt behind me.

“When you go to shoot the ball, cup it in your hand like this.” He held my hand in his and positioned it to hold the ball the way he wanted.

“The secret to this game is aiming for the right spot on the backboard. Once you can hit that spot, you’ll make it every time. Shift your weight a little while you shoot and try to get it to right there.” He pointed to the area I should aim for. I did a practice shot and made the basket fairly easily.

“Again,” he said with authority in his voice. I tried and made it once more. He kept telling me to repeat the action, so I did. I missed a few shots, but my score was much higher than it had been in previous games.

“Good job, little omega.” My omega preened himself at the pride in Jeonggukie’s voice. His alpha was proud of us. He was pleased that we are a good omega and listened to him.

“I had a good teacher,” I said quietly. I tried my hardest not to be unnerved when he wrapped his arms around my waist and spoke into my ear.

“The teacher is only as good as the student lets him be. If you weren’t such a quick learner, this would have gone differently.”

I begged my omega to calm down, but he didn’t. The combination of praise and the close proximity of his alpha made him too excited. I stepped away from Jeonggukie and tried to find something else to do. This was affecting me more than I wanted to admit. He pulled me back by my waist and turned me so I was facing him.

“You okay?” His soft voice didn’t help the situation at all.

“Yeah. You’re making my omega freak out,” I said as I bit my lip and avoided his eyes.

“Are you sure it’s just your omega? You seem a little flustered.” I could tell by his tone that he was amused by the situation. His nerves from earlier in the day were completely gone.

“Positive. I just wanted to kick your ass in darts.”

“Let’s go, then.” He grabbed my hand and led me to the dart board. I was glad that he allowed me to change the subject.
During our time at the arcade, I learned two things. The first thing I learned is that Jeonggukie is
good at everything—literally every fucking thing that he does, except Tetris. Racing game? Good.
Table hockey? Good. DDR? Good. Stupid perfect alpha. The second thing is that I don’t mind
losing to my life mate the same way that I used to. I’m definitely still bitter. It’s still a hit to my pride
that I lost, but somehow that didn’t matter as much when it was him that I lost to. After he finished
beating the mess out of my character in our last round of Street Fighter, Jeonggukie’s hand found
mine again. That soothed the bitterness of defeat even more.

“Two more things on the list, Jimine. One of them is dinner.”

We opted to try the Korean buffet. There were so many different options that neither of us knew
where to start. We made a plan to divide and conquer. Jeonggukie started at one side of the restaurant
and I started at the other. We got decent portions of several things from our designated sections and
returned to the table. Naturally, we stole bits and pieces from each other’s plates. I finished eating
before he did, so I curled up to his side. He held my hand as he ate. It was peaceful and pleasant.

“I really like this,” he said in between bites.

“Like what?”

“Doing this with you. I was nervous about it because I thought it would somehow change everything
between us. I thought that maybe we would be different if we decided to go on a date. It was a little
awkward at first, but it got a lot better after that. I appreciate spending time with just you, I like
holding your hand, and I love making you smile. This whole dating thing is a lot better than I thought
it would be. I know it doesn’t mean that we’re mates or anything, but I’m happy we decided to try. I
enjoy being with you like this.”

“I do too. I always love spending time with you, but the date has been very nice. I have had a great
time. You’re also really sweet to me. It makes me feel weird and I don’t know how to process it.”

“Then don’t. Just go with it and see where it takes you. That’s what I’m doing. No matter what I’m
thinking and feeling at the moment, I just run with it. I can figure out what it all means later. If we
analyze too much and don’t act on our instincts, then we’re not giving each other a fair chance. I
probably would have talked myself out of doing half of this stuff if I listened to my own logic. But,
so far you’ve had a great time. We would have missed out on a lot of today if I had listened to the
voice of reason.” Jeonggukie finished eating and pulled me into his lap before he continued
speaking.

“I’m committed to this and I want you to be committed too. I’m not saying I have my feelings all
figured out, but I know I never will if I don’t give this my everything. How can I possibly know how
I feel about you if I’m thinking too much and not allowing myself to actually feel it? How can either
one of us know if we’re going to fall in love and be mates if we don’t put at least some effort into
falling in love and being mates? I’m not saying it’s going to turn out that way. I’m just saying that we
owe it to ourselves to get out of our own way. As far as I can tell, emotions happen whether we want
them to or not. Even though they grow on their own, it’s up to us to cultivate them. We can’t force
ourselves into feeling a certain way. However, people are very good at convincing themselves not to
feel and ignoring their feelings until they go away. Let’s not overthink and let’s not neglect our
emotions. We should just allow ourselves to feel and focus on nurturing those feelings. That way,
there will be no regrets or second-guessing when you make your decision.”

My eyes disappeared into crescents at his words. Jeonggukie was right. I turned to hug him and felt
him nuzzle my hair. As always, the actions were so simple and natural. It felt like this was where I
was supposed to be. I decided to go with it and clung to him even more. For the second time today, I
came to the conclusion that I could get used to dating my life mate. Our server came to clear away
our plates, staring at us with a wide smile. I heard her talking to a coworker about how cute we were as we left. When I told Jeonggukie, he laughed.

"You don't think we're cute?" I wasn't sure if I was offended or not, but my omega hated the idea of his alpha not thinking we're a cute couple.

"We definitely are. I just thought it was funny that she thought we were so cute that she had to talk about it while we were right there. I didn't realize we were *that* cute."

"Apparently, we are," I said with a giggle. My omega was much happier after Jeonggukie agreed with the server's assessment.

"Well, we have one more place to be cute at."

"Lead the way." I locked my fingers into his before I thought about what I was doing. It felt instinctive at this point to hold his hand. I always seemed to normalize things quickly when it came to my alpha life mate.

We left the mall and got on another bus. I curled up in Jeonggukie’s lap and placed my head on his shoulder. It was nice to be this close to him. It always felt so serene. I let out a pleased sigh and hoped that he didn't hear. I may have decided to let these feelings develop, but I wasn't sure I wanted him to ask about them just yet. Even though I chose not to overanalyze them, I still wanted to be able to name them before I tried to express them to my life mate. I didn't want to give him the wrong idea if I mislabeled what I'm feeling.

"Happy?" He asked softly. He seemed to know not to ask too much.

"Yeah. I think so," I whispered.

"Good. Me too."

Like so many of our other interactions today, it was effortless yet meaningful. I grabbed the hand that was resting on my waist and started playing with his fingers. He seemed content to let me move them back and forth, pushing and pulling however I wanted.

"You have nice hands," I blurted out before I realized what I was saying.

"You do too. They’re small enough to disappear in mine." He laced our fingers together to illustrate just how tiny my hands were compared to his.

"I like that," I said while staring at the intertwined extremities.

"Me too." I could hear the smile in his voice. "It makes me feel like I can take care of you."

My body reacted positively to Jeonggukie’s words. I felt warmth, tension, and enthusiasm course through me. My omega was equally as enthralled. He was ecstatic that our alpha wanted to care for us. Much to my dismay, I also enjoyed that fact. "I kinda like that too." The words left me before I could stop them.

My life mate never responded to my statement, but he held me closer after that. I could almost feel how pleased his alpha was. We fell into a comfortable silence—both satisfied to hold one another and be in each other's presence. The feeling of his hand in my own was the only thing that kept the weight of my feelings at bay. The bus ride wasn't very long, but I noticed we were going in the direction of my house. I wasn't sure if that meant our last stop was close to where I live or if my life mate decided against going there. My question was quickly answered when we dipped into a
building with a bright sign. I wasn’t surprised that Jeonggukie would bring me to a karaoke room. I’ve only mentioned once, in passing, that I sang as a kid. By now, obscure emotional references seemed to be the theme of the date.

“Let me guess, you picked this because I casually mentioned when we danced that I also used to sing?”

He chuckled. “No. I actually forgot about that. I picked karaoke because I thought it would be a lot of fun and I wanted to sing with you. Call it a weird guess, but I think your singing voice is another thing that I’ll have to add to the list of your pretty features.”

I felt the embarrassed, tingly thrashing in my chest and stomach again. He said the words so casually, like it was nothing to give me those types compliments. I really do have a nice singing voice, but there’s no way he could know that. I wondered what Jeonggukie’s voice sounded like as we entered our room and started looking over songs. He decided to go first, picking “Eyes, Nose, Lips” by Taeyang. It wasn’t what I would have imagined he’d choose, but I was curious to see what it would sound like. When he started to sing, I felt the tension come back tenfold. He sang beautifully. The song sounded like it was made for him. He easily kept up with the vocal runs, adding his own ad-libs here and there. Halfway through the performance, I came to the conclusion that I could listen to him sing for hours. Jeonggukie’s voice is the perfect representation of him as a person—soothing, calm, and beautiful, despite all of the power it held. The performance was over before I knew it and I was sad when it ended. I wanted to hear him sing more.

“Your turn.” I picked up the other microphone as he sat on the sofa to watch me.

It took me a minute, but I finally decided on “Beautiful Life” by CRUSH. I already knew all of the words to the song and it was simple enough to perform. I didn’t focus on Jeonggukie’s presence. I wanted to sing without worrying about what he would think. I closed my eyes, took a deep breath, and began. I hoped that I wouldn’t sound too bad. I was nervous under his gaze. Even though I couldn’t see him, I knew he was watching me. I let my thoughts disappear within the music and tried not to worry. Soon enough, I was finished. I opened my eyes and turned. I was met with the wide, twinkling eyes of my alpha life mate. He looked stunned. I started to get a little self-conscious as he continued to stare.

“Was it that bad?” I asked with a chuckle.

He snapped out of his trance and looked at me with a serious expression. “You have the most beautiful voice I’ve ever heard, Jiminie. I’m actually upset I haven’t heard it before now.”

“You’re one to talk,” I said as I sat next to him.

“What do you mean?”

“Let’s just say, I’m calling you to sing for me the next time I can’t sleep.” For some reason, I was too shy to actually compliment him. Luckily, he was smart enough to understand.

“Gladly,” he said with a smile. “You want to sing together now?”

My omega perked up at the request. The offer to join his alpha in creating something beautiful made him more pleased than I would have imagined. The rest of the night melted into an endless mixture of ballads, power tracks, love songs, breakup songs, and idiotic dances. We covered the gamut of artists—including some karaoke must-haves, like BIGBANG, Roy Kim, and Im Jae Beom. We alternated between singing together and separately when we felt we needed a break. I was watching his hilarious rendition of EXID’s “Up & Down” when Jeonggukie pulled me off the couch to dance
and sing backup vocals. I wasn’t used to the silly side of him, but I thoroughly enjoyed it. It was nice to see him let loose. I could tell he felt the same when he nearly choked from laughing at my version of “Gee” by SNSD. Existing in this moment was beyond amazing. The score from the machine didn’t matter. How many lyrics and dance moves we butchered didn’t make a difference. The only important thing right now was Jeonggukie and me being together.

We decided to call it a night after we made a duet out of So Chan Whee’s “Tears.” We both knew there was nowhere else to go once that song was performed. Plus, all the high notes made our throats a little sore. If we stopped now, we would still be able to talk tomorrow during school. We walked out into the night, holding hands and laughing at nothing in particular.

“I hope you had fun, little omega.” He spoke quietly to conserve his voice, but I could still hear his sincerity.

“It was absolutely amazing, Jeonggukie. I know this was my first date, but I’m pretty sure it’s the best one I’ll ever go on.” I couldn’t help smiling when I smelled the excitement in his scent.

“Good. That’s exactly what I wanted. Like I said before, you deserve to be treated well. No matter who is taking you places, they better put effort into it. Maybe not this much effort, but it shouldn’t be half-assed.”

“If they don’t, I won’t bother. Does that make you feel better?”

“Yes. You should be given all of the care and respect in the world by whoever is lucky enough to get your attention. All of your dates should be thought out.”

“You better start thinking then,” I said with a smirk. “You’ve got a week to figure out what we’re doing next Sunday. Although, I don’t expect anything like today. This was a great first date, but I’d probably be exhausted if we did all of this every week.”

He gave me a cocky smile and raised his eyebrow as we walked up to my house. “Are you saying you want to go out with me every Sunday, little omega?”

“I’m not opposed to the idea,” I quietly confessed. I hadn’t realized I insinuated that, but I really wouldn’t mind doing this on a regular basis.

“Then, consider all of your Sundays mine from now on.”

I failed to stop a smile from taking over and he didn’t seem to be able to control his either. We stood at the door for a few moments, staring at each other. Our hands were still locked together. I knew it was getting late, so I decided it was best to go inside. I wrapped my arms around Jeonggukie’s neck tightly.

“Thank you again for today. It was perfect.”

He clung to my waist and held me close to his chest. “I’m really glad you enjoyed yourself. I had a really great time too. It was definitely a good first date.”

We both acknowledged the need to leave. That didn’t prevent us from spending the next few minutes lost in an embrace. Neither of us wanted to let go. After a little while longer, Jeonggukie spoke again.

“It’s late and you need to sleep. I should go.” I groaned at the idea, making him laugh.

“You could just stay over.” I don’t care if it sounded wrong or not. I didn’t want him to go, I didn’t
want this moment to end, and I didn’t like the idea of being cold again.

“I’m sorry, but I can’t. My research clearly showed that I have to drop you off at your house and go home. But,” he said as he shifted out of my hold, “there is one last thing I have to do.” He sounded slightly anxious.

“What’s that?” I asked with a confused tone.

He placed his hand on my cheek and tilted my head upwards. Before I realized what he was doing, he had pulled me into a kiss. Just as I processed the warmth of his lips on my own, they were gone. It was quick, barely more than a peck, but it was long enough for my brain to shut down from surprise. I didn’t know what to do, so I stood and stared at him. He smiled, looked me over one last time, and bid me goodnight. I hardly managed to whisper a response as I watched him walk away. It took me a few minutes to break out of my trance. I slipped inside and made a conscious decision to not think about the meaning of anything tonight. My mom was asleep by now, so I didn’t have to recount the day’s events just yet. When I got into my room, I placed my new book on my desk and changed my clothes. I was tired and my mind was numb. I laid in bed and waited for unconsciousness. It didn’t take long. Like a ghost, the brush of his lips tingled on mine as I drifted off to sleep—trying not to dwell on the coldness of my hands and the echoing of his beautiful voice in my ears.

Chapter End Notes

Did you enjoy their date? I hope you did. It was a little hard to write, but I think it turned out well. Do you have any favorite parts or questions? If so, feel free to ask. I love reading all of your comments! They really inspire me to keep writing. It means more to me than I can say that you all are reading and enjoying this.

Also, JIKOOK KISSED!!!!! It wasn't the firework-inducing, drawn-out kiss that some of you might have been hoping for, but this fits better with the story. They have plenty of time to shove their tongues down each other's throats later. For now, they're still working on developing feelings and getting to the point where they make out. I hope it didn't disappoint you.
Rebellion

Chapter Notes

I'm sorry that I updated later than I normally do! I hope you all enjoyed the oneshot that I posted as an apology. If you haven't checked it out, you should. It's called "What's Your Fantasy?"

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

I woke up in a bad mood. It was strange. I usually only feel this way during the first day of my rut. My cycle isn’t for another three weeks, so I must just be having a bad day. I shrugged it off as much as possible and got ready for school. My mom wasn’t home, which isn’t uncommon. She often works the early morning shift because she’s one of the most experienced anesthesiologists and the majority of scheduled surgeries happen in the morning. I spent the start of my morning in silence, trying not to be upset. I got plenty of sleep, I ate, I don’t remember having any weird dreams, and I had a good weekend. I can’t think of any reason to feel like this. When I heard a knock on the door, I got a little excited. Jeonggukie has been walking Mi Mi and me to school for a while now. Between the two of them, I was sure to be in a better mood by the time we got to class. I grabbed my stuff and headed outside.

“Hey,” Jeonggukie said, flashing a small smile.

“Hey,” I replied with a smile of my own.

It was the first interaction we had since our date—since our kiss. I don’t really know what the protocol is for these situations. Do we talk about it? Do we pretend it didn’t happen? Do we keep acting like we did before the date or do we continue where the date left off? I wonder which would be more awkward. If we pretend it didn’t happen and exist like we did before, does that mean dates are like an alternate universe? I couldn’t help imagining the world being made up of two timelines. The first is actual time and the second was date time. The things that happen in each line don’t affect the other. It was comical and ridiculous, but it felt more comfortable to act like that was reality. Maybe, I’m just worried things will change if we acknowledge what happened. I felt Jeonggukie’s arms wrap around me and it dragged me out of my own world.

“You’re thinking too much again. Let’s walk and talk, so Ranie doesn’t yell about us being late.”

He grabbed my hand and pulled me along. I felt uneasy and agitated as he began talking. “Nothing has to change, little omega. We talked about this. Yesterday happened. We went on a date, we held hands, and I kissed you. I’m also holding your hand right now. There’s no reason to dwell on it unless you didn’t like something. Are you regretting anything that happened? You smell upset.”

“I am upset, but not because of anything from yesterday. I woke up in a really bad mood, almost like rut rage. I’m on edge right now. I don’t know why.”

“Do you want me to try to calm you down?” He asked softly.

I nodded and he changed his scent. Instead of making me feel peaceful, the citrusy floral smell made me angry. My alpha growled and I barely stopped myself from growling too. I could tell Jeonggukie heard the strangled noise that came from the back of my throat and smelled the bitter spike in my
own fragrance. Why is my alpha being like this? He got used to my alpha life mate’s scent a long time ago. Just a few days ago, this same action calmed him down when he was upset. What’s with this sudden negative reaction? It felt almost like when I first smelled Jeonggukie during my rut—back when my alpha hated him. The questions turned in my mind, over and over, until the distress in my scent caused my life mate to stop. I felt a smaller set of arms engulf me and I smelled the calming fruity spice of my favorite omega. My alpha immediately turned docile. This makes no sense. Lately, both my alpha and my omega have been responding better to Jeonggukie than they have to Mi Mi. It’s almost like my alpha is throwing a tantrum. Fuck.

“I know what’s wrong,” I said to my life mates. They were both looking at me with concern on their faces. “My alpha is rebelling. I don’t know if he’s pissed about my omega coming out more or about me going on a date. I’m guessing it’s a combination. It’s only been a week since my omega made himself known and my alpha probably doesn’t want to share control. Also, I’m sure he’s not happy about the date. I’m not even sure if he cares that I went on a date with an alpha. I think it’s because you’re stronger than me. He’s either scared of you or scared of not being the strongest. Maybe both.”

“Is that why you’re not responding well to my scent change?” Jeonggukie asked.

“I think so. It’s also why Mi Mi’s is making me feel better. My alpha sees her as his omega, although not in a romantic way.”

“So, what are you going to do? That kind of puts you two back at the beginning. Your alpha needs to stop being a little bitch, Ji Ji. Tell him that his omega says he needs to just accept his alpha and get over it!” Mi Mi’s tone was light and joking, but I could tell she was being serious. I laughed at the thought of her telling my alpha what to do under the authority of being his omega.

“That’s basically what I plan to do. I’m done listening to him. I’m committed to trying with Jeonggukie and my alpha can shut the fuck up if he has a problem with it. I’ve let him dictate how I act my whole life. It’s time I decide what to do. Plus, if we are going to be mates, my alpha is going to have to get over it eventually. He might as well start now because we’re stuck with Jeonggukie for life—no matter how my alpha feels about it.”

I aggressively grabbed my alpha life mate’s hand to illustrate my point. He laughed and intertwined our fingers. I was aggravated, but I made the choice not to give in to my alpha. It’s not up to him whether or not I am comfortable around Jeonggukie. After I got settled into class, my alpha relaxed. I could still feel his frustration, but it was much less than before. I wonder how long things will be this way. My alpha is stubborn. He’s not going to let something go if he thinks he can win. He’s probably just waiting for when I give up. I don’t think he realizes I’m just as willful as he is. Even though I knew I could outlast him, I wasn’t looking forward to living in a constant state of being moderately annoyed. It was so confusing how my feelings regarding Jeonggukie were everywhere. My omega wants to mate him, my alpha can’t stand him, and I’m somewhere in the middle.

Speaking of my omega, I haven’t heard from him today. He was present all day yesterday. Maybe my wolves are going to switch who’s the voice in my head each day. That doesn’t seem right. A few days ago, they were both giving me opinions on whether or not the date was a good idea. Only time will tell how this will play out.

My alpha was calm for hours after I got to my first class. That changed when I began walking towards the cafeteria. Jeonggukie’s scent lingered faintly in the halls and it made my wolf unhappy. Too bad for him I don’t care what he thinks right now. I was on edge by the time I reached the door. I took a deep breath and walked inside. I’m not going to give in to the nagging voice in the back of my mind that told me to stay away from my alpha life mate. When I arrived at the table, Jeonggukie was laughing with Mi Mi, Dae Jeong, and Ji Ae. The rest of the pack hadn’t arrived yet. I stood behind the alpha and waited for him to acknowledge me.
“Are you waiting for something, little omega?” He said without turning around.

“My spot.” He slid his chair away from the table and I instantly sat down on his lap.

“I wasn’t sure if you wanted to sit like this given the circumstances,” Jeonggukie whispered in my ear to avoid letting the other omegas know.

I turned to the side and whispered as well. “I told you, I’m not letting my alpha control me. He can get the fuck over it.” I grabbed both of my alpha life mate’s hands and squeezed them. “Even if he doesn’t like you, my omega and I both love your company. He’s outnumbered.”

“It’s still going to cause problems. We’ll have to figure it out at some point. If we’re going to be more than what we are now, every side of you is going to have to agree to that. That would be like you and I deciding to date, but my alpha hates you. It wouldn’t work.”

“For now, I’m going to ignore it and see if he gives up. If he doesn’t, we will figure it out.” The rest of Jeonggukie’s statement didn’t sit well with me. I know his alpha likes my omega, but I’ve never actually asked how my life mate or his wolf feel about me or my alpha.

“What’s on your mind?”

“How does your alpha feel about me and my alpha? And how do you feel about all three of us? We’ve never really talked about anything other than your alpha liking my omega.”

He was quiet for a moment. I could tell that he was trying to figure out exactly what to say. I don’t often think of how difficult all of these emotions must be for Jeonggukie. Although he seems to have his feelings more together and defined than I do, I’m sure this is a struggle for him. I understood the pressure. He’s young, he’s never tried to date anyone, he’s never been interested in anyone, and he’s always thought he’d be mateless. Now, he’s decided that we should see if we can be together. He’s brave for confronting these issues head-on. I wonder if he has figured out how he feels about me at all. It wouldn’t surprise me if he has. I get the feeling that he’s better with emotions than I am. All I know is that I enjoy his company and I didn’t like seeing Chae Hyun touch him. He makes me feel things, but I don’t know what to call them or how to understand them. I guess it doesn’t help that the feelings only appear every once in a while. I don’t feel a constant draw towards him or overwhelming affection the way that books and movies always describe when you like someone. If my feelings are fleeting and inconsistent, doesn’t that mean they aren’t true? The constant push and pull between my wolves makes everything more difficult. Their emotions tend to take over my own. How am I supposed to figure out how I feel if it largely depends on how they feel?

I felt Jeonggukie shift and pull me closer. “You already know my alpha likes your omega. He likes you too, says you’re good company. He thinks your alpha needs to chill though. I agree with my alpha.”

It was a simple explanation, but it told me what I needed to know. I focused on eating and tried not to overthink things. I was never one to analyze every little detail of an event—at least when it came to how I feel. I was always happy to ignore thoughts and emotions until they went away, never considering if they had a deeper meaning. That changed when Joon asked me to start contemplating how I feel about Jeonggukie. Ever since then, all I seem to do is stay in my head. I felt my alpha life mate tap my thigh and I turned towards him.

“Yunie wanted to talk to us,” he said while pointing towards the other alpha.

I gave my attention to Yunie, who was addressing the whole pack. “Chae is coming over again tonight. I thought it would be nice if everyone was there. If you can’t be, I get it.”
‘I’ll definitely be there,’ I said quickly. ‘I have to apologize to her.’

‘What did you do?’ Dae Jeong asked.

‘He growled at Yunie’s girlfriend because she was touching Guk.’

‘Tae isn’t telling the whole story,’ Mi Mi interjected. ‘In Ji Ji’s defense, Gukie was half naked and Chae Hyun fell on top of him. It was innocent, but it looked a little questionable.’

Dae Jeong’s eyes lit up and he smirked. ‘I thought you said you guys weren’t together. Why are you getting jealous of another omega on your alpha if he’s not your alpha?’

At this point, I was used to Dae Jeong’s playful teasing. He never meant any harm when he said stuff like this. He just liked to try getting a reaction out of us. It was his way of joking. Right now, however, my alpha was having none of it. I shot daggers at the omega while my scent thickened. His smile immediately dropped. I could smell his fear.

‘Forgive him,’ Mi Mi said while moving to sit on my lap. ‘His alpha is being a stupid dick.’ She released calming pheromones and my alpha relaxed.

I wrapped my arms around her and stuck my face in her neck. It had been a while since I sought the comfort of my omega life mate. Jeonggukie had become my main source of peace so quickly that he had all but replaced her. By only responding to Mi Mi’s scent, it felt like my dominant wolf was trying to show me that I didn’t need the other alpha in my life. I grabbed Jeonggukie’s hand and pulled it with mine to surround Mi Mi again. I wanted to show my alpha that I don’t care what he thinks. Plus, that isn’t how life mates work. I don’t need a mate mark to be bound to my life mates forever.

I didn’t pay much attention to the idle chatter that filled the rest of our lunch period. I sat sandwiched between my two favorite people, trying to find a balance with my feelings. Such close proximity to Jeonggukie was making my alpha upset, but cuddling Mi Mi made him happy. The busy work that I had in the rest of my classes kept my mind comfortably engaged. I didn’t have enough time to pay attention to the grumblings of my childish alpha. It was nice to have a bit of a break. My wolf’s whining became more pronounced when I held Jeonggukie’s hand on the walk to the pack’s house. As a compromise, I also held Mi Mi’s hand. That seemed to placate him enough for the time being. The three of us did our classwork and additional studies while we waited for Chae Hyun to arrive. Her classes let out a little late on Mondays, so we had time to get a lot of our tasks done.

‘She’s here,’ Jeonggukie said as he shifted on the couch. She hadn’t made her presence known yet, but I knew he could smell her. A few seconds later, there was a knock at the door. Yunie got up from the couch and let her in.

Chae Hyun gave us all a smile and a wave. ‘Hello again, everyone! I’m sorry that I’m getting here so late. My last class doesn’t get out until 7:30.’ She smiled more when the pack assured her that she wasn’t inconveniencing us.

‘I want to apologize for my behavior the last time we met. I shouldn’t have reacted like that.’ I looked her in the eyes so she would know I was being sincere.

‘It’s not a problem, Min Jae. If I had seen you in the same position on Yun, I probably would have come for your throat. You can’t help that your omega wants to keep all other omegas away from your alpha. It’s natural.’ Her bright smile made me not want to argue with her, but my alpha was annoyed that Chae Hyun would refer to Jeonggukie as my alpha.
“It’s Ji Min.” I decided to only correct my name, leaving my alpha agitated because I didn’t deny that we belonged to my alpha life mate. I smiled at the quiet apology she gave.

“It’s fine. You did promise that you’d mess up my name at least twice. I’d be disappointed if you were the type of omega that couldn’t keep a promise. I would find it very offensive.” She laughed at my joke and I could tell it made her more comfortable.

“How did your project go? Did you get a good grade?” Jeonggukie grabbed my hand absently as he spoke.

Chae Hyun’s face lit up at the question. “I got an A! My professor was super excited because HADD is so rare. He said that he’s never had another student who encountered someone with it. He’s never even met someone with it and he’s been specializing in genetic disorders for 30 years. Thanks to you, my project was the best one!”

I chuckled at her enthusiasm. My alpha was frustrated, but for a different reason than before. How dare she be so happy about how uncommon that alpha’s disorder is when we’re literally the rarest person in the world. If only she knew, she wouldn’t give him all the praise. My scent soured at the thought.

“Don’t be jealous. She doesn’t know about your RHDS, Jiminie.” Jeonggukie’s whisper surprised me. I didn’t know when he got that close to me. “You should tell her. Maybe she’ll do her next project on you.”

I nodded. “Next time you have a project where you need someone with a genetic disorder, ask me. I guarantee your professors will lose their minds.”

“Why?” She asked with a tilt of her head.

“Have you ever heard of Random Hormonal Dominance Syndrome?”

“I’ve seen it mentioned in some articles about the growing rate of genetic disorders, especially among pups born in Busan. I don’t know much about it. There’s only been one recorded case.”

I decided to play with her a little, wondering how long it was going to take her to catch on. I knew she was just tired, so her mind wasn’t functioning at full capacity. However, it amused my alpha to pay her back for her insult. “What do you know about the person with it?”

“He’s a male omega born in Busan. I think he’s 16 or 17. That’s all anyone knows about him. The only doctors who have treated him are a specialized team from the Busan Medical Center and they’re obligated to keep his records confidential. There’s not too much literature on the disorder and even less on him. The only person I’ve ever seen mention it is Dr. Park Hee Yeun. She’s basically the queen of geneticists. If you have any sort of genetic disorder, odds are she’s written about it. Her work really is amazing. She’s actually the reason I’ve been considering specializing in pediatric genetic disorders.”

I laughed, which confused Chae Hyun. “Dr. Park is obsessive if you ask me. She’s absolutely insane. She would be honored to hear someone call her the queen of geneticists, but you really shouldn’t. She has a horrible ego. It would go straight to her head. She’s also not really a people person. She probably wouldn’t give you the chance to compliment her.”

Chae Hyun’s face contorted into the most ridiculous combination of shock and offense. She looked absolutely scandalized at the thought that someone would say something bad about her idol. I could tell she was so taken aback that she couldn’t think of a response. She didn’t need to say anything.
Her thoughts were written clearly on her face— *how dare you say something like that? Who do you think you are?*

“Park Hee Yeun is my aunt. While she’s always been prominent in the field of genetics, her all-consuming obsession began when her one and only nephew was born with Random Hormonal Dominance Syndrome. Ever since I was diagnosed, studying these disorders has taken over her life. I actually stopped visiting Busan a few years ago because all she ever talks about is my RHDS. The only time I ever go back is when I have to go to the doctor. All of my doctors are there. Also, I’m 18.”

If I thought she was surprised by what I said about my aunt, then there isn’t a word strong enough to illustrate the astonishment she was experiencing now. Chae Hyun’s eyes were wide, her mouth was agape, and her scent had spiked. Yunie pulled her onto his lap and comforted her. It took several minutes for her to be lucid again.

“You could have just told her like a normal person, Min. You didn’t have to break her,” Yunie said with a glare. His tone was a mixture of amused and concerned.

“It’s okay, Yun. I was just really surprised. It’s such a huge honor to meet you. Not only are you related to one of my favorite scientists, but you’re also the most genetically complex person alive. You’re basically a researcher’s fantasy. It’s so incredible to have a chance to speak with you. Would I be able to ask you questions some time?”

“That’s fine with me, just not tonight. I have school in the morning and I still have some work to finish before I can go to bed. We’ll find some time and I’ll let you ask me a bunch of questions.”

She squealed with excitement. I was glad to be able to make her like me after our first meeting didn’t turn out well. “Could I perform the same assessments on you that I did on Jeong Guk? It’s fine if you say no. It’s really just for my own curiosity.”

“I’m fine with the tests, but you’ll have to do the measurements over my clothes. The only people who have seen me in shorts or without a shirt are Jeonggukie and Mi Mi. I’d like to keep it that way.”

She nodded and smiled, trying to hide her slight disappointment. I could tell she would love to run a ton of tests on me if I let her. I understand the appeal. Not much information has been released about my condition. Part of that was because it was so rare that not many people knew about it. Another, larger part, was that my aunt wanted to be the only researcher to write about RHDS. That selfishness wasn’t completely due to her ego. She was also born with a condition that caused her to be infertile. Since she can’t have pups, she feels like being the world’s expert in genetic disorders is her legacy. Being the only researcher to have access to someone with RHDS gives her a secret weapon. My medical records are confidential and won’t become public until I die. I allow her access to my information because I know she doesn’t really have anything other than her work. I may not like how much my aunt talks about my disorder but that doesn’t mean I won’t help her as much as I can.

The rest of the pack began talking to Chae Hyun after our conversation finished. I tried to participate when I could, but I was beginning to get sleepy. Being pissed off all day is surprisingly exhausting. When I yawned, I felt Jeonggukie stand up. He pulled me off of the chair.

“We’re going to bed. If Ranie doesn’t want to sleep over, could you guys take her home for us?” He led me to his room after the pack agreed to take care of Mi Mi.

“You need to sleep, little omega. I don’t care about your homework. I’m going to cuddle you and sing for you. If the cuddling bothers you too much, I’ll stop.”
I nodded and changed into my sleepwear. I curled up in bed, waves of comfort hitting me. My body was tired and my mind was even more so. My omega made an appearance for the first time today, reveling in the concentrated scent of Jeonggukie. My alpha was displeased with my omega’s arrival and the heat of my life mate’s body that radiated behind me. It meant a lot to me that Jeonggukie wanted to sing for me. He seemed to know I would have a hard time sleeping with my wolves fighting over how I should feel. His arm found my waist and pulled me to his chest. It was a comforting thing for my omega, but a point of discontent for my alpha. I was torn between the two. That ceased to matter when I heard his beautiful voice behind me. The first few notes of Kim Ryeo Wook’s “The Little Prince” immediately put me at peace. I let the light, soft sound wash over me, filling me with a serenity that I hadn’t felt in quite some time. My wolves were long forgotten. They were silenced by the hauntingly soulful way Jeonggukie’s voice bewitched them. I fell asleep soon after, lulled by the only music that could tame both my savage beasts.

The rest of the week sped by. There was an abundance of tests and homework, making all of us stressed. It amazes me how the due dates of our work appeared planned. It felt like our instructors met and decided which weeks would be simple enough and which weeks would be hell. Even Jin and Yunie’s classes had assignments due this week. My alpha made the pressure worse. He wasn’t present for the entire week, which made me beyond relieved, but he was out enough to be a pain in my ass. He always seemed to pop up whenever Jeonggukie got too close or we spent too much time together. The constant battle with my alpha was draining. I found myself being more tired and agitated because of it. I knew he was trying to wear me down. The longer we spend at odds with our wolves, the weaker we become. My alpha knew that eventually I would have to give in, that sooner or later I wouldn’t have the strength to oppose him. Still, I refused to let him win. My omega felt the same way. He was ready to fight for his alpha. Despite the fact that he was weaker than my dominant wolf, he was willing to do whatever he could to shut my alpha up and keep Jeonggukie in our life. There were times when I could sense their arguments. In those moments, it felt like there were two halves of me that were being repeatedly ripped apart and smashed back together. It was painful and dizzying. Afterward, I would get a massive headache and become angry. It’s only been a week, but I’m so sick of this already.

Sunday arrived and we all heaved a collective sigh of relief. The next few weeks shouldn’t be as stressful as this one. Personally, I was glad to have more mental capacity to devote to my internal struggle. At this point, it was a matter of pride that I show my alpha he’s not in charge. This is my life. It’s my body he’s inhabiting, not the other way around. Luckily, he wasn’t lurking around at the beginning of the day. I wondered how difficult my date would be with my alpha constantly snarling in the recesses of my mind. The knock on my door brought me out of my thoughts. I could tell Jeonggukie was nervous when I answered. The conflict I’ve been experiencing has been affecting him too. He’s been more careful with me this week. I could feel his hesitation when he approached me or touched me. He didn’t want to upset me or make anything worse. That caution was evident in the small, tentative smile he gave me as we walked towards the bus stop.

“We’re going to see Nabi first. I told you last week that we would. I also figured hanging out with her and the other cats would be a good way to relax. We’ve all had quite the week.”

I nodded and grabbed his hand. My omega was happy to be around him and even more pleased to have some time without my other wolf around. My alpha has always been annoying, but I have never resented his appearances before now.

“How are you feeling, little omega? You seem tired.” I could hear a tinge of sadness in Jeonggukie’s voice.

“I am really tired. I don’t know how you do this every day. I’m exhausted after a week. I can’t imagine how hard everything has been for you.” I moved into his lap and rested my head on his
shoulder. Comfort was the only word that came to mind, although I couldn’t tell if I was seeking it or trying to give it.

“It’s not as bad as it used to be. My alpha and I actually get along now. After years of therapy and finding the right balance of medication, we’ve come to an agreement. We still fight sometimes and that is definitely tiring. I imagine your struggle is a little more intense than mine because there’s three of you. No matter how strong my alpha is, there’s still only one of him. I can usually keep him at bay. My therapist always tells me our wolves are strong, but we are stronger. She says that our wolves can’t do anything that we can’t handle, so we should have faith that we will be okay no matter what struggles we face. So far, it’s been true for me. If you’d like, I can teach you some techniques that are designed to calm down angry alphas.”

I nodded, not sure what I should say to him. Once again, Jeonggukie has proved that he’s much more intelligent and mature than his age entails. He never ceases to amaze me. We got off the bus and walked to the cat cafe. We silently held hands as we went. Nabi was waiting by the front door, just like she was last week. She perked up and immediately presented her head for petting. She seemed to recognize me. I scooped her up and pulled her to my chest as Jeonggukie and I followed the host to our table. Nabi curled into my lap when we sat down. The server, the same alpha from last time, recognized us as well. We ordered the same meals as before and I paused to consider how domestic it all felt. Jeonggukie asked me what was on my mind.

“It’s almost like we have a weekly routine, like we’re one of those old married couples who gets breakfast at the same place every week for 30 years.”

“We can come here for breakfast every week if you want,” he said with a small smile. “Maybe not for 30 years, but for the foreseeable future.”

I nodded. “I’d like that. We can come until Nabi gets sick of me. Wait, I don’t think I could handle that.” I looked down at the cat in my lap and spoke to her. “You’re not allowed to get sick of me.”

She nuzzled my hand and purred when I scratched behind her ears. Somehow, I get the feeling that Nabi and I are going to be good friends. Our food arrived and we ate in comfortable silence. We held hands as we ate, something that had become so common for us in the span of a week. It wasn’t a bad thing. It felt nice and my omega absolutely adored the times his alpha would grab our hand and lace his fingers into our own. After our meal, I looked for the little orange kitten from last week. He had already been adopted. I walked back to the table and found Jeonggukie laying on the floor. Nabi was standing on his chest, a fluffy black cat with white paws was licking his face, and another tabby was chasing a string he was flailing around. I pulled out my phone and snapped pictures before they had a chance to stop.

“I’m super jealous,” I said as I sat next to him. “I wish I got this much attention.”

“I can fix that.” He sat up, gently moving the cats away from him, and pulled me onto his lap. He dangled the yarn in front of my face. I could hear him trying not to laugh behind me.

“I meant from the cats, dumbass.” I tried to sound as mad as I could, even though I’m sure he could hear me chuckling.

He grabbed Nabi and put her in my lap. She happily laid down as both the tabby and the black cat began batting at the still-hanging string. “You really should be more specific in the future, but problem solved.”

I scoffed and took the toy from him. We sat like that for a while, occasionally trading who was moving the string. It was peaceful and oddly calming. This moment reminded me why I decided to
keep fighting against my alpha. It’s up to me to choose whether or not I’ll keep dating Jeonggukie—whether we’ll stay life mates or become something more. That’s not my alpha’s place. If I can feel this level of comfort when I’m with him, then it’s worth exploring. I never would have pictured myself cuddled up to an alpha, holding his hand and laughing at his stupid jokes. Never would I have guessed that Alphabet would develop a soft spot for one of those disgusting meatheads. But, here we are—me, my omega, three cats, and, much to his dismay, my alpha. This is my choice.

“Do we have a schedule this time?” I asked Jeonggukie.

“We do, but there’s only one thing on it. We don’t have to be anywhere for the next two hours. We can stay here or I can take you somewhere else I’m sure you’d love to go.”

“I want to stay, but now I’m curious. Where is the other place? I want to know before I decide.”

“Dog cafe. I told you last week that I’d take you there.”

“You remember that?” I was surprised he could recall saying something like that in passing, especially with how much we talked last weekend.

“I remember all sorts of random things about you. I thought you realized that last week. I literally remembered the dream you had before we met and you’re surprised that I remembered something I said to you directly, just last week?” Amusement danced in his eyes as he giggled.

“Fair point.”

We eventually decided to head to the dog cafe. I kissed Nabi on the top of her head and promised to see her again next week. It was a short walk to our next destination. The atmosphere in the dog cafe was much different than the cat cafe. The dogs were much louder and ran around more than the cats did. We were greeted by a young female omega and a short-haired dog that looked a lot like a wolf. Jeonggukie explained that we wanted to play with the dogs. He ordered a couple of drinks to make sure we were supporting the cafe. When the omega took us into the main play area, the dog followed us.

“Don’t mind Gi,” she said when she saw me eyeing the dog. “He’s taken it upon himself to be our watchdog. He always sits by the door and inspects everyone who comes in. Once he sniffs you a couple of times and makes sure you’re not a threat, he’ll leave you alone.”

I bent down to look at Gi, offering him my hand. He allowed me to pet him and then moved to sniff Jeonggukie. He stopped halfway, bowed his head, and stuck his tail between his legs. My life mate walked over to the dog, sat next to him, and carefully scratched his ears. After a few moments, Gi was back to normal and patrolling the cafe once more.

“I’ve never seen him do that before. He’s always a little skittish around alphas, but I’ve never seen him submit to one. Usually, he just sniffs them once and runs off.” She sounded surprised.

Jeonggukie seemed uncomfortable as she stared at him. I could tell that she was wondering what was so special about the alpha. I sat on his lap and grabbed his hand to calm him. He cuddled up to me and addressed the omega. “Dogs are always that way with me. I think they’re scared.”

“Aww… you’re harmless,” I said, giggling.

“You’re probably the only one who thinks so.”

“Nah, you’re a softie.”
“Only with you,” he whispered.

I wasn’t expecting his response. The words made that tingling sensation come back and my stomach felt like it was jumping around a little. My omega purred so loudly that my chest rumbled for a moment before I could stop it. When Jeonggukie chuckled, I realized I didn’t control myself fast enough.

“I think you’re a little soft for me too.” I could hear the smirk in his voice.

“Just my omega.” I challenged, not willing to admit that I might also have a growing affinity for him.

“I’ll take what I can get.” He laughed and shrugged. I knew he could tell that I was just being difficult.

We played with the dogs for a while. It was a little difficult because some of them refused to go near Jeonggukie. The brave few who did were rewarded with belly rubs and full-body scratches. There was one shaggy puppy who absolutely adored me. He kept licking my face and chasing the other dogs away from me. It was cute, but a little weird. The strangest thing he did was growl at Jeonggukie when my life mate put his arms around me.

“I think Beom’s trying to challenge you for your omega,” the server said when she walked by. She obviously meant it as a joke.

“That’s cute,” I said.

Jeonggukie playfully pouted and let out a little huff. “I’m cuter.”

“I don’t know… Beom is pretty cute. You’re not doing a good job of convincing me that he shouldn’t be my alpha instead.” I teased him.

“Okay, maybe he is cuter than me. But, I’m a much better conversationalist, I’m taller, I give better cuddles, and I can cook.” He smiled as he spoke, glaring at the dog jokingly. “Plus, your omega would be really displeased if you chose Beom over me.”

I nodded and let out an exaggerated sigh. “I guess you’re right.” I knelt in front of the dog and scratched his ears. “I’m sorry Beom, but Jeonggukie has a point. I think he’s a better candidate to be my alpha. I’m going to see how this goes first. If he and I don’t work out, you’re definitely my second choice.” I laughed when Beom licked my face in response.

“I think he accepted your terms,” my life mate said as he wiped the drying slobber from my cheeks.

When we finally decided to leave, Jeonggukie made sure we washed our hands and faces thoroughly. He insisted that we needed to be pretty clean for our next task. I sat on the alpha’s lap when we boarded the bus.

“I never thought I would reject a dog.” I couldn’t control the giggle that escaped me. The situation was too amusing.

“I never thought I’d have to prove I’m a better alpha than a dog.”

We discussed the logistics of having a dog alpha versus a human alpha as we got off the bus and walked to our next stop. We determined that dog alphas would be a lot more obedient, would be much less aggressive, and would be more likely to be nicer to strangers that are near their omegas than human alphas. Overall, we came to the conclusion that dog alphas would be much friendlier than human alphas, especially to omegas. If it wasn’t for the sexual aspect of alpha-omega dynamics,
a lot of human alphas would probably be nicer too. It’s sad how much someone’s libido can emphasize their horrible characteristics. We eventually stopped walking and entered a small, nondescript building. Jeonggukie led me upstairs and into a sterile-looking room. It had a long counter equipped with burners, six cutting boards, and six sets of knives and cooking utensils.

“A cooking class?”

“I thought it would be fun. I don’t know how to cook anything on the menu for today and you don’t know how to cook. You seemed a little bitter last time we talked about it.”

I shrugged and pursed my lips together. “I don’t really follow the thought that omegas should be the ones cooking and cleaning, but it does hurt my omega’s pride that I can’t cook. He feels like we should be able to provide food for our family. Technically, I can cook. I can make ramyeon, rice, and pancakes.”

“One of those is instant noodles. You just have to boil the noodles or add hot water. I don’t know if that counts.” He chuckled at my indignant expression.

“Well, I’m sorry we’re not all chefs like you.” I stuck my tongue out at him.

“I just follow Jin’s recipes. He used to spend a lot of time in the kitchen with his family’s personal chef. He really enjoys cooking, says it’s a good stress reliever. He and Joon like making food together. I think it’s a bonding thing for them. They’re actually really cute when they cook—doing all that gross couple stuff, like feeding each other and almost burning the food because they’re making out.” Jeonggukie had a goofy smile on his face as he spoke.

I didn’t have time to respond because the class was called to attention. I looked around and saw another couple, an alpha and a female omega, and that the teacher had moved the items from the other cooking stations to give the four of us more room. The instructor was a short, stocky alpha with an apron and resting bitch face.

“Hello, everyone! Today I’m going to be teaching you how to make a few different dishes and how to cook efficiently. We’ll be making braised chicken, seaweed stew, kimchi, and spicy cucumber salad. You’re also going to be learning about time management in the kitchen. When you’re cooking, it’s best to use your time wisely. Doing all of your prep work first is typically the best option, but sometimes it isn’t. Today, we have a stew that is quick. If you were cooking another type of soup that took longer, you would want to do the prep for the stew first. Then, you could make the other dishes while that was cooking. Also, take advantage of your partner. If one of you is better at chopping veggies than the other, then let that person do the majority of the cutting. That’s what I mean by cooking efficiently.” The alpha sounded a lot nicer than he looked.

He walked around and gave us ingredients. Since it was a couple’s class, each pair was making enough food for two. We were also given the recipes for each of the dishes so that we could follow along at our own pace. The instructor explained that he was mostly there to teach us techniques and help develop our confidence. I grabbed a knife and began chopping the vegetables for the braised chicken while Jeonggukie soaked the noodles and cut up the chicken.

“Don’t hold your knife like that,” the instructor said from beside me. “Do it like this.”

He demonstrated the proper grip with his own knife and I imitated him. “Also, tuck your fingers underneath your hand when you hold things that you’re cutting. No, not like that. Here, let me show you.”

I felt the alpha move closer to me and I stepped away. I didn’t feel threatened by him, but I don’t like
people being that close to me. He followed me and I anticipated feeling him behind me. I knew he was just trying to demonstrate the best method by moving my hands with his own, but it made me uncomfortable. My omega was uneasy with the thought that another alpha would be touching us. I contemplated fighting him, but I knew that was a bad idea. There were too many weapons, breakable items, and variables to take into consideration. Plus, we’re in public. My violence is excused at school because they expect a large number of students shoved into one building to be a little aggressive. It’s actually allowed on school grounds. Out in the open, I could get arrested. It surprised me when his unwelcome presence never came. I turned to see Jeonggukie’s hand on the alpha’s shoulder, holding him in place from behind. I could tell he was digging his fingers into the other alpha by the way his hand was flexed and the pained expression on the instructor’s face.

“Don’t you think it’s a little inappropriate to enter your students’ personal space without permission, especially a young, unmated omega? I’m not saying that you’re trying to sexually assault him, but what’s he supposed to think you’re doing? Did you even think to ask before you tried to press yourself against him and touch him? Did you even notice the discomfort in his scent? That’s the problem with most alphas. They don’t think enough about what the people around them want. Why don’t you go help them? Only come back over here if I tell you to.” Jeonggukie’s voice was barely more than a low growl, but we all heard him clearly.

The room was filled with my life mate’s scent. It was aggressive, but calm somehow. The teacher nodded and Jeonggukie let him go. My omega swooned because of the way our alpha defended us. My scent went back to normal the second the other alpha stepped away. I felt my life mate’s arms wrap around me. He held me close, nuzzling my cheek and reassuring me that I’m okay. I leaned back into his touch and realized the room was eerily quiet. I looked around to see the female omega hiding behind her alpha, both of them staring at Jeonggukie with wide eyes.

“So,” my life mate began as he took my hands, “you want to hold your knife like this. Tuck your fingers like this and hold the tip of the knife to the board. You want to use the back of the knife to do the cutting for this type of work. It makes it much easier and safer.” Jeonggukie’s hands were on mine, moving me the way the instructor was going to.

I was impressed by the way that my life mate was able to easily slip back into the cooking class like he hadn’t just essentially threatened the teacher. The other couple followed our lead and continued cooking. The instructor stood at the front of the class. I noticed that he shot angry glances our way, but he stayed away from us. I also saw him occasionally hold and massage his shoulder. Jeonggukie must have been squeezing him really hard to stop him with one hand. At this point, I don’t know which is more surprising, the amount of ways my life mate keeps amazing me or the fact that I’m still shocked every time. My omega was happy that our alpha was strong and willing to protect us. After Jeonggukie showed me how to properly chop the veggies, I felt a lot more comfortable doing the prep work for the rest of our meal.

“This is a lot easier,” I said with a smile.

“Since you’re getting the hang of it, do you want to help me make dinner next time I cook for the pack? We can show off your newfound knife skills.”

I hummed in agreement as I began salting the cabbage for the kimchi. With the chicken braising and everything else getting ready, Jeonggukie began helping me make it.

“Are you sure you haven’t made this before? You look too comfortable.”

“I told you, I just read the recipe. Jin taught me the basics of cooking. Everything else from there is following instructions and adjusting spices to taste.”
“Will you teach me how to cook? I want to learn some basic stuff. Maybe make dinner for my mom some time.”

“Of course, little omega. I can even come over and help when you cook for her.”

“Yep. Not gonna happen. I don’t need her fawning all over you any more than she already does. It’s bad enough she thinks you’re the greatest alpha in the history of alphas. I don’t need her bothering me about how good of a cook you are. I’ve eaten your food. I know you’re amazing.” My tone was joking, but there was a hint of truth to my words.

“Fine. At least let me figure out how to make her favorite food so I can teach you. If you’re going to surprise her, do it properly.”

I smiled brightly at him and thanked him for his help. The rest of the class was spent mixing, draining, stirring, and seasoning. We chatted a little with the other couple while they were finishing their dishes too.

“I brought my alpha here to teach him how to cook. It’s a little weird to see it the other way around,” the girl said with a laugh.

“I’m cursed with a life mate who is perfect in every way imaginable. He teaches me things that I should probably already know.” I rolled my eyes at the thought.

“Why cook when omegas can do it?” The other alpha asked Jeonggukie. I could tell it was a genuine question.

“You are an alpha, correct?” My life mate asked with a serious tone.

“Of course,” the other alpha replied with a scoff.

“Most alphas have urges to protect their omega and other loved ones. Do you?”

“Yes.”

“Do you wish to provide for them and take care of them however you can?”

“Yes.”

“Do you want to make sure they are happy and healthy?”

“Yes.”

“Then, why wouldn’t you make them a meal and do all of those things at once?”

The other alpha stared at Jeonggukie with wide eyes, mouth opening and closing as if he were trying to speak but couldn’t. The other omega giggled and nodded. I could tell she loved her alpha’s response.

“He is good at everything. I’ve never seen anyone be able to shut my alpha up.”

“Oh, he’s great at shutting people up and arguing. If he wasn’t going to be a psychologist, I’d say he should be a lawyer.” I ruffled my life mate’s hair and he laughed.

“It comes from being the youngest in a pack full of alphas. Just because they can’t beat me in a fight doesn’t mean they don’t like to try to win at other things. I learned from all of that. I learn from everything. Also, the heat is up too high on your chicken. The liquid is almost gone and your
chicken is about to burn.” Jeonggukie said as he pointed to the other couple’s food.

After the omega checked the pot and added more liquid, she asked my life mate how he could tell their food was almost ruined.

“I have heightened senses, especially smell. I could hear the boiling in your pot and I could smell the chicken getting too much direct heat.”

Jeonggukie and I plated our food when it was finished. As we enjoyed the fruits of our labor, we held hands. The alpha and omega finished cooking and we ate as a group. Despite the unpleasant invasion of my personal space, the cooking class was actually pretty enjoyable. I could see why Jin and Joon thought it was fun. To avoid thinking about myself feeding Jeonggukie and us almost burning food while making out, I commented on how delicious the food was. It was disappointing we couldn’t eat our kimchi today, but we get to take it home with us to enjoy later. After we ate, we said goodbye to the other couple. The instructor called for us before we could leave the room.

“I’m sorry,” he said with a quiet voice. “I shouldn’t have gotten that close to you without asking. I’m used to being able to do that with the students at the culinary school where I work. They’re all alphas, so they understand that it isn’t meant to be sexual. I really didn’t think anything about trying to show you the same way. It was very rude of me. I’ll ask in the future.”

“I appreciate your apology, but keep in mind omegas don’t like to be randomly touched by alphas. It’s not your decision to make. If we’re not comfortable, then you should stop.”

The alpha nodded and confirmed he would get permission before approaching another omega the same way. “Also, exactly how strong are you, kid? I can’t move my damn shoulder now.”

“Strong enough,” Jeonggukie replied with a smirk. He bid the teacher farewell and led me out of the building. I could see the surprised look on the other alpha’s face as we left.

We boarded the bus and went towards the pack’s house. We decided to watch a couple of movies before the date was over. My omega wasn’t ready to be away from his alpha yet. I guess Jeonggukie fending off the instructor had more of an effect on my wolf than I originally thought. It made sense. This was the first time I’ve ever seen my life mate do something like that. I know he fought the problematic alphas in our school, but I didn’t actually see it. Witnessing something is much different than simply hearing about it. It meant a lot to me and my omega that he was willing to stop something that I felt uncomfortable with. Not everyone would have done that. It’s not acceptable to do something disrespectful to someone older than you, even if they’re doing something rude to you. It could also be considered assault if the alpha decided to press the issue. None of that seemed to matter to Jeonggukie when he grabbed the instructor. Just thinking about it made me feel things.

I cuddled up to my life mate as we settled in to watch the first two Harry Potter movies. I was being forced against my will to watch them, but I was okay with it. My omega wanted to please his alpha and that meant watching Harry Potter. I actually liked all of the books, but I never watched the movies because the books are usually better. When Jeonggukie heard that, he immediately borrowed the collection from Tae. Being surrounded by my life mate’s scent and warmth made me sleepy. I shifted my weight so that I could lay down, putting my head on the alpha’s lap. I’ve been so tired lately. The battle with my other wolf has been exhausting me and making me lose sleep. Now that the fight was temporarily over and my omega was in the presence of his alpha, I felt my eyelids grow heavy.

I’m not sure exactly when I fell asleep. I don’t even know if I made it all the way through the first movie. What I do remember is Jeonggukie carefully picking me up and carrying me to his bed. I woke up when he moved my head. I wasn’t fully conscious but I was awake enough to feel him lay
me in his bed and tug at the ankles of my pants until they came off. I was happy that he remembered I can’t sleep with pants on. If I went to sleep still wearing them, I would toss and turn the whole night or until I took them off. I was falling back into my slumber when I felt the bed dip next to me. Jeonggukie leaned over me, pulling the blanket up to my chest. The last thing I recall before completely drifting off was a whisper of goodnight and his lips lightly brushing against mine.

Chapter End Notes

So, what did you think? A lot happened in this chapter. Do you have any questions, comments, or concerns? There is also going to be a lot in the next chapter as we gear up towards something important. Thank you for reading!
Rumination

Chapter Notes

This chapter contains very watered-down versions of real psychological techniques and concepts. I didn't want to go into too much detail because the chapter isn't about those things. I'm sorry if they don't make sense.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

To say I’m nervous is an understatement. I don’t think there’s a strong enough word for what I’m feeling right now. It’s date day again and I’m the one who planned it this time. I insisted because I think it’s only fair that I invest myself in this as much as possible. My alpha wasn’t happy about it, but there’s not much he’s happy about lately. It’s been a nightmare keeping him in check. Jeonggukie taught me some relaxation and mindfulness techniques to help me calm myself. Sometimes they work and sometimes they don’t. He also told me to try to change the way my alpha thinks when he’s present. Instead of thinking in absolute terms, like never and always, I should try to change how I view the things that make me angry. He said it helps pinpoint the cause of the feelings or something like that. It’s called cognitive restructuring and it’s a pain in the ass. The only reason I’m still trying is that it’s less troublesome than dealing with my alpha. My omega has been the biggest help during this process. I can feel him trying to fight his way to the surface when my other wolf is dominating my thoughts. There have been more than a few times when he’s managed to push my alpha away. It hasn’t happened often, but it’s been enough to give me hope. My omega is out today, which I’m glad about. He usually finds a way to fend off my stronger wolf during our dates. It’s exhausting but necessary. I silently thank him as we wait for Jeonggukie. Even though I planned the date, he’s still insisting on picking us up. Stupid alpha.

When he knocked on the door, I quickly opened it and joined him outside. I’m sure he could tell that I was nervous, even if my scent wasn’t a dead giveaway. “Hey.”

“Hey,” Jeonggukie said while taking my hand. “You don’t have to be nervous. I’m going to enjoy whatever we do. I really like spending time with you.”

I nodded, still not convinced that everything would turn out well. Is this how Jeonggukie felt when he was planning our other dates? This is a lot of pressure. I don’t know how he does this. If I’m worried about whether or not he likes it, is that a good thing? My thoughts were immediately stopped by three squeezes to my hand.

“Worrying or rumination?” My life mate asked with a soft tone.

“Mostly rumination. It’s almost always rumination.”

“Stay here with me for now. When you get home, think about it. Don’t judge yourself and trust your ability to figure it out.”

I nodded again. Jeonggukie and I had been working on methods to stop my overthinking. He’s been helping me take myself out of my thoughts and be present in what’s going on. I always have time to think about it later, when I’m by myself. We headed towards the cat cafe and I tried not to focus too much on what was to come. My life mate kept me busy by talking about school and trying to guess what we’re going to do.
“Bungee jumping?” He asked with a laugh.

“No. I’m not a huge fan of heights. I’d probably be fine once I actually did it, but I don’t think that’s something I would choose to do.” I picked up Nabi when we walked through the door. I’m convinced she knows when we’re coming and waits for me.

“Ice skating?”

“I’ve never been ice skating. Also, isn’t it past the season? Most of the rinks close in February or March, right?”

“They have indoor skating rinks. Are we going to a movie?”

“Nope.”

“Going to a library?” I could tell he was just naming off random stuff at this point, hoping that I would just give in and tell him.

“We pretty much did that already.”

“So, it’s something we haven’t done before?” He raised an eyebrow at my comment as if I had given away a very important piece of information.

“One of the things is. We’ve done the other one before.”

We had to pause because our food had arrived. Jeonggukie and I moved in synchronization. We split our food, switched plates, and held hands before eating. It became a habit so quickly that we accepted it before we acknowledged it had happened. It was nice. After we ate, we played with Nabi and some of the other cats. Our two new friends from last week were still here, but they were busy with other people. We always had so much fun spending time at the cat cafe. It was simple and easy. After a while, we had to leave to go to our next destination. Anxiety seeped into my scent again as we sat on the bus. Jeonggukie pulled me closer and whispered in my ear.

“Calm yourself, little omega. I know it can be nerve-wracking, but you have nothing to be worried about. You know we’re going to have fun no matter what. I always have fun with you.”

His last sentence made me smile. It also brought about that tingly, nauseous jumpy feeling. Yunie told me that was what everyone calls butterflies. He said we get those when someone we like does something we like or sometimes when we’re just around the person we like. Although I’m not convinced that I actually have romantic feelings for Jeonggukie, my body seems to be telling me differently. I’ve spent a lot of time trying to figure out if my feelings, or lack thereof, are due to my wolves or myself, but that’s a discussion for another time. Right now, it’s important that I be here for my date.

“An auditorium?” My life mate asked when we walked inside the building.

“We’re seeing a show,” I answered as I showed the person at the front our tickets.

“What is it?”

“It’s called Nanta. It’s a non-verbal comedy? It’s hard to explain. It mixes traditional Korean music, acrobatics, cooking, and miming. I can’t really explain it. I watched a couple of videos online about it and it seemed like fun. They even do audience participation sections where they call people up to the front and make them do stuff.”
We found our seats and waited for the performance to begin. “What made you want to come here? It sounds really interesting, but I’ve never even heard of something like this. How did you find it?”

“I asked Jin what you like to do in your free time. I know you do a lot of different things as outlets, but I wasn’t sure what you actually enjoyed doing. He said you like music. He also mentioned that you liked doing martial arts as a kid, but I didn’t know if doing anything like that would be appropriate for a date. I tried to find something that would be music based. I ended up finding something that somehow incorporates a few different things you like. You’re not the only one who can do research.” I stuck my tongue out at him and giggled.

Jeonggukie was completely speechless. He had a bright smile on his face, one that made his nose scrunch up and his eyes crinkle. It was cute. That smile made me want to cause a hundred more just like it. My omega danced around at the thought, playing with and chasing the butterflies that had resurfaced. He seemed to enjoy making me feel even more nauseous and jittery inside. My life mate leaned across his seat and hugged me tightly. I chuckled and squeezed him in return. I could tell that he was touched that I put forth effort. I wanted to show him that I really am committed to trying this dating, possible relationship thing with him. Before Jeonggukie could respond, the performers walked onto the stage.

The show was like nothing I had seen before. The sheer amount of energy it must take to keep the beat going while running all over the stage is impressive. The story was about a kitchen crew who was trying to get ready for a wedding. The comedy came from one useless staff member messing things up. It was such a unique thing because the entire story was told through miming and music. It was something that I lacked the words to explain. I looked over at my life mate, happy that he was tapping his feet to the rhythm and laughing along with the crowd. My omega and I were pleased that he was enjoying himself. The show was over quickly. It didn’t seem like an hour and a half had passed when the performers were bowing at the end. Jeonggukie and I left the theater and decided to walk around until we were hungry again. We killed time by talking about the performance.

“That was really fun, Jiminnie. I never would have thought about going to something like that, but it was so cool. I really liked how they were cooking while using the utensils and cutting boards to make the beat. I feel like I’d end up cutting my finger off if I tried to chop in time with a rhythm.” His eyes were shining as he spoke.

“I was amused when they were dancing around and using mixing bowls and water jugs as drums. I don’t think I would have ever considered doing that or using barrels. I also thought it was great when they pulled those two alphas up to be the wedding couple. I thought they were going to lose their shit. You could tell the one guy was so uncomfortable. He was trying to play along, but I almost felt bad for him.”

“I thought it was hilarious when that omega beat his alpha in the dumpling stacking contest. I could see how embarrassed the alpha was. He wanted to be a show-off and it bit him in the ass.”

“That’s what he gets for being an asshole, show-off alpha,” I said with a laugh.

“I don’t have that need like other alphas do. I get wanting to be the best, but I don’t feel like I have to anything to prove to other people. I’m incredibly competitive. I just never feel like I’m competing to show others how good I am.” I was surprised by the sincere and quiet tone with which Jeonggukie spoke.

“That’s because you’re perfect.” The words slipped out of my mouth before I could stop them. I would usually be embarrassed by my admission, but I didn’t feel like I should be. What I said was true.
My life mate stopped walking and pulled me into a back hug. He kissed the top of my head and chuckled. “If I didn’t know any better, I would say you like me.” I could hear the teasing smirk in his voice.

“It’s a good thing you’re smarter than that, huh?” I said with a smile of my own.

Jeonggukie tightened his grip around my waist and brought his head to my neck. His warmth behind me made the butterflies come back and my omega thrash about. He put his face to mine and lightly ran his nose along my cheek. It was impossible to not be affected when my wolf was biting and clawing his way to the surface. He was trying to break free. He wanted his alpha. It took everything in me to keep myself under control. My omega may be my strongest ally against my alpha, but that doesn’t mean he’s my friend. As if my life mate could sense the struggle, he left a kiss on my cheek.

“Are you sure you don’t like me, little omega?” The whisper and his breath against my ear made it even harder to keep my wolf back.

“Just my omega,” I responded quietly.

“Must have been my imagination then,” he said with another smirk and a shrug. Jeonggukie stepped away from me and pulled me along by my hand. “We should probably get some food before we continue.”

My omega whimpered at the loss of contact and I had to stifle the noise in my throat. There were tingles where his nose and lips touched, which surprised me. I actually felt a little sad that my life mate had left. Jeonggukie didn’t seem bothered by my words. For some reason, that troubled me even more. If he likes me, he should be upset that I don’t like him. But, if I’m unhappy that he isn’t affected, does that mean I like him? I felt three squeezes on my hand again and immediately stopped my thoughts. That was my life mate’s sign that he had given me enough time to halt my thinking and decided to step in when I didn’t. Over the past week, I have been getting really good at not thinking as much. It’s still hard though.

“One thing you smell,” he demanded, beginning a simple mindfulness exercise.

“Grass.”

“Two things you hear.”

“You talking and a baby crying.”

“Three things you see.”

“Trees, the road, and a food truck.”

“Four things you feel.”

“Your hand, the breeze, my pant leg tucked into my shoe, and a hole in my sock.” I bent down to fix the pant leg, not really sure how that happened in the first place.

“Better?”

“Yes, thank you.” I smiled and squeezed his hand. “What do you want to eat?”

“There are a few vendors over there. Let’s get some stuff from them. I haven’t had street food in years.”
I happily agreed. We walked over to the small gathering of food trucks and stands and surveyed the options. Several couples and families were carrying different skewers, cups, and small plates. They all had smiles on their faces. It didn’t seem like we could make a wrong choice. We picked a few different stalls and got a couple of foods from each. We found a spot to sit in and instantly began eating. I was impressed by the large variety we managed to find—chicken skewers, fried dumplings, steamed dumplings, fish cakes, and spicy rice cakes.

“Try this skewer. It’s really good,” Jeonggukie said, holding the stick to my mouth. I took a big bite. It was delicious.

In turn, I fed my life mate a fried dumpling. It was normal for us to feed each other and I typically didn’t think much about it. However, with a few of the families looking at us and smiling, it was hard not to consider how this looked. For the first time, I didn’t mind that others thought we were a couple. I guess we technically kind of are. I didn’t dwell on that thought, choosing to be present in the moment. I happily munched on the spicy rice cakes and steamed dumplings before I switched with Jeonggukie and took a skewer and fish cake. We shared our food until it was almost gone. Out of nowhere, my life mate stood up with a smile on his face.

“I’ll be right back, little omega. I wanted to find something. Finish eating the rest.”

I watched him look around for a moment and then get into a line. I wondered what else he could possibly want to eat as I finished the last piece of chicken. There was a little bit of the spicy rice cakes left. It was a tad too much to be one mouthful, but not enough to be satisfying as two mouthfuls. I made a hasty decision to down the rest in one bite right when Jeonggukie returned. He couldn’t stop laughing at how much food I had stuffed into my mouth. After I was done chewing, I asked what could possibly be so funny.

“That was such perfect timing. I couldn’t help thinking that you looked like a manggaetteok when you were eating earlier, so I went to see if they had any. I wanted to compare your cheeks with it. When I came back, your mouth was so full that you looked exactly like this.” My life mate held out the desserts in his hand.

I glared at him, but I couldn’t fully deny it. I know how chubby my cheeks get when I eat too much at once. My mom and Mi Mi think it’s the most adorable thing ever. Apparently, Jeonggukie noticed it too.

“I’m calling you Manggae from now on. You get no say in the matter. It’s happening.” He was still trying to calm himself down from laughing, but I could tell he was serious.

My omega preened himself at the thought that his alpha had a nickname that was specifically for us. I rolled my eyes, but I couldn’t stop the small smile that formed. Of all the things he could call me, I guess Manggae isn’t that bad. “Little omega and Manggae? What exactly do you think of me, Jeonggukie? According to your pet names, you think I’m a tiny squishy little dessert. I’m more alpha than 90% of the alphas out there. I bet you wouldn’t call another alpha a dessert.” I didn’t mean to pout when I said it, but my life mate noticed before I could correct my face.

“Don’t look sad, little omega. You look even more like a manggaetteok when you do that. You’re right. I wouldn’t call another alpha a dessert. But, you are an omega. I keep trying to tell you this. You may be a badass alpha to the rest of the world, but you’re a little manggae omega to me. You don’t seem to understand that I don’t see Alphabet when I look at you. I see Park Ji Min. And, to me, Park Ji Min is a ‘tiny squishy little dessert’ as you put it.”

Jeonggukie put the manggaetteok down and held on to my hands. “I hope that doesn’t bother you. I very much respect you as a person and a wolf. I’ve never seen anyone deal with all of the bullshit
you have and fearlessly jump into a protector role, despite being genetically predisposed to want to avoid that kind of conflict. Even though the other omegas still treated you pretty badly, you continued to protect them because you knew it wasn’t okay to let them suffer. You’re a very strong person, Manggae. I think you’re incredibly admirable. So, I don’t want you to think I’m diminishing you by calling you these things. I just want you to know that’s how I see you. You have an alpha wolf inside of you, but that doesn’t automatically make you one.”

I didn’t have the words to respond to what my life mate said. The comments hadn’t fully been processed yet. My omega was happy that his alpha acknowledged him, especially given that our dominant wolf is usually what we are associated with. My alpha was displeased. I felt him awaken at the insinuation that we are not an alpha and begin to claw his way into my conscious mind. I closed my eyes and tried to steady myself as my wolves clashed. It was painful to deal with and draining. I could tell my scent spiked when I winced in pain from my headache. Jeonggukie had me in his arms within seconds, already knowing what the problem was. He began to sing. It was the only thing that seemed to calm my wolves down enough to stop fighting. He only did it when they started trying to overtake one another, worried that this remedy might lose its effect if he used it too often. When I was calmer, he began a breathing technique.

“Close your mouth and breathe in through your nose while you count to four. Hold your breath while you count to seven. Now, exhale while counting to eight. Be sure to make a whooshing sound when you do it. Good job, Manggae. Do it again for me.”

I repeated the breathing until Jeonggukie was satisfied that I was relaxed and no longer in pain. The throbbing in my brain subsided as I felt my omega resurface. I let my weight fall on to my life mate as I leaned into his chest. I listened to his heartbeat until I felt my eyes growing heavier. The sound soothed me with its deep, steady rhythm. It was much like the alpha himself—constant, strong, and unwavering.

“I know you wanted to do something else, but I think we should get you home. You’re too tired to stay out anymore.”

I grunted as a response. I wasn’t ready to end our date yet. It made me feel like a failure that I ruined the date I planned. “Don’t want to mess it up,” was all I could manage to say in my exhausted state.

Jeonggukie seemed to understand. “You’re not messing anything up, little omega. You’re just sleepy. How about I take you home and we’ll cuddle for a while? I’ll even put a movie on for you. That way, we can spend more time together. How does that sound?”

I nodded in response. My life mate picked up the manggatteok and set them in my lap. “Your very important job is to make sure that these don’t fall. Can you handle that?”

When I confirmed the mission, he stood up while holding me bridal style. I kept my hand weakly on the dessert as he carried me to the bus stop. I was conscious, but just barely. Each step that Jeonggukie made felt as though it was rocking me to sleep. I lost track of where we were and how far we had traveled. I was only aware that we had arrived at my house because my life mate had to dig my keys out of my pocket.

“Minie?” I heard my mom call out from the kitchen.

“It’s me, Ms. Park.”

“What happened?” I could hear the worry in her voice as she got closer.

“His wolves were fighting again. He’s still awake, but kinda out of it. He felt bad because the date he
planned got interrupted. So, I told him we’d watch a movie and cuddle for a little bit. He’s probably going to end up falling asleep, but it’s for the best. He needs as much rest as he can get.”

“Okay. I’m prepping stuff for dinner, so come get me if you need me. You’re welcome to stay and eat. I’m making kimbap and bibimbap.”

“I’d love to. I’m going to go tuck Manggae in bed and put a movie on. If you want some help, I can help you after he falls asleep.”

“I’ll let you know. Thank you for taking care of him, Jeong Guk.”

“He deserves to be taken care of, even if he doesn’t necessarily want to be.”

I felt myself fully relax when I was placed on my bed. Once again, Jeonggukie pulled my pants off and the covers over me. When I heard faint noises, he joined me in bed. I assumed he had chosen a movie at random and quickly turned it on. He stroked my cheek and whispered softly to me. “It’s okay, little omega. Get some sleep.”

I was woken up by a soft shaking and my alpha life mate’s voice. “Time to get up, Manggae. Your mom and I just finished cooking dinner. I’m sure you’re still tired, but you might not sleep tonight if you sleep too much now.”

I groaned and turned away from him, hoping that would buy me some more time. Jeonggukie chuckled and tried to gently shake me again. “I’m trying to be nice, little omega. Trust me when I tell you that you don’t want me to wake you up the way I wake the pack.”

I put a pillow over my head and curled deeper into the blankets. Suddenly, the blanket was ripped from me. I hissed at the unexpected exposure to the cold on my bare legs. I didn’t have too much time to focus on the chill because my life mate plucked me from the bed and slung me over his shoulder. He spun around a few times and threw me back on the bed. I was definitely fully awake at this point.

“That’s the first step. The second involves me throwing you into a bathtub full of cold water. Are you going to get up?” I could tell by his voice that he was completely serious about the water.

“I give up! I’m awake, you ass!”

He laughed again and handed me my pants. “To be fair, I did warn you that you wouldn’t like it. It’s not my fault you didn’t listen to me.”

I got dressed and headed down the stairs with Jeonggukie. My mom was sitting at the table and waiting for us before she began eating. When I grabbed my life mate’s plate and filled it with food, he shot me a confused look. I was a little unsure why I did it too, but I just shrugged. It wasn’t until my omega rolled around in happiness that I realized my omega made me do it. He wanted to feed his alpha, even if we can’t cook.

“Please tell me that mom didn’t use you as easy labor for cooking,” I said with a giggle.

“I’ll have you know that your alpha actually didn’t let me do anything, except tell him how to make the kimbap. He also told me that he calls you Manggae now. I think that’s the cutest thing ever. Maybe second to him tucking you in. If you don’t keep him, I will, Minie.”

Normally, I would get flustered by my mom’s teasing. I haven’t been comfortable with her calling Jeonggukie my alpha, so I lashed out and got offended. Now that I’m starting to care less and less about the title, I decided to fight back. “No offense, but I think you’re a little old for him. Plus, I’m
much cuter. I also have a nicer ass.”

The fact that my life mate choked on his food combined with the wide-eyed stares I got from both people at the table made the comments worth it. My mom recovered quickly, much to my dismay. “I could reply that because I’m older I have more experience or that you got both your looks and your ass from me. However, I’ll simply say that you’ve finally admitted he’s your alpha. Because you didn’t deny it, you’re never going to live that down.” She stuck her tongue out at me and winked at Jeonggukie.

I sighed and rolled my eyes. I should have known there was no winning with her. We finished eating mostly in silence. I didn’t want to risk starting a conversation with my mom, knowing that she was going to torture me with the “admission” that my life mate is my alpha. I volunteered to clean the dishes since mom and Jeonggukie cooked. The alpha didn’t let me do them by myself. He insisted that I allow him to help. After we were finished, I walked him to the door. I knew he had a couple of assignments he needed to finish for class. To be honest, I did too. I haven’t been as on top of my school work lately because I’ve been so tired.

“I had a good time today, Manggae. I think you did a great job planning the date. Next week, I’ll do it. I’ve already got an idea.”

“Okay. Thank you for helping me so much today. I’m sorry that I’m still having a hard time.”

“Don’t be,” he said, taking my hands. “You can’t help what your wolves do.”

I stared at him for a moment, working up the courage to do one of the things I hadn’t ever pictured doing with an alpha. I wanted to kiss him. We established that was a date thing. Dates seem to have to end in kisses. Since this was my date, it has to be my kiss. My omega pulled me forward, onto my toes. My alpha tried to jerk me backward, away from the other alpha’s face. I pushed myself forward and my lips connected with my life mate’s cheek. I tried to pull myself towards his mouth, but my stronger wolf wouldn’t let me. Jeonggukie could feel the problem I was having, probably in the jerky movements I was making. He pulled me by my waist and held my face steady. He leaned in and brushed my lips with his own. I tried to press into the kiss, wanting to show that my alpha wasn’t in charge. Instead, I growled. My life mate froze immediately and looked into my eyes. He seemed displeased with what he saw, a low growl barely escaping his throat. He hugged me tightly and kissed my cheek before he walked towards his house.

The next week was beyond exhausting. My alpha came out more and more, causing me to be a dick to everyone. They were all understanding, but that didn’t mean I was happy about it. I felt especially bad for Jeonggukie. He’s been on guard around me ever since our last date. He said that my eyes started to glow scarlet for a moment when I growled. It wasn’t a good sign. I know it’s happened once before, but my eyes aren’t supposed to be able to turn red. They’ve only ever had honey spots. I didn’t know how to deal with the fact that my alpha was trying to control my life. I kept fighting. My omega and I both did, but it seemed like a battle we were destined to lose. As my rut got closer, my alpha got stronger. It was only a week away and I was growing more concerned about exactly what was going to happen. If my alpha takes over, I don’t know if he’s going to ever let me or my omega come back out. I’ve never heard of anyone being constantly under the influence of their wolf, but I’ve also never heard of someone with two wolves either. If it was possible, it could happen to me. I felt three squeezes to my hand and looked up to see my alpha life mate staring at me. I knew he was concerned.

“I’m fine, Jeonggukie. I’m just tired and worried about my rut.” I tried to smile, but his response showed that I failed miserably.

“Should we cancel our date tomorrow? I don’t know if it’s a good idea. You can’t even last a whole
day without falling asleep in class or at study. Me being around makes it worse. I don’t want to make things harder for you. Maybe you should just stay home and sleep or try to catch up on your work.”

“No. Fuck my alpha and his stupid pride. I’m not giving in to him. This is my decision. I don’t care if I have to show up at your house and drag you outside. We are going out tomorrow and there is nothing my alpha can do about it.”

Jeonggukie sighed and rubbed his thumb over the back of my hand. “If you say so, Manggae. I’ll go along with this, but I’m bringing you home at the first sign that you can’t handle being out. I don’t care which part of you wants to object.”

I woke up in a terrible mood and realized that this was the first Sunday my alpha had made an appearance at the beginning of the day. This should be fun. After I got ready for the date, I could smell my life mate’s worry from the other side of the door before he knocked. I knew he was nervous about how all of this would turn out. He wasn’t the only one. When I opened the door, he stiffened. I’m sure he could smell my alpha’s frustration at seeing him. I quickly grabbed Jeonggukie’s hand and we headed towards the cat cafe. I was excited to see Nabi, hoping she would make me feel calmer. I could feel the hostile edge in my scent, but there was nothing I could do to stop it. My alpha was releasing it without my consent. My life mate tried to counter the change with his own smell, but the way other people were looking at us showed me it wasn’t working very well. My hopes that Nabi would be able to help me were dashed when she sniffed the air as I walked in and quickly ran away. Even my best cat friend didn’t want to be around my alpha when he’s like this. I sighed and took my seat. This turn of events just pissed me off worse.

Personally, I was glad that Jeonggukie ordered for me. I wasn’t sure what would come out of my mouth if I had to talk right now. My alpha is angry at the situation and I’m angry at my alpha and the fact that none of the cats are even coming near me. I could hear the other customers whispering, undoubtedly talking about how noticeably upset I am. My stronger wolf was displeased that the other alpha would even dare to think we couldn’t order our own food. How dare that alpha try to establish dominance over us by making us look weak like that? I vowed to keep my mouth shut for as long as I could. I couldn’t risk being an ass to my life mate. None of this was his fault, regardless of what my alpha wanted to believe. No matter who would be on the other end of these emotions, they would still exist—whether it was my alpha or my omega feeling them. Neither of my wolves would be happy with whoever I choose, I realize that now. It’s not their decision. It’s mine and it always will be.

When the server brought our food, he quickly walked away. I could tell that my strong hormones were not only confusing him but making him feel threatened. I tried to quell my alpha’s rage, to no avail. There was nothing I could do to prevent his anger. When Jeonggukie began splitting up our food, I caught a glimpse of his eyes. The specks in them were glowing bright crimson. He had made a point to avoid eye contact with me so that I couldn’t tell how much this was affecting him. Even when I could tell he was tense beyond all belief, he was still doing things to try to make my life easier. I felt my omega wake up at the thought. He lunged at my alpha, but my dominant wolf was having none of his useless rebellion. When his teeth sunk into my omega, it hurt so badly that I yelped out loud. It was always like this when they fought, but this was the most violent. Usually, it was just growling, barking, and clawing until one lazily gave up. This time, my alpha was out for blood. Jeonggukie was at my side in an instant, making sure I was all right, even though he could tell I wasn’t. He placed money on the table and pulled me out of the cafe. I tried to protest, but the splitting pain coursing down the center of my head wasn’t allowing me to do anything but whine. My alpha had already won the fight, but the headache wasn’t lessening. I’m sure it had something to do with my life mate’s arms around me as he walked me back towards my house. He fished my phone out of my pocket and dialed my mom.
“Ms. Park, does Manggae have any medication allergies?” He waited for my mom to respond before speaking again.

“He’s fine physically, but his wolves are fighting again. He’s in a ton of pain and he’s crying involuntarily. I wanted to give him something to make him sleep, but I wanted to make sure he wasn’t allergic to anything first.”

“I have some over-the-counter sleep medicine at home. I’ll get one of the pack to bring it to your house, so I can focus on getting Manggae home.”

“I promise I’ll take care of him. I always do.”

“I’ll see you when we get there.”

I hadn’t realized I was crying until Jeonggukie said something. I tried to wipe the tears from my eyes, but I couldn’t move without it hurting. Even breathing seemed to make the pounding ten times worse. If it weren’t for my life mate holding me up, I would be curled into a heap on the ground. At some point, I started to get light-headed from the intense pain. As if he could sense it, Jeonggukie lifted me up and carried me the rest of the way. I wasn’t even sure if we got onto the bus or not, but we eventually arrived at my house. Yunie and Chae Hyun were waiting inside with the medicine. It barely registered when my life mate forced my mouth open and shoved a pill inside. He brought water to my mouth and forced me to drink. It hurt. Everything hurt so fucking much. I felt more tears fall. I could barely make out the voices around me as they spoke. After a while, I blacked out—unsure if it was because my body couldn’t take anymore or the medicine finally kicked in.

I woke up the next morning, feeling so much better than I did the day before. My head throbbed gently, but it was nothing like the searing feeling of a jackhammer digging into my skull. My alpha was out again and my omega was nowhere to be seen. I could feel how strong he was. He became surprisingly more dominant and controlling as it grew closer to my rut. There were only three days left. They passed without another incident like the one on Sunday. Unfortunately, that didn’t mean there weren’t problems. The first day didn’t start off too badly. My alpha wouldn’t allow me to be near Jeonggukie, forcing me to be around Mi Mi instead. There wasn’t a moment that my omega life mate was around that I didn’t have my nose shoved in her neck. My alpha life mate was still around, but my alpha refused to be within a certain distance of him. Even at lunch or when walking home, Mi Mi had to be between us. It was annoying. I couldn’t stop my dominant wolf’s actions, despite being frustrated by them. I was too weak to fight at this point. The exhaustion that I felt after all of the previous struggling was a million times worse than before. I found myself falling asleep in class and barely being able to focus on the lecture. It was starting to become a real issue.

The second day was much worse. Anytime Jeonggukie came within so many arm lengths of me, my alpha would growl. I couldn’t contain the noise. At this point, I didn’t have any fight left in me. I felt guilty growling at my life mate, but even Mi Mi’s calming pheromones couldn’t stop my alpha’s reaction. It was certain that my wolf did not want my alpha life mate around. I felt so lost and so helpless in my own body. By the end of that day, I bared my teeth and claws at Jeonggukie. The pack immediately held him back when they realized I was challenging him. I choked out an apology and left school. I ran home as fast as I could, but fatigue caught up with me. I blacked out and woke up in my bed. I didn’t have to wonder for long how I managed to get home. My alpha life mate’s scent was all over my blankets. I imagine that he must have run after me and followed me home, knowing that I might not make it. I could tell he sat with me for a while to make sure I was all right. Not only was this beyond frustrating, but it was also becoming dangerous.

The third day, I decided to stay home and sleep. I couldn’t handle whatever reaction my alpha would have towards Jeonggukie. I also didn’t have the energy to get out of bed. I alternated between taking
naps and watching random movies to pass the time. I wasn’t sure what tomorrow was going to hold, but I was worried about it. While I knew I wasn’t going to school tomorrow, I wondered if I needed to lock myself up. I wasn’t violent or angry unless my alpha life mate was around. I should be fine as long as I stay away from him. My mom came home and brought me some seaweed stew. It was one of the most nutritious things I could eat when I didn’t really have the energy to consume anything. She and I talked for a while about what I was going to do about my rut and my alpha, not really coming to any conclusions. We decided that I would go back to Busan and talk to my doctors if it got too bad. I had wanted to avoid that as long as I could, but it didn’t seem like I had much of a choice anymore. I obviously couldn’t handle this myself. As I got ready to go to sleep for the night, my phone vibrated. The subsequent conversation filled me with both curiosity and dread. I hope I’m not making a mistake.

Jeonggukie 😊: Be at my house at 6 pm tomorrow

Me: I don’t think that’s a good idea. My rut starts tomorrow

Jeonggukie 😊: I know. I have a plan to fix this

Me: I still don’t think this is a good idea

Jeonggukie 😊: Do you trust me?

Me: Yes

Jeonggukie 😊: Then be at my house at 6.

Jeonggukie 😊: Do you need me to send someone to make sure you get here okay?

Me: Yes, please. I can barely walk around by myself. I’ll see you at 6

Chapter End Notes

So, how did you like the chapter? I know it's not super happy, but sometimes things aren't. There were still some rather cute moments. What do you think will happen during Ji Min's rut? Be sure to leave your thoughts and theories. Thank you for reading!
Resolution

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

When most of the pack showed up at my door, I was concerned. I wasn’t expecting to be faced with a security detail of four alphas. I honestly thought Jeonggukie would send Tae or maybe Joon, not almost everyone. I knew they could smell the anger rolling off of me, but none of them seemed to be too bothered by it. I was grateful that they didn’t respond to my pronounced scent and obvious rut rage. It wasn’t so bad earlier in the day, yet my alpha started getting more and more uneasy as it got closer to 6 pm. Now that the time was almost here, I couldn’t keep the irritation out of my voice.

“Are you guys here to make sure I get to your house safely or to make sure I don’t run?”

“Both,” Seok said with a shrug.

“Oh, if you do run, I recommend running away to join the circus. I’m sure your alpha will be much happier with all of the clowns and balloons and food around.” Tae looked very proud of his contribution to the conversation.

“Tae,” Joon began, “if Min runs away, we’re all going to have to join the circus. It’s probably the only place we could go that might keep Guk from murdering us.”

“What do you mean?” I asked as I followed behind them. I tried to temper my tone with the right amount of curiosity, but I know I just sounded pissed off.

Jin slowed his pace and put his arm around my waist. He seemed worried that I would fall at any minute. “Guk’s alpha has been freaking out ever since you started getting worse. If you run off on our watch, he’d probably come for our throats.”

“Why has his alpha been upset?” I wanted to take the time to ask my questions before we got to the house, while my mind was still slightly clear and my alpha wasn’t completely in control. I didn’t feel like I had much sanity left, but I was trying to keep it together.

“It’s not a secret that his wolf sees you as his omega. You can only see your omega suffer so much and watch him pass out so many times before you’re constantly on edge. He hasn’t really been sleeping over the last week and he’s been very quiet. I hope this works. If it doesn’t, I don’t know how much longer it will be before he loses it.”

“What is he planning?”

“That’s not for us to tell you.” Jin’s soft voice was filled with something I couldn’t name. It made me a little worried.

“Has he really not been doing well? I don’t want him to get sick because of me. I didn’t even think about how he’s felt through everything. I’m such a terrible life mate.”

The sadness that rushed through me was quickly replaced by anger. My alpha didn’t care about Jeonggukie’s well-being. As far as he was concerned, the weaker my life mate was, the better. I tried to shut my alpha up, but he wasn’t listening. I didn’t have the strength to fight him anymore. I decided to give up. In the back of my mind, I worried that he would completely take over. I had no idea what would happen if he did. I’ve never been fully controlled by my wolf before, but I’ve heard horror stories. Plenty of people have talked about fights, sex, and mating that happened while under
the influence of their wolf. I didn’t want to be one of the people who ended up doing something like that when I couldn’t help it. I felt Jin tap my side three times and I looked at him.

“Guk told me to do that if you were quiet for too long or if you didn’t respond to one of us. You didn’t even hear what I said, did you?”

“No, I’m sorry.” I was surprised that Jeonggukie would still be looking out for me when he wasn’t even around, especially with how I’ve been treating him.

“I said that you’re not a terrible life mate. You care about him so much. I can tell, even though you don’t seem to realize it yet. I already know how you feel and I hope you figure it out soon. You both deserve happiness, Min.”

As much as I wanted to reply, I didn’t know what to say. How is it that Jin knows how I feel when I don’t? He seemed to be alluding to me having romantic feelings for Jeonggukie. I don’t know if I do, but maybe it’s possible. I thought about the butterflies, the kisses, and the moments that I could only describe as sweet. Things were completely different with my alpha life mate than they were with anyone else. Mi Mi and I have gone on countless “dates” throughout the years. We’ve also cuddled, held hands, and fed each other. It never tugged at my heart and made me feel things like it does when I’m with Jeonggukie. It never felt quite right. The more I mulled it over the more I came to the conclusion that maybe I do—

A loud growl interrupted my thoughts. It took me a moment to realize that the growl had come from me. Jin immediately stopped walking and checked to make sure I was all right. The rest of the pack was next to me in a flash. I was too embarrassed to admit why I growled. How do I tell them that my alpha threw a tantrum because I was starting to admit—

Another growl came from me and I decided to stop thinking about the thing I was previously thinking about. My alpha was obviously not going to allow this to continue. I shook my head when I saw that the pack was still waiting for me to explain my actions.

“My alpha’s being a dick. He doesn’t like this situation and he doesn’t like feelings.”

They nodded and continued walking. Jin stayed with me the whole time, making sure that I could walk properly. I was surprised that I wasn’t as tired as I have been in the last week. Something told me that it probably had to do with me giving up and letting my alpha win. There wasn’t a reason to be exhausted anymore because I had finally stopped fighting myself. I can’t control my dominant wolf. I don’t know why I thought I could. I felt Jin tap me again and I couldn’t think of anything to say. I knew he was just trying to help, but there was no need to pull me out of my thoughts. Nothing would change if I was listening to myself think or if I was walking in complete silence with the pack.

“You’re nervous,” he said quietly.

“I’m pissed. I don’t want to be around that stupid alpha.”

If my words had any effect on Jin, he didn’t show it. I’m sure he could tell that my alpha was the one talking. While I felt like I wasn’t making my own decisions right now, I was glad to be still present in my own mind. I could hear my own thoughts and I could tell what was going on. That meant I wasn’t completely out of control yet. I’ve heard that when your wolf takes over, you essentially pass out. It’s almost like your body moves on its own without you knowing. You wake up sometime later and have no clue what happened. I’ve heard about some people who remembered things afterward and some who haven’t. It comforted me a little to know that even though my alpha was the one calling the shots right now, I still had the option of trying to overtake him. The rest of the walk was spent in silence. It wasn’t a very long journey from my house to theirs, but it felt like forever. Each
step we took filled me with more dread and my alpha with more rage. At this point, I wouldn’t be surprised if I went for Jeonggukie’s throat the moment I saw him. My alpha perked up at the thought. Although we both knew it wouldn’t end well, my stronger wolf was practically begging for the opportunity to get his teeth and claws on my life mate.

Everything in me tensed when we walked inside the house. Out of all the scents present, I could only smell Jeonggukie. The pungent bitter orange taunted my alpha until he began to shake with animosity. I growled again, louder this time, as my body trembled. I’ve never felt like this before. I’ve never felt this level of pure hatred for anyone or anything—not even Jae Seok. The pack ushered me to my life mate’s room and crowded around me, almost standing guard. I knew they wanted me to enter. My alpha was torn between the overwhelming urge to destroy the person that was causing this anxiety and the desire for self-preservation. My dominant wolf wasn’t stupid. He knew we couldn’t beat Jeonggukie if it came to violence. However, he was overcome with the need to prove himself and protect his territory. My life mate had invaded every aspect of my life and started to win me and my omega over. As far as my alpha was concerned, we belong to him. He wasn’t going to just give us to another wolf. Not without a fight. I tried to reason with the howling voice inside my head, tried to tell him it was better to just walk away. Even if he wanted to agree, retreat wasn’t possible. I was still surrounded by the pack and they definitely weren’t going to let me leave. No words were exchanged as I twisted the door handle and stepped inside.

I felt the door close behind me as my eyes tried to adjust to the darkness. Jeonggukie’s thick and tangy fragrance was everywhere, cluttering my senses and pressing down on me as if it were the weight of another person. I could sense and smell him, but I couldn’t hear or see him. That fact put my alpha on high alert, hackles rising as we took a defensive position. My life mate had probably been sitting in the dark for some time. Coupled with the fact that he has better senses than I do, I’m sure that meant he could see me. After taking a few steps into the room and listening for shifts in movement, I felt him close to me. He moved to stand directly in front of me and my alpha let out a low warning for him to back off. I could see Jeonggukie now that I was finally used to the lack of light. His face was stern and his jaw was set as he eyed me carefully. The light glow of crimson in his eyes made it so I was unable to discern what kind of look he was giving me. He stood completely straight, body rigid and imposing. He looked somehow bigger than the last time I saw him—more threatening. A deep growl came from his throat as a challenge to my previous call for caution. My alpha bared our teeth in an attempt to make him leave.

The quiet chuckle that we got as a response made me growl even louder. My claws readied themselves to meet flesh. Jeonggukie simply stepped closer, completely unbothered by my threat. He reached his hand out to grab my shoulder and I immediately ducked out of the way. He shrugged and moved closer to me. I couldn’t tell what he was trying to do and it made me angrier. I’ve always been able to predict alphas’ movements, always known exactly what they were doing and why. My life mate, however, was confusing me. I didn’t know if he was trying to fight, provoke me, or get me used to his presence. He was just standing in front of me and staring at me. He was within reach. If he wanted to attack me, I feel like he would have tried something already. The curiosity was enough for me to ask.

“What the fuck are you doing?” I didn’t try to hide the venom in my tone.

“What do you think I’m doing, Manggae?” His voice was calm and steady. It seemed like none of this was bothering him. That set my alpha off even more.

“I’m not a fucking manggaetteok,” I spat at him.

He took a step closer to me. “But you are, little omega. We established that last week. I believe the full title was something like tiny squishy dessert?” The smirk in his voice was audible as he spoke.
“Cut the little omega bullshit and tell me what the fuck you want. Why the fuck did you call me here?” I moved a few paces away from him.

“I already told you. I’m going to fix this,” he replied while walking towards me again.

“Well, you’re doing a shit job of fixing anything. So far, you’ve just followed me around your room like a fucking creep. Get to the point or I’m leaving. I should just go. There’s no point in me being here anyway. Nothing is wrong. There’s nothing to fix.”

“You and I both know you’re not going anywhere, Manggae. You wouldn’t even be able to get to the door before I stopped you.”

“If you’re going to hatch your evil scheme or whatever, get the fuck on with it, you stupid alpha!” I was to my limit with the unknown. I wanted this to be over with already.

“I know me being an alpha is a problem for you, but at least you can acknowledge my rank.”

Another two steps had me backing up even more, right into a wall. It was then that I realized he had been cornering me ever since I walked into the room.

I tried not to show any concern for my position as I retorted. “You’re an alpha, so what? That doesn’t make you fucking special. Half of the population are alphas. Should we throw you all a party or something? Do you want a fucking award? Most alphas are just worthless pieces of shit. Why should I care about you?” I thickened my scent to show him that I’m still a threat.

“Alphabet you is much mouthier and scarier than normal you. I could see why some people are intimidated,” he replied with a laugh. He reached out to touch my face, but I slapped his hand away.

“What the fuck does that have to do with anything? Just tell me what you want.”

“You say you’re an alpha, right? Do you know what alphas do when they’re challenged?”

“I don’t know. Why don’t you tell me?” My tone was obviously sarcastic. I knew the answer, even though his question didn’t seem relevant. I played dumb because I wanted to keep him talking. I was trying to use this time to analyze how to get away from the wall. I didn’t want my movement restricted, just in case something happened.

He sighed and bent down to eye-level with me. “It really is a shame you have all of the alpha bravado and pride, but none of the morals and honor.”

“What does that even mean?”

“You shouldn’t lie, especially not to a stronger wolf. If you’re going to claim to be an alpha, I’ll treat you like one and demand you live up to the same standards I hold myself to. Maybe I should spend all our free time teaching you how to be a real alpha.”

“Get to the fucking point! I’m done with this stupid shit. I’m ready to be away from you. You’re not wanted here. We were perfectly fine before you showed up. I don’t need alpha lessons and I don’t need a fucking alpha!” I screamed at him, my chest heaving from the sheer force I used to say the words. My wolf was fed up and ready to explain to Jeonggukie exactly how he felt.

My life mate put his hand on my chest, pinning me to the wall. His voice came out as a low growl. “You may say you don’t need an alpha, but that doesn’t mean you don’t have one. Two parts of you have already accepted me. You’re the only one left.”

“You’re not my fucking alpha!” I barked back as I pushed his arm away.
“Prove it, little omega.”

It wasn’t his words that caused me to lunge at his throat, it was the taunting and arrogant way he said them. Jeonggukie dodged to the side, allowing me to move from the position he had trapped me in. He stood there and carefully watched me. I couldn’t tell if he was sizing me up or trying to predict me, but I honestly didn’t care. My body was on autopilot, being controlled by the will of my alpha. I inspected my life mate as well as possible in the dim lighting. I tried to calculate a weak point that I could attack. Escape was no longer an option in my mind. This was now a matter of pride. Even if my alpha had wanted to leave, I’m pretty sure there was no way I was getting out of this room without a fight. I circled him cautiously. I knew he was stronger and could easily subdue me, but that strength didn’t matter if he couldn’t touch me. I rushed at him from behind, aiming my punch at the back of his head. He grabbed my arm and pushed me towards the wall. Jeonggukie wasn’t even trying to hit me. It was almost as if he was toying with me. The thought made me growl.

From his side, I moved to punch at the soft spot below his ribs. He grabbed onto my arm like before, but I latched onto him to prevent him from pushing me away. In an effort to catch him off balance, I kicked at his legs. My blow connected with the back of his knee. He fell into a kneeling position, but he was still holding me. He pulled at my arms bringing me down with him. I tackled him before he could get back up. I punched him a few times in the stomach and he responded with some blows to my chest. I could barely contain the scream when he connected with the same spot for the third time. I would be a miracle if my ribs aren't broken, but I wasn’t about to let a little pain stop me at this point. I rolled off of him before he could keep me there. My life mate stood back up and smirked. I wanted to beat that look off of his face so badly. I ran at him and punched at his chest. He allowed the hit because he used it as an opportunity to grab me and pull me to the ground. We wrestled for a moment and he ended up on top of me. Jeonggukie landed a blow to my temple and instantly my head swam. Still, I refused to give in.

“You’re not so strong if you can’t even knock me out.” I laughed as I threw my fists at him a few more times.

“I’m trying to save your pretty face, little omega,” he responded with an equally snarky tone.

“Too bad I’m not that nice,” I growled and hit him directly in the side of his mouth.

He wiped a small bit of blood that pooled at the corner of his lips and chuckled. “I hate to say it, but you hit like a bitch.”

His words made me lose whatever shred of calm I may have had left. I extended my claws and slashed at his chest. My legs instinctively wrapped around him in an attempt to flip him over. I punched at his face again and then lost track of the places that my blows connected with or missed. My life mate seemed unfazed by the hits. He shoved his fist so hard into my stomach that I thought I would throw up. It made me temporarily stop my assault. He used this opportunity to hit me one last time in the side of the head. My vision blurred and I became dizzy. I knew I was done, but I wasn’t ready to admit defeat yet. Jeonggukie could sense my weakness and bent to whisper in my ear.

“Give up, little omega,” he growled deeply.

“Never.”

The alpha wrapped his hand around my throat and squeezed firmly. As he choked me, he stared directly in my eyes. I fought at first because my alpha was not willing to give in to him. I struggled to break free. He grabbed my wrists and pinned them to the ground above my head. When his grip tightened, I began to see spots. My thrashing calmed to little more than a wiggle and then stopped altogether. There was nothing I could do. My dominant wolf had been beaten. He tucked his tail
between his legs and lowered his top half. The bowing of my alpha’s head broke something in me. I felt myself being swept away by a sudden rush of heat. I dug my nails into my hands and squeezed my legs tighter around my life mate. I moaned loudly when my hips bucked against him. I couldn’t seem to catch my breath, even though there was very little pressure left on my windpipe. I felt like I was melting in my own skin. I bit my lip while I stared directly at Jeonggukie. Whatever he saw within my eyes made him release my throat and wind his fingers through my hair. He used that leverage to yank my head back harshly. I whimpered when his teeth grazed my neck. I couldn’t fight the urge to pull him closer with my legs and press myself against him.

“Are you willing to accept me now?” He whispered into my ear, voice dangerously low. I nodded quickly in response.

“Say it,” he demanded while tugging with more force.

Chills ran down my spine and I moaned again. The movement of my hips against him intensified as I realized that friction was making the heat subside. My life mate bent his body over mine, giving me a better angle to rut against him. An involuntary whine left my lips when I realized he was also moving his hips, ever so slightly. He pulled harder at my hair, drawing more noises out of me I didn’t know I could make. For some reason, I couldn’t stop gasping for air and crying out long enough to force words out of my mouth.

“I said speak, omega!” My breath hitched and I made a strange, high-pitched sound when he sunk his teeth into the side of my neck.

“You’re my alpha…” My voice came out as a defeated whisper. My pride was broken and alpha had finally submitted.

Jeonggukie let my hands go and pulled me into a kiss. It was nothing like the simple pecks we had shared before. It was deep and filled with desire. I felt like I couldn’t get close enough to him. Even when I wrapped my fingers in his hair and pulled him towards me with my legs, I didn’t feel satisfied. I wanted more of his lips and body on mine. The heat crashed over me again, more painful than before. I was able to ignore it when my life mate drew my bottom lip into his mouth. My heartbeat sped up when I felt his tongue trace over it. I darted my tongue out to meet his and he immediately sucked on it. The feeling went straight to my dick and I realized I was still grinding against him. He grabbed my hips and held them closer, eliciting loud groans from both of us. Just as I started to find a rhythm in this new position, the door opened and Jeonggukie was no longer on top of me.

It took me a moment for my eyes to adjust to the light. When they did, I saw my panting life mate being held by five alphas. I sat up so that I could see what was going on. His stare burned into me at the same temperature as the flush under my skin, if not hotter. The memory of his lips made the heat flare up and activated the painful need to have him against me once more. It also made me horribly aware of the aching between my legs as my cock strained against my underwear. I could smell arousal oozing from both Jeonggukie and myself.

“Uhh… I take it your plan worked?” Joon said, looking back and forth between us. He was clearly shocked by the situation.

“Something like that. I wasn’t quite expecting this outcome, but I guess it served its purpose.” The small smirk that graced his lips made me want to kiss him.

I stood and began walking towards him, only to be stopped by Yunie and Tae. I tried to move past them, but they wouldn’t budge. “Why are you stopping me?” I stifled a growl in the back of my throat.
My life mate answered for them. “I just wanted to calm your alpha down. I didn’t mean to make you submit, Manggae. Now that your sex drive has been unlocked, your rut has fully kicked in. I asked them to pull us apart until I get myself under control. We’ve barely kissed for the first time, I’m not trying to break you just yet.”

I bit my lip at the insinuation and nodded. As much as my hormones were telling me I wanted to be broken, Jeonggukie was right. I could hardly think when another wave of pain hit me. I doubled over and the two wolves in front of me caught me before I fell on the ground. I felt feverish. Everything looked blurry and sounded like I was underwater. I tried to focus on the voices around me so I could hear what they were saying.

“He’s getting worse, Guk,” Jin said when he looked at me. “It’s probably not going to be long before he’s completely gone. You have to make a decision on what you’re going to do.”

“I want to see if his medicine helps before I do anything. A week ago, he couldn’t even kiss me. I’m not going to do anything to him if I can help it. I don’t exactly consider hormonal begging during rut or heat consent and I’m sure as fuck not touching him without his permission.”

Suddenly, my life mate was sitting in front of me. I clung to him and climbed into his lap. Just his touch seemed to cool some of the sweltering fire that tore at my flesh. I nuzzled my face into his neck. After I felt his hands on my back, I began kissing and licking at his throat. He grabbed my face and moved it away from his neck. The loss of contact made me whine. Another whimper came from me when he held me in place and prevented me from rutting against him.

“Manggae, I need you to try to stay with me. Do you have your Primemmeryn?”

It took me a few moments to understand and process what he was asking me. Primemmeryn? What is that? It sounds familiar. Oh, yeah. I don’t have that. I shook my head. I got excited when I felt his hands on my hips. That elation crashed when I realized he was pulling my phone out of my pocket.

“Hey, Ms. Park. Manggae’s fine, but his rut has hit him pretty hard. I’m sending Tae to get his Primemmeryn. How long does it take to kick in? So, if he’s not better in an hour, it’s safe to assume the medicine didn’t work? Okay. Thank you.”

I dug my nails into his shoulders when the crippling pain came back. He ran his hands over me and tried to comfort me. I wanted to scream and cry and throw things, but I could hardly move when it hit again. “Hurts,” was all I managed to croak out.

“I know it does. It’ll be all right.” He kissed the top of my head and held me close. “Jin? Joon? What can I do for him right now? You’re the only two in the pack who have had a natural rut. There has to be something to lessen the pain. This is breaking my heart.”

“Put him in your bed, take both your shirts off, and cuddle him. Skin-to-skin contact helps. Give him a pillow or something he can rut against. If he comes, great. If not, it will at least make him feel a little better. Let him do pretty much what he wants, within reason. Also, kissing him, biting him, and touching him will do a lot. Just don’t mate him or anything,” Jin replied.

“I bit him earlier and we’re not mated. I think I can handle that part. I’ll figure the rest out. I’m going to lay him down now. I’ll be out in a bit to get his medicine.”

“Just remember, he’s going to be kind of lucid for a little bit longer and then he’s going to be out of it. I’d figure out what you want to do before that happens. He’s going to be a wreck when it fully takes over.” I think it was Joon talking, but I wasn’t sure.
I heard them leave and felt my body being lifted. By the time Jeonggukie laid me in the bed, we were both shirtless. He ignored the sweat dripping down my body as he pulled me to face him and kissed my neck. I immediately wrapped my legs around his and ground my hips into his thigh. The friction against his hard muscles made me moan loudly. My life mate shushed me and gripped my sides. I hissed in pain when he touched the spot he hit before. I could smell the worry in his scent and I knew he regretted hurting me.

“I’m sorry,” he whispered against my neck as he kissed it. “I’m sorry. I’m so sorry.”

He kept repeating the phrase as he kissed and sucked on my neck. My eyes rolled to the back of my head at the feeling. I latched onto the back of his head and drew him as close as he could be. The friction against my cock felt amazing, but it wasn’t enough. I needed more. I wiggled in Jeonggukie’s hold, trying to position myself to get some satisfaction. Another increase in temperature had me feeling incredibly sensitive. It was then that I realized how tender my neck had become.

“J- Jeonggukie, stop.” I didn’t really want him to stop, but that section of my throat was starting to hurt.

I tapped his head, tried to pull him back, and even tried to push him off of me. He was caught in a loop of apologizing and marking my skin. “Alpha, please stop,” I whispered when I couldn’t take much more.

He immediately froze. He looked at me with shock in his doe eyes. I couldn’t tell if he was more surprised by his actions or the fact that I called him alpha. He stared at me for another moment before clearing his throat and standing up. I whimpered. I didn’t want to lose the comfort that having him near me brought.

“Tae is back with your Primemmeryn. You’re going to take that and wait an hour. While you’re still mentally here, we’re going to have to figure out what we’re going to do if your meds don’t calm this down.”

He disappeared and reappeared within a moment. He handed me two pills and a bottle of water. Luckily, I swallowed it before another gut-wrenching pain struck me. The attacks seemed to hit out of nowhere and dissipate just as suddenly, although some of them lasted a while. Jeonggukie grabbed me and pulled me into another kiss. His fingers danced over my skin as he sucked and licked at my bottom lip. It made my temperature drop substantially, but it still wasn’t enough to make it go away. My life mate picked me up and sat down on the bed, making me straddle his lap. I liked sitting with him like this. It allowed for the most skin contact and it let me rub myself against him easily. One sideways gyration of my hips had him growling and holding me still. I had brushed my dick against his. I didn’t realize he was hard too. I completely forgot that he’s also in his rut.

“How are you so calm? You don’t seem like you’re having any problems with your rut at all,” I said as I nuzzled into his neck.

“Normally, I don’t. I am today though. I’ve got a very attractive, very eager omega on top of me who just submitted to me. It’s taking every bit of control I have to not claim you right now, especially when you’ve already got my marks all over you.”

I touched my neck and remembered how sore it was. In an effort not to be affected by the fact that Jeonggukie wanted to claim me, I asked about his previous behavior. “What was with all of the marking? One second, you were apologizing and the next you were eating my neck.”

“Alphas really like marking their significant others. An alpha in rut feels like he has to. Marking also calms us down. So, it was a combination of feeling like your skin was too blank and trying to make
myself feel better about hurting you. I’m really sorry, by the way. I wasn’t actually trying to leave any bruises. I’m not used to pulling punches in fights. I usually go for the throat.”

“Do you really think I hit like a bitch?” I said with a sour tone.

“No, but I had to piss you off somehow.”

I wanted to reply, but I didn’t get the chance. I was silenced by another flaming spike to the stomach and groin, crying out in pain. Jeonggukie placed my body over his leg and started moving me. I couldn’t stop a loud moan from escaping the second I felt the fabric drag over my cock. I bucked my hips in time with his pulls and it felt heavenly. After a few minutes, the friction began to hurt.

“I need to take these off. My skin feels like it’s being rubbed off because of my clothes.”

“Are you sure? I know you don’t like people seeing you. I could leave if that makes you feel more comfortable”

“Please don’t.” The words came out a little more desperate sounding than I wanted. While I was embarrassed to be naked in front of Jeonggukie, I needed him with me. The shame of removing my pants was worth it to keep my dick from being rubbed so raw that I wanted to cut it off.

I stood up and suddenly realized I was about to strip in front of an alpha. “Can… can you close your eyes, please? I’m a little uncomfortable.”

Jeonggukie immediately squeezed his eyes closed and covered them with his hands. I took my pants off as quickly as possible and went to straddle him again. He stopped me. He took his own pants off and kept his underwear on. “The friction is going to be just as bad if you’re moving against my pants as it was when you were moving against your own. Actually,” he paused to grab something from under his bed, “this will help.”

“Why do you have a bottle of lube under your bed?” I raised an eyebrow and tilted my head to the side.

“I had a hard time when you were in heat. I threw it under the bed when I was done and never bothered to move it.” he said as he poured some of the liquid on his thigh and spread it around.

When he was done, he wiped his hands on his boxers and pulled me back onto his lap. A chill went through me the second my cock brushed up against his slick muscles. My life mate moved my hips, the feeling unlike anything I’ve ever experienced. My head fell back and my mouth fell open as he picked up speed. He shushed my loud moans with a kiss.

“You’ve got to be a little quieter, Manggae. I’m going to have to get the pack to leave if you aren’t,” Jeonggukie said after he pulled away.

“Can’t.” I managed to choke out in between moans.

I took over rolling my hips against his thigh when he let go of me. He put his hands on my waist. I realized he was watching my face the entire time. It made me feel shy, but I couldn’t stop myself from rutting against him. I had to do this or keep suffering through horrific pain. Either way it would hurt, but this way hurt less.

“If your meds don’t work, what do you want to do? I’m not going to have sex with you. You’re not able to make a fully conscious decision right now and I’m not taking advantage of that. I recommend masturbating for as long as possible. If you get too tired to do that, I guess I could help. Honestly, I’m not totally comfortable helping. What we’re doing right now is actually making me feel really
awkward. The only reason I’m doing this is to make you feel better. I can get over feeling weird about something if it means you’re not in pain for a while.”

“Is that why you’re staring at my face?”

“That and the fact that you look beautiful like this. My alpha is so proud that you’re this way because of us.”

“Yes. Only been horny twice in my life, both times because of you. I guess that’s something to be proud of.” My chuckle came out mixed with a broken moan.

“I think it’s something to be proud of that I’m making my omega feel good.” He pulled me forward and captured my lips again. The new angle gave me added friction and sent a rush through me.

My life mate silenced my moans as much as he could. I wanted to be quiet, but I couldn’t contain myself. This is the first time I’ve ever done anything like this. I’ve never even masturbated before. That suddenly reminded me about what Jeonggukie said.

“I… I don’t know how to masturbate.” My speech was broken by jagged breaths and deep groans.

“Put lube on your hand, wrap it around yourself, and move it up and down. It’s really simple.”

I nodded and nipped at his neck. The low growl that I got in response spurred me on. As I looked at the flesh covering his throat, I understood what he meant by it being too barren. I wanted to leave my own markings on my alpha, to show that I owned him just as much as he owned me. He buried his face in my shoulder and bit at it. I muffled my own noises with my life mate’s skin and he did the same. His claws dug into my waist and the feeling triggered a heat wave. They were getting more and more painful each time they happened.

“Fuck this shit hurts! How long has it been?”

“You’ve got 15 minutes left before it’s been an hour. I’m going to take a guess and say your Primemmeryn isn’t going to stop the rut pains. You probably have another hour before you end up losing yourself.”

Over the next 15 minutes, I experienced six rushes of crippling pain. Each time, Jeonggukie would diligently mark my skin and guide my hips until I stopped sobbing. The attacks were growing stronger and more frequent with every passing second. After the time was up, my life mate sat me on the edge of the bed and knelt behind me. I knew what was coming next. He poured lube on my hand and waited for me to touch myself. When I wrapped my fingers around my dick, I felt his tongue traveling up the back of my neck. After the first few pumps, I tightened my grip. My head flew back at the feeling, the heat finally lessening some. I bared my neck for Jeonggukie after he huffed angrily, obviously annoyed that I stopped what he was doing. I tested how fast I should move and how firmly I should hold myself as my body grew tense. Each flick of my wrist and my life mate’s tongue made a tingling, dizzying heat crash down on me. As time went on, I felt like I was getting closer and closer to something, but wasn’t able to ever get there. No matter how long or how many different ways I stroked myself, I couldn’t come.

“I can’t. I feel like I keep getting close, but it just isn’t working. I don’t know what I’m doing wrong.”

“You might not be doing anything wrong. If you want, I can try for you. You need to tell me now though. There’s probably only another 15 to 20 minutes before you get too caught up to make
decisions. If you can come before then, the timer essentially restarts.” I could hear the hesitation in his voice, but I needed his help.

As soon as I nodded, his hand was on my cock. It was so much bigger and warmer than my own. It practically swallowed me up. Every small movement felt more intense when he was the one making it. I leaned into him, wanting to be as close to him as possible. Even with part of his chest against my back, it wasn’t enough contact. I stopped him for a moment and motioned for him to sit down. I situated myself in his lap and pressed all of my body against him. I couldn’t help bucking my hips when he began stroking me again. I moved with him and eventually he stopped, letting me thrust into his hand. I fell out of rhythm and accidentally rubbed my ass against Jeonggukie’s cock. A spark shot through me. I continued to grind into him, feeling how hard and big he was. It was just as satisfying as masturbating, if not more so. When my life mate began pumping my dick again, I melted into an incoherent mess of whimpers and moans. My body quickly became a bundle of heat and tension. I could no longer move—too gone from the pleasure—so he continued to grind his cock on my ass as he stroked me. I felt something coil in my stomach and knew I had to be close.

“Fuck, J-Jeonggukie. P-lease don’t stop.” I wasn’t sure if he could understand what I said in between the high-pitched cries, but he kept going.

After another minute, my body gave in. A wave of relief washed over me as the knot in my stomach unfurled. “J-Jeo-Jeong—” I stuttered and whined my alpha’s name as I felt my cum cover his hand and run down onto my thighs. He kept pumping me until my body was trembling and I could no longer sit up straight.

My life mate pulled me further onto the bed and laid me down. I was slipping out of consciousness when I felt him leave my side. I vaguely registered something wet and cold rubbing over me before I fell asleep. I was awakened by soft kisses and an even softer voice calling my name. When I sat up, I was met with the delicious smell of japchae with chicken. My stomach immediately reminded me that I hadn’t been eating much lately.

“I know you didn’t sleep a lot, but I wanted to wake you up before your next bout hit. I made food because I know you’re hungry. We also need to talk.”

I eagerly thanked him and picked up a ton of noodles with my chopsticks. Jeonggukie stopped me and made me get a normal bite. “The food isn’t going anywhere. I don’t think it’s a good idea to try to eat that much at once. I don’t want you to choke.”

“So, what do we need to talk about?” I asked as we both happily ate.

“I did some research and I think I figured out why you were having trouble earlier. Normally, I would try to find a more scientific way to say this, but I don’t really feel like it right now. During rut, alphas have to fuck something to feel better. During heat, omegas need to be fucked. That’s why mates synching their heat and rut is part of the mating process. You are a special case. Even though you’re in rut, you still have an omega body. You couldn’t finish because you weren’t getting what your body needed. I’m guessing that your body thought that me grinding against you was enough. So, we need to figure out what to do. You’re going to be horny for the next two days and you can’t get off unless you feel me against you.”

“The simplest answer would be for you to keep grinding against me. I don’t want you to hurt yourself though.”

“What do you mean?”

“Well, not only does that amount of friction hurt, but you also didn’t come before. I’ve heard how
painful that is. Is there a way to fix both of those things?” I couldn’t think of a solution to the problem. I’ve had a sex education class like everyone else, but I don’t really know how sex works when there’s no penetration.

His eyes grew wide and he blinked a few times before looking away from me. He took a few more bites, peeked up at me, and immediately looked at his food again. I could tell that he didn’t want to say what he was thinking. We finished eating and Jeonggukie cleared away the dishes. I crawled in his lap and faced him when he returned to the room. Normally, I would be incredibly shy about being naked in front of anyone. The situation didn’t allow me that luxury. At any moment, the rut pains could start again. I was honestly lucky that the break in between them had lasted this long. I nuzzled my nose into my life mate’s neck and kissed it softly. I took a moment to admire my marks before I spoke.

“Look,” I said as I forced him to look at me. “You’ve made it clear that you’re not going to take advantage of me and I trust you. You seem to know a way to keep your word, not hurt yourself, and help me. I want you to do it. I don’t care what it is, Jeonggukie. If you don’t feel comfortable telling me what it is, just do it when the time comes.”

He nodded and gave me a bright smile. I felt his fingers gently trace over the bruises on my neck and I moved my head to the side to show them off. I was startled when I heard a low growl.

“You can’t do that, little omega. Don’t bare your neck like that unless you want to be mated. Alphas take that as an open invitation if you’re facing them. You’re lucky that I can control myself. My fangs even came out on instinct.” He smiled to show me his elongated canines. He nodded and gave me a bright smile. I felt his fingers gently trace over the bruises on my neck and I moved my head to the side to show them off. I was startled when I heard a low growl.

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“Hey, I’m not mad.” He smiled at me and kissed my lips gently. “I just wanted to give you a warning. I know you wouldn’t show any signs of submission to another alpha, but I didn’t think you knew the extent of the issue. If an alpha’s in rut and an omega shows their neck, there’s a good chance the alpha is going to at least try to mate them.”

The stabbing, searing pain tore through me once more, preventing my reply. Jeonggukie moved me so I was lying on my side, stood up to grab the lube, and returned to lay behind me. I heard him open the bottle and squirt some into his hand. I expected to feel his touch, but it never came. When I turned to look back at what he was doing, my life mate held my head down so I couldn’t see.

“This is really awkward for me. Please don’t look.”

I agreed, wondering what he could be doing. I jumped slightly when his fingers brushed against my dick. It stopped the heat from completely consuming me. His gentle touch caused me to thrust into his loosely closed hand. I needed him to hold me tighter. Jeonggukie squeezed his fist around me, drawing a low whim from the back of my throat. He began to slowly flick his wrist. I moved my hips with his hand. The friction felt amazing. I pushed back into him and that was when I felt his bare cock poke against my ass. The shockwave sent shivers throughout my body. Instinctively, I pressed into it and angled my pelvis backward. It slipped between my cheeks and I could feel the lube he had spread all over himself. He rolled his hips forward and we both let out loud groans. His dick rubbing over my entrance was almost enough to make me come. I stopped focusing on how he was stroking me—too lost in the way his cock dragged against my skin. It was so hard and massive that it felt like a pillar was being ground into me. The feeling made me quiver with anticipation and awakened a sensation of emptiness that I’ve never experienced. I moaned loudly when he started moving faster, matching his thrusts with the pumping of my cock.

I moved my body to get more friction over my hole. My body craved something that I knew only he
could provide. I tried to bounce slightly in time with his rhythm, needing more as I grew closer and closer to my release. With a simple slip of my hips, the tip of his dick pressed against the tight muscle of my entrance. That pressure was enough to make me come completely undone.

“A-alpha!” That one word was all I could manage to say as my whole body quaked with the force of my orgasm.

After my life mate milked the last drops of cum from me, he moved his hand to my ass. He pressed the cheeks together and enclosed them around his cock. He quickly thrust in between them, continuing to stimulate my hole. Soft whimpers spilled from my lips, falling in time with his quiet grunts and moans. His breathing picked up and his rutting became sloppier. I assumed he was getting close. I squeezed my muscles with the last of my strength. After another minute, a loud growl rumbled through both of our chests as he came. He didn’t stop until his orgasm was finished. We both lay pressed against each other, panting and desperately trying to regain our composure. I moved my neck to Jeonggukie’s lips, wanting to feel him more. I tried—and failed miserably—to not get aroused again at the feeling of his teeth on my throat and the sensation of hot cum trickling slowly down my back.

Chapter End Notes

Are you surprised? Tell me what you think!
Planning Ahead

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

I woke up to an empty bed, but I could still smell Jeonggukie in the house. I was wearing boxers and another of his shirts. He must have dressed me after everything was over. I was glad to have fresh clothes and to be clean. During the thick of it, I felt like most of my body was drenched in cum. My own was splattered all over the front of me and my life mate’s coated my backside. I thought back on the last two and a half days and I was more accepting of the events than I thought I would be. Rut pains were something more terrible than I had ever dealt with before. If Jeonggukie and I had to do some sexual things to prevent it, then that was fine with me. My alpha took very good care of me.

Because he was so diligent in making me come as soon as the pain started, I never slipped into the mind-bending madness that rut often causes. I didn’t get to the point of being one of those alphas that have to be locked away because they’re too dangerous when they’re in their rut. I remember the comforting words, the relieving bites, the soothing touches. It made me realize more and more how amazing Jeonggukie really is. My thoughts were cut off by my rumbling stomach. I did eat during my rut, but I didn’t eat enough to make up for how much food I missed the week before. I’m definitely ready to have a large meal. I heard voices in the dining room as I approached. The whole pack was home.

“Holy shit! It’s true!” Mi Mi called out when I came into the room. I watched her eyes trail over my neck and remembered that I had marks all over me. I didn’t even have to look in a mirror to know I was completely covered. “I can’t believe my baby is claimed!”

“Ranie, I keep telling you that I only helped him through his rut. I didn’t claim him.” Mi Mi moved to open her mouth, but Jeonggukie cut her off. “He didn’t claim me either if that’s what you’re thinking.”

I laughed at the two and walked over to the table. I sat in my alpha’s lap and stole a piece of his chicken. The whole pack’s eyes were on me, waiting to see what I had to say. “I’m still 100% virgin, guys. There was no sex, no penetration, nothing like that.”

“Bullshit,” Seok said with an unbelieving tone. “There’s no way you were both in rut and didn’t fuck.”

“We didn’t have sex,” I repeated.

Yunie eyed me cautiously. I could tell he wasn’t sure whether to believe us or not. “How? From a strictly hormonal standpoint, that shouldn’t be possible. Plus, you seem more comfortable with each other. Everyone knows that people start to act differently around each other after they have sex. I’m having a hard time accepting your story.”

“It’s true,” Jeonggukie replied. “I told you all that I wasn’t going to take advantage of him and I didn’t. What kind of person would that make me? What type of horrible alpha would I be, especially since he just accepted me? I’d never do something like that and I’m actually kinda pissed you guys think I would.”

My body instantly responded to the distress in my alpha’s scent by releasing calming pheromones. I shifted to wrap my arms around his neck and hugged him tightly. I whispered reassuring words into his ear and left small kisses on his cheek to help him settle down. Again, I noticed that it wasn’t as
strange as I thought it would be to do these things. Perhaps, halfway having sex with someone for three days gets a lot of the awkwardness out of the way. Something about having your tongue shoved down someone’s throat and being covered in their cum makes cheek pecks seem less intimidating.

“Guk, we’re sorry. We weren’t trying—” Joon’s words were cut off by heavy sniffing. He stood up and walked closer to me, inhaling my scent. “Why do you smell weird? You don’t smell like you usually do.”

“He smells exactly like he always has,” my alpha replied.

“No, he smells a lot different.” Mi Mi stood to put her face in my neck. “He smells a lot sweeter than he usually does. He smells like—”

“Orange blossoms dipped in vanilla sugar and honey with strong bits of woodsy, amber undertones.” Jeonggukie finished Mi Mi’s sentence.

“Exactly! He hasn’t always smelled like this. His normal scent is orange blossom and balsam. I’ve been around him long enough. I would know if he smells like some type of pastry or candy, which is exactly what he smells like right now.”

“Have you ever noticed that Manggae’s scent turns really sweet when he’s in heat?”

“Yeah, that’s an omega thing.” Mi Mi’s tone was sarcastic as she wondered what our life mate could be getting at.

“That’s because his omega smells sweet and he’s stronger during heat. His alpha smells like orange blossoms and balsam. His omega smells like vanilla sugar and honey. Manggae has smelled like this since the day I arrived at your school. It’s been stronger since his alpha submitted, so that’s probably why you guys noticed. Now, he smells like an equal mixture of both.” Jeonggukie buried his nose into my neck and peppered it with little kisses. It made me giggle.

“So, you’re telling me that I’ve had two scents this whole time and you’ve never said anything?”

“I thought you knew.”

“I barely even knew I had an omega before he decided to start talking to me a month ago. How would I know he smells differently than I do?”

“I’ve always smelled you like this, so I didn’t think much about it. I kind of thought everyone else noticed too. Your sugary fragrances were usually hidden under your other ones, but they were always there. I really like that they’re all together now. Although, I will say your heat will probably be the death of me. I could hardly handle it when your sweetness wasn’t as pronounced. I don’t think I can take it being as strong as I know it will be. I might just have to avoid you again.”

The thought of being alone during my heat made my blood run cold. If I couldn’t live through my rut without him, how could I manage my heat? Heat pains are so much worse from what I’ve heard. Jeonggukie had his arms around me before I could finish my thought. I felt his hot breath hitting my ear before he spoke. “I don’t want to be away from you either, but I don’t think I’ll be able to hold back this time. I’m also worried that your heat won’t be stopped by your medication, just like your rut. If you smell that sweet and you’re begging for me, I’m going to claim you. I already promised you that I wouldn’t do something like that without your consent, so I’ll have to leave.”

I moved to straddle him and held him close. My mind was trying to process the million things that were racing through it all at once, along with the myriad of emotions that I was experiencing. Fears,
worries, concerns, excitement, happiness, and anger streamed through me. My thoughts looked like a bouncing ball that was hurled into a small, empty room with the force of a baseball pitch. They centered on the idea of being alone. I couldn’t process what my life would be like without Jeonggukie, without my alpha. Now that we’ve had kisses, dates, and been relatively intimate, I can’t imagine spending my heat without him. Yet, he has a point. How would I feel if he claimed me because of my heat?

I don’t feel awkward about what we did during my rut, but I was conscious enough to make that decision before the rut pains got too bad. I’ve heard heat hits harder and faster than a speeding train. I’m not going to have time to ponder if I’m all right with my life mate deflowering me. The thought made me hyper-aware of my alpha’s arms around my waist and the way I fit against him perfectly. My omega perked up at the implications of how his warmth and aroma suddenly made me feel. Flashes of how good it felt to have his hands on my body and how badly I had wanted him inside me made me heavily consider what it was that I wanted from him. Maybe it wouldn’t be so bad to consummate accepting Jeonggukie as my alpha.

After several minutes of thought, I decided to speak up. “What if I give you my consent now? Would you still help me?” I was glad the pack had already started talking amongst themselves. I don’t think I would be able to have this conversation with an audience.

Jeonggukie swiftly pulled away from my embrace and forced me to look up at him, hands firmly planted on either side of my face. He searched my eyes for hesitation, wondering if I was fully understanding what I was saying. “You don’t have to agree with that, little omega. If you’re worried about the pain, I’ll figure out how to make it not hurt as much. I know it will still hurt some, but there are other ways. Don’t make a decision just because you know it will hurt.”

“I’m not scared of the pain,” I whispered quietly. “I know it’s going to hurt like a bitch, but I can handle that if I have to. I want you to be with me during my heat. I want you to help me through my heat and I want to help you through your rut.”

I swear I could feel his heart stop for a moment after I spoke. I couldn’t discern the look in his eyes, no matter how long I watched the scarlet and deep brown twinkle. He quickly regained his composure and responded to my claim. “I wouldn’t want our first time to be while you’re in heat. It wouldn’t make for a great memory, especially if we end up as mates. I want your firsts and our firsts to be special. Our ruts sort of interrupted that plan, but I’m serious about your first time. Take it from someone who regrets his.”

A smile found its way onto my lips as I contemplated what he said. My life mate is the sweetest alpha ever. Of course, he would try to convince me not to sleep with him. Of course, he would want our first time to be special. I met his eyes, that were still trained directly on me, and smiled even harder. “We have a month before my heat. We can have our first time beforehand. That will give us the chance to make it special.”

“I…” Jeonggukie began. He seemed unsure of how to say what he was thinking. “What we did during your rut was out of necessity. I can’t let my omega be in pain if I can help it. This is something different altogether. I already told you that I don’t want to have sex just because we’re horny. It feels dirty and wrong. Not that I think being with you would feel that way. I mean it more in general. I’m just not the friends with benefits type.” The look of guilt and fear on his face let me know that he was worried about my reaction. I found that utterly endearing.

“You said you didn’t want to have sex with someone who you weren’t with in some capacity. We are going on dates. That’s kind of like we’re together and, well… I…” I steadied my breath and my heart. I was about to admit something that I could feel my inner alpha being angered by. I finally
realized it, so I might as well say it. “I’m pretty sure I like you in a romantic way.”

Despite my alpha’s hold on my face, I could no longer meet his gaze. I felt heat rush to my cheeks and I wanted to shrink inside of myself. It was out in the open now. I wasn’t embarrassed by my feelings, but I was nervous about admitting them. Saying something aloud added a level of reality to it that simply thinking in passing could not. Three days ago, I couldn’t even admit to myself that I liked him—the inner monologue making my dominant wolf so angry that I literally could not finish the thought. Now, I found myself sitting in Jeonggukie’s lap, confessing. I worried for a brief moment on how he would respond. My alpha hasn’t been very open with his feelings in the past.

He was trying rather hard to find a reason for us not to have sex, even though he has already said he would at least try to be with me if I decided that’s what I want. It made me wonder why, but I chalked it up to the ambiguity of our relationship. I’m not sure if I want to be his boyfriend or anything yet, but I like him. I hoped he would accept me and the little I knew about my feelings. My concerns were cut off by a deep kiss. The pressure of his warm lips against mine made me forget whatever I was thinking about before. I took the synchronous, slow movements of our mouths as my answer. Right as I opened my lips to lick his, I heard yelling from behind me. Oh yeah, the pack’s still here.

“Look, I don’t care what the fuck you do in your room, Guk. But, I’m not sitting here and watching you two dry hump each other. It was bad enough hearing Min moaning like you were fucking his brains out. That’s another reason I don’t believe you didn’t have sex. Why would he have been so loud?” Yunie’s sarcastic comments caused a wave of agreement from the others at the table. Even Mi Mi joined in, although I can tell she was just doing it to bother me.

“He also looks like he lost a fight with a vacuum cleaner or an octopus. Why else would he look like that?” Tae asked with a serious tone.

I could feel my alpha starting to get upset again. I knew it was a blow to his pride that his packmates believed we had sex. They didn’t see the harm in it, oblivious to how it was making Jeonggukie feel. To them, they just wanted him to admit something that they felt he had no business being ashamed of doing. However, I could tell what the problem was. They were insulting his pride and honor as an alpha. He gave his word that he wouldn’t have sex with me and he kept it. The fact that his family was accusing him of claiming me meant that they believed he didn’t fulfill his promise. I left gentle kisses on my alpha’s neck and whispered to him.

“We know the truth, even if they don’t want to believe it. You’re a very good alpha. You didn’t do anything wrong or anything I didn’t consent to.”

He stifled a growl in his throat, the noise getting the pack’s attention. The change in his fragrance to a pungent tanginess also alerted them.

“Why are you upset, Guk?” Jin asked. He was careful in his words and tone, knowing that anything could set him off if he’s already getting angry.

“I kept my word. I didn’t take advantage of my omega.”

“Hey,” Tae said from next to us. “Look at me, Guk” 

Jeonggukie looked up at him, vermilion fractals shining within his beautiful eyes. They stared at each other for a few moments. I wondered if they were yelling at each other in their minds or if this truly was a silent conversation. After quite some time, Tae nodded. A small, pleased smile came across his face and I knew he had found whatever he was looking for.
“He really didn’t do anything, guys. Our Min is still pure.”

“Why the hell was he so loud, then?” Seok seemed confused. “Those weren’t just kissing noises. Min was so loud we legit had to leave the house for almost three days.”

“Sorry,” I said. My cheeks heated up in embarrassment and I put my head on Jeonggukie’s shoulder to hide. Now that the intense desire of my rut was over, I was a little ashamed of the fact that the pack could hear me.

My alpha ran his hand up and down my back to comfort me, leaving small kisses on the top of my head. He whispered to me that it was okay before taking a deep breath. I could tell he was about to address the pack, but Mi Mi beat him to it.

“You guys seem to forget that Ji Ji is completely untouched. The only contact he’s ever had with an alpha has been when he’s kicking their asses. He’s never even hugged an alpha before. He’s probably just sensitive. You’ve seen his neck. It looks like Gukie tried to eat him. Most likely, that’s what all the noise was. I doubt he was even moaning or anything. He was probably trying to fake death noises so Gukie would stop.” She laughed and winked at me. The rest of the pack started talking about what Mi Mi said and I silently thanked her for her help.

“I don’t care if he’s a horrible actor or they were fucking until they blacked out, I don’t want to be sexiled again. Jin’s grandparent’s house is nice, but I like my own bed, thank you.” Yunie’s voice was filled with a snarky attitude that the others couldn’t help but laugh at.

“Sexiled? Is that exiled because of sex?” Mi Mi asked. I heard one of the guys hum in approval. “But, if Tae brought someone home, wouldn’t you be sexiled then? And don’t you sexile him if Chae Hyun comes over?”

“It’s different when they’re your roommate. I don’t mind if Tae kicks me out because I wouldn’t want to see him and his partner having sex and it’s just basic courtesy to tell someone you share a room with. It’s another to get kicked out because of something that’s happening in a different part of the house. The rest of us keep our sex lives pretty quiet. Hell, we all think Jin and Joon are celibate because we never hear them do anything.”

“Speak for yourselves,” Jeonggukie scoffed. “If I’m not distracting myself or sleeping with earplugs, I can hear every one of you. I know when you’re watching movies, playing games, having sex. I can even hear it when you masturbate. I get that it’s a little frustrating that you guys had to leave the house so I could take care of Manggae, but try to keep in mind that I have to deal with all five of you every day.”

“Sorry, Guk,” Joon said after a few minutes of silence. “We knew that your hearing was good, but I guess we never thought about it. We can try to be more considerate.”

“I don’t mind. I just wanted to let you know that leaving the house for two days isn’t the end of the world. It’s inconvenient, but you’ll be all right. I feel like leaving was better than sticking around and listening.”

“Guk’s got a point. Min is like my little brother. I wouldn’t want to hear my little brother getting railed,” Seok said with an uncomfortable chuckle.

I turned around on Jeonggukie’s lap to face the rest of the pack. “I don’t know whether to feel special that you called me your brother or totally grossed out that you said ‘getting railed.’”

“You can be both. We are usually both when Seokie is involved.” Tae laughed as he got up from the
table to dodge Seok. I watched them chase each other around for a moment before they ran outside.

“Let’s try to be a little more mindful of how loud we are when we do certain things,” Joon said when Seok and Tae returned to the table. They both had a bruise and a huge smile on their faces. Stupid alphas. “That goes for everyone. If Guk and Min are going to do anything else here, please warn us ahead of time. I’d like to make other plans to avoid any more issues.”

“What?” Jin chimed in, “please open up a window or something in your room, Guk. I could smell how strong the scents are just from walking by.”

“It smells like two alphas in rut took care of an omega in heat.” I searched Yunie’s face for any sign of a joke, but he didn’t look like he was playing. Does it really smell that bad?

Joon cleared his throat and addressed us again. “Speaking of heat, Min can’t be here during his heat. If his rut was any indication, his heat is going to be difficult and we can’t be around him.”

“Why?” The question escaped me before I could stop it. I don’t know much about omegas in heat and I don’t know how alphas normally react to it. I’ve heard horror stories, but those are usually the exception.

Jeonggukie snaked his arms around my waist and put his head on my shoulder. He was quiet, yet he seemed a little nervous. The alphas looked back and forth between each other for a moment.

At length, Seok sighed. “We’re all alphas, as you know. Being around an omega in natural heat can trigger rut in an alpha, even if they’re on Primatin. A rut strong enough to surpass suppressants is dangerous because…” He trailed off, unsure of how to continue his sentence.

“Because it will focus all of our attention on you. Even Jin and Joon might have a hard time fighting their instincts. We can’t risk that. It wouldn’t end well,” Yunie replied with a grim voice.

I could guess what that meant and probably be completely right, but I didn’t want to assume. I needed to know. “Why wouldn’t it end well?”

My alpha’s grip tightened on my waist. I could smell the change in him. “Because I’d kill them if they touched you.” His tone was dark and matter-of-fact. There was no speculation, wonder, or hesitation in his voice. He meant what he said.

I immediately sweetened my scent, focusing on bringing out the vanilla sugar and honey tones as much as I could. I decided not to focus on the giddiness my omega felt that our alpha would take on his pack for us. Calming my life mate down was my priority. I didn’t want him to be upset. Jeonggukie rested his nose directly next to my scent gland. After a few tense moments, I felt him relax behind me. I didn’t like to be the source of any awkward times within the pack. Not only did I make it so they had to leave their own home, but now I was causing tension and threats.

“Hey, what’s wrong?” All of the venom had bled out of my life mate and he was back to his normal, sweet self.

“I didn’t mean to cause problems.”

“You didn’t. Nothing is wrong. They’re not really that upset about having to leave. They were just being annoying.”

“It’s not just that. You also threatened them.”

My life mate laughed and kissed the side of my head. “They know I’m serious, but they’re so used to
it that it barely phases them anymore. No one is mad about it. Ask them how many times I came for their throats when I was younger.”

Jin nodded fervently. “He was always a violent kid but he was mostly able to control it until he got mad. When Guk was angry, we just tried to avoid him as much as possible. Don’t even get me started on when he was maturing. He was a fucking nightmare. His body was changing a lot, his ruts got more aggressive, and he was pissed off all the time. Anything would cause him to lose control. Back then, he was only taking one Primatin a day and two a day during his rut. It got so bad that I took him to his therapist and told her that she had to fix him or I was going to throw him off a cliff. After she adjusted his medication, it was better but not great. They started doing more therapy sessions per week and eventually he evened out. He didn’t start becoming the collected and restrained alpha you know until about six months ago.

“Guk’s grown up a lot since his maturation stopped. We raised him, but he’s not a kid anymore. He’s a grown man now. It makes me feel like a proud dad to see the person he is today.” Jin paused for a moment to steady his wavering voice. “But, to address what he said, we are completely used to Guk threatening us. In this case, none of us would blame him if he attacked. You don’t touch someone else’s significant other. There’s a chance that we might not have a normal reaction to your heat because of the pack bond, but it’s not worth finding out. It’s not just about saving our asses either. We really care about you, Min. You’re a pack member on top of being Guk’s omega. We wouldn’t want to disrespect you, especially not because of our hormones. So, it’s better if we just avoid all of that.”

I nodded in agreement, understanding why it was important. I felt a lot better after hearing Jin’s words. No one was mad at me and I wasn’t a bother. It calmed me. “We’ll figure something out. I’ll talk to my mom and see if she can leave or something.” I pulled my phone out and set to work texting.

Me: Hey, mom. I’m done with my rut. It was horrible

Mom: Jeong Guk told me it was pretty much a natural rut. Your Primemmeryn didn’t help at all?

Me: No

Mom: Jeong Guk was in his rut too, right?

Me: Yeah, why?

Mom: Did he claim you?
Me: No. He didn’t want to do something like that while I wasn’t in my right mind

Mom: Your alpha is a good guy, Minie

Me: He is

Mom: You accepted him?

Me: Yeah

Mom: I think I’m gonna cry. I just screamed a little at work and my coworkers looked at me like I was crazy

Me: Aww… you’re cute mom

Mom: Are you coming home tonight?

Me: If you want me to

Mom: I’d like to talk about everything especially how your alpha managed to keep himself under control like that

Me: He’s very strong although he did say he wouldn’t have been able to do that if I’m in heat. We’re speculating that it’s going to be natural like my rut

Mom: Does that mean you’re planning on spending your heat with him? You can’t be around the pack if you’re in natural heat

Me: Yes, I was planning on spending my heat with him
Mom: Suddenly I have to go to Busan for unexpected business around this time next month

Me: Thanks

Mom: I’ll be sure to stock your room with a bunch of lube. I’ll also leave some finger foods and leftovers for you in the fridge for your heat. Not that you’ll be getting much use out of them

Me: Thanks, I think?

Me: I’m gonna go now. I’ll be home later. Have a good time at work and try not to scare your coworkers anymore

Mom: Ok Minie! I love you!

Me: I love you too mom

“So,” I said with a slight laugh, “mom has to go on a sudden trip to Busan during my heat. I think we’re all safe.”

“I figured she’d say that,” Mi Mi responded. “She’s been practically begging you to let Gukie claim you. Even if she didn’t have anywhere to go, she’d rent a hotel room for a few days if it meant you two would have sex.”

I nodded. “She said she screamed and was going to cry when I told her I accepted Jeonggukie as my alpha. Mom is probably more excited about this than anyone. She even said that she was going to leave leftovers and food for me during my heat, whatever that means. She acts like I can’t make my own food. I know I can’t cook like she can, but I can feed myself. She even said I won’t get much use out of them, which I don’t really understand.”

In times like these, my inexperience and ignorance bother me. I know I only really have a textbook understanding of sex and mating cycles. I had honestly stopped paying attention in class after the basics because it was never going to apply to me. I looked around when I noticed the mood in the room shift a little. I could tell by the looks on their faces that I was missing something.

“Are you guys going to tell him or do I have to?” Yunie’s voice sounded annoyed.

“I nominate Seokie to give Min the sex talk!” Tae said with a huge smile.

Seok shook his head and sighed when I mentioned that I know how sex works. “You know how sex works and now you know how rut works. You’ve never really been in heat. Umm… how do I explain this? You know how there was kind of a break in between being horny in your rut? Like, everything would get super overwhelming until you came and then it would be okay again for a little
while? That doesn’t exist when you’re in heat. You’re going to be horny 24/7 for three days. Guk isn’t going to have a break either. Your pheromones will keep him ready the whole time. Your mom said she was going to leave you leftovers—even though you probably won’t eat them—because the only thing you and Guk are going to be doing is fucking and sleeping.”

It took me a few minutes to fully comprehend what it all meant. I guess I never really thought about how different heat will be. Now that my sex drive has been uncovered, I don’t suppose I have much of a choice. I can spend my heat alone, in pain, and miserable. Or, I could give myself peace of mind and help Jeonggukie through his rut too. To me, the answer was simple. It wasn’t wasted on me how different being in my alpha’s presence felt now. It was still calming and peaceful, but there was an unnerving twinge of something else. Whenever he shifted under me and I felt him press against my body or whenever his hands gripped me tightly, I felt the dimly glowing embers of arousal settling into the pit of my stomach. I had wondered if I felt horny solely because I was in rut. I guess not.

“Great,” I said when I could no longer bear the pack staring at me expectantly. “I could barely handle rut. How the fuck am I going to survive heat?”

My words were said in a joking manner, but everyone knew I meant it seriously. For someone who had never felt turned on before, three days of endless lust is going to be one hell of an experience. I felt Jeonggukie’s lips on my neck, an effort to calm the anxiety he knew I must be feeling. Mi Mi also took my hand and squeezed it. I looked up at her and realized that we had finally slipped into the roles our friendship should have given us. We were still close—still talked every day, spent time together, had sleepovers—but we had grown apart. Mi Mi and I had shifted from our quasi-dating, pseudo-courtship to what life mates were always meant to be—a support system for friends. It was freeing in a way, but I wasn’t sure how to feel relieved. No matter how far Jeonggukie and I got into a relationship, Mi Mi was still alone. I made a promise that I wouldn’t mate until she did. My omega and inner alpha could wake me up tomorrow with the conclusion that we have to mate Jeonggukie or we’re going to die and I wouldn’t go back on my word. When I looked at her, I saw a tender smile that she had never given me before. She looked happy, but I could see something else in her eyes. I couldn’t place what it was or what it meant. I need to figure it out.

As if he could read my mind, my alpha whispered to me. “I’d like to talk to you for a bit, but I think you and Ranie should spend some time together after that. I know you have to go home tonight, but your mom won’t be home for at least 4 hours. That will give you two enough time to talk. I’ll walk you guys to the park or something.”

I nodded and told Mi Mi that she should get ready to go. Then, I followed Jeonggukie to his room. The first thing I noticed was the overwhelming aroma that seemed to have seeped into every corner. Citrus, flowers, and pure sugar mingled with the distinct odors of arousal and semen. It wasn’t a bad smell, just strong. My life mate opened the window and joined me on his bed. He pulled me to lay with him, encasing my body with his own. I snuggled up to my alpha and waited for him to speak.

“Are you sure about your heat?” He asked with quiet hesitation. “If you have any doubts whatsoever, I don’t want you to do it. We will figure out another way to handle it.”

“I’m sure, Jeonggukie. Is that okay? You seem to not want to spend it with me. If you don’t, we don’t have to.” The insecurities of my omega surfaced before I could stop the words. Why was he so opposed to us having sex?

“That’s not it at all. I just… I don’t want you to feel pressured or rushed. Your very first sexual experience was three days ago. It’s not impractical to think that you might not be comfortable having a sex marathon within a month. It’s not odd to wonder if you’re okay spending your heat with me in 4 weeks when you’re still a virgin. I’m fine spending our mating cycles together if you are. I just
want to make sure you are completely okay with it before we do. That goes for us having sex too. I
don’t want you to feel like you have to do that just because of your upcoming heat. I’m not one of
those alphas who are going to try to push you into doing something you don’t want to do. I’m
willing to give you all the time you need to make sure you won’t regret it.”

I turned in his hold to face him, leg instinctively finding his waist. I looked deeply into his eyes,
trying to discern what he was feeling. Did he really think that I felt pressured? Was he really worried
that I thought he was the type of worthless alpha who tries to force himself on an omega? I know
he’s not that guy. He’s too sweet, caring, and considerate to be like that. The realization of these
traits made me all the more certain that I would be safe in Jeonggukie’s hands. It didn’t hurt that our
close proximity and the flashes of carnal moments that lingered between us kept pulling me towards
him—like the unavoidable attraction of gravity. Now that I think about it, I suppose I’ve always been
drawn to him. I just never saw it in a sexual light until the submission barrier crumbled.

“I’m sure, Jeonggukie. I don’t feel like you’re trying to take advantage of me or that I have to do this.
I actually want to. I’ve accepted you as my alpha and I’ve felt how good sexual things can be. Not
only am I committed to finding out if we could be more than life mates, but I want to explore those
sides of potential matehood with you. I trust you. I know you’re going to take care of me. I know
you’ll never do anything to hurt me.”

He placed his hand under my chin and captured my lips with his own. Their warmth overtook me as
I shifted my body closer to his. It was a simple kiss with no tongue and barely any movement, but it
was filled with emotions. Within that exchange, I could feel the glimmers of things unspoken—
untold truths that I knew were not ready to be shared. It made me wonder what my alpha could be
hiding, but I had faith that it was for my own good. Jeonggukie would never cause me harm. After a
few, too-short moments, my life mate pulled away. His tight hold on my upper thigh let me know
that he was worried about escalating the interaction a little too far. I gazed into his dark eyes as he
stared at me with equal intensity. He wanted to speak but seemed almost afraid to do so.

“Did you mean what you said at the table?” He asked, finally willing himself to voice his concerns.

“Which thing?”

“How you feel about me.” His voice came out quieter and more fragile than I’m sure he meant it to
be. He appeared worried about what my response would be.

“Yeah,” was all I could manage to say.

“I like you too, little omega.”

He enveloped me into a tight hug, as if he was trying to hold onto this moment before it slipped
away. I wanted to assure him that I wasn’t going anywhere, but the words were caught in my throat.
I don’t make promises I can’t keep. Despite my trepidations that I might not become my alpha’s
mate, my omega was overjoyed at Jeonggukie’s admission. The telltale rumbling in my chest caught
me off guard and made my life mate’s face scrunch into the most beautiful smile. He kissed my
forehead and happily sighed as I lay curled in his arms. The only sounds that could be heard were
synchronized breaths and contented purrs.

Chapter End Notes

Did you enjoy it? Let me know what you think!
New Mission

Chapter Notes

New nicknames are used in this chapter. Dae Jeong is referred to as Dae and Ji Ae is referred to as Chi. The reason her nickname is Chi will be discussed in a later chapter.

Trigger Warning: Sexual harassment

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Prying myself out of my life mate’s arms was more difficult than I imagined. He and I had been cuddling for a little while, but Jeonggukie insisted that I needed to go. He knew talking to Mi Mi was important.

“I know I need to speak with her about everything, but I don’t want to.”

“Why?”

“One, I’m really comfortable just laying here. I’m kind of worn out from my rut and sore from our fight. My ribs still hurt a little.”

Jeonggukie moved his head to my side and began kissing the spots he had hit. I was a bit taken aback at first, but it ignited the flutter of wings in my chest. It was such a minor thing yet it was sweet. It also sort of tickled. I pushed his face away before I started giggling too uncontrollably.

“I’m sorry again for all of that. I saw how sick you were getting because of your alpha and I knew I had to do something. I started thinking about how it would be easy to deal with if you were someone else. The only way to handle those kinds of alphas is through violence. I came to the conclusion that I had to fight you, but it was hard to convince myself. You passing out on the way home made my mind up for me. I was surprised when you submitted so easily. I was terrified that I’d have to do some real damage to you before you’d give in.”

I faced him and put my arm over his waist. “Part of the reason I’m such a good fighter is the fact that I’m good at analyzing my opponents and the fight. As soon as you got your hands on me, I knew that I wasn’t going to win. I kept fighting but I realized it was over when you punched me in the head the second time. After you grabbed my throat, my alpha saw that it was better to give up than to get hurt more. He’s stubborn but he’s not stupid. He’d rather give in to you than have broken bones and a crushed windpipe. He’s still not happy about it but there’s not much he can do right now. You’re a better fighter than I am. I can’t escape that.”

“You’re honestly the strongest person I’ve ever fought. Then again, I don’t really have actual fights very often. If people are brave enough to challenge me, I usually punch them in the face. Most of the time, that’s enough to knock them out. If not, I choke them until they submit or pass out. I didn’t want to do that with you. I didn’t want to accidentally break your nose or something.”

I smiled and felt the overwhelming urge to kiss him. I didn’t know why I wanted to do it, but I decided that I’m done with questioning things. I finally understood what Jeonggukie meant when he said he was just going to follow his instincts. I leaned over and pressed my lips against his. He seemed surprised but it didn’t stop him from reciprocating. My alpha’s hand tipped my head back
and I felt his thumb rest on the corner of my bottom lip. Before I could wonder why, he was using it to open my mouth. I immediately darted my tongue out to meet his. After a few moments of exploring each other’s mouths, my life mate pulled away. I didn’t realize I had basically climbed on top of him until he was pushing me back onto the bed.

“You have something you need to do, little omega. As much as I’d love to stay here for the rest of the day, we need to be responsible.”

I could smell his arousal and I knew he could smell mine. It would be nice to stay here with him, but Jeonggukie was right. Mi Mi and I needed to talk. I had to go back to school tomorrow and I wasn’t sure if we would have time after that. That thought made me realize it was Sunday. “I’m sorry we didn’t go on a date today. Our ruts messed up that plan.”

“Don’t apologize. We have plenty of time for dates when you don’t need to talk to Ranie. Speaking of, you never told me the other reason you didn’t want to go.”

“I’m worried about what she’s going to say. What if she’s mad? What if she thinks I’m breaking my promise?”

My alpha shushed me and rubbed his hand over my back. “I’m sure Ranie doesn’t think you’re breaking your promise. We’re not mated, so why would she? You said the agreement was that you don’t mate until she does. In theory, you could even get married and it wouldn’t be breaking your promise. Don’t worry about it. She will be all right and everything will be fine. No matter what, she’s still our life mate.”

I nodded and thanked him for his words. “I guess I won’t really know how she feels until I talk to her.”

“Exactly. I’m going to walk you guys to the park and then I’ll come to pick you up in a couple of hours. I know you’d be fine going alone, but you know I can’t let you two go anywhere by yourselves. Leaving you there is going to be hard enough. My alpha hates the idea.” His admission made me smile and move in for another kiss.

“Manggae, you’re not making this easy,” Jeonggukie said after another mini-makeout session. “Let’s go before Ranie gets mad.”

I groaned in protest but got out of bed anyway. I didn’t want to face Mi Mi. Even though I knew it would be okay, I was still concerned. I avoided the knowing looks of the pack as we exited Jeonggukie’s room. There was no way they missed our scents or the slightly swollen redness of our lips. I was starting not to care but it was still a little weird. I’m not used to this type of attention and I’m not used to having an alpha. We left the house and started towards the park. Both of my life mates took my hands when they smelled my nervousness. We didn’t really talk during the brief walk. Luckily, our trip was short enough that the silence never became awkward or overwhelming. I noticed that there weren’t many people when we arrived. It made me feel a little better. If things got heated, there wouldn’t be too many witnesses. I wasn’t expecting any drama, but it’s best to be cautious.

“You two be safe. I’ll be back in two hours to take you back home. Ranie, you’re welcome to stay at our house if you want but I know Manggae needs to go home.”

“I’ll probably stay. Tae and I were in the middle of watching Love Stage!! and Sorcerer Hunters.”

“How are you watching both at the same time?” I asked, confused as to how that would work.
“Tae says he has to break it up or he gets too involved. He said he started having crazy dreams and dressing up like the characters the last time he watched an anime all the way through. So, we watch two episodes of one who and then two of the other. We’re trying to go over some anime that aren’t the crazy popular ones but still have good stories. Our next choices are Shugo Chara! and Ayashi no Ceres. Dae is actually going to join us for the these. He’s already seen Love Stage!! and Sorcerer Hunters.”

Jeonggukie smiled a little when Mi Mi mentioned the other omega. “I’m glad Tae is getting to know Dae. He’s a really social guy, but he’s shy around omegas. I think it’s because he’s worried that being around an omega will make him too much like one. He’s been struggling with all of the things his alpha dad told him but he’s getting better. Plus, he thinks Dae is cute.”

“Dae would die if he heard that. He thinks Tae is cute too. Well, cute wasn’t exactly what he said but it’s the abridged version.”

“Now, I have to know what he said.” My alpha’s voice was laced with amusement and excitement. It was touching to see how invested he was in making sure his cousin found someone.

“He said something to the effect of ‘super handsome, hot alpha with the cute smile and the sexy eyes.’ I kind of stopped paying attention after that because he wouldn’t shut up about it. I changed the subject after I heard the words ‘slick-inducing’ and ‘knot me.’”

I was a little surprised but not much. I knew Dae was bold and outspoken. “Damn,” I said with a little laugh. “He’s got his priorities I guess.”

Mi Mi laughed and nodded. “Dae definitely knows what he wants and he’s persistent. He’s been after Tae’s dick since he first had lunch with us.”

“Does he actually like Tae or does he just want a knot? Tae gets attached easily and I’m not going to let him get his heart broken again. The last girl he was interested in just wanted to mess around. They slept together a few times but she left when Tae confessed. The next day we saw her on another alpha’s lap. She was one of those people that I didn’t like the way she smelled but I didn’t say anything. I regret it. Dae smells like a good person and I don’t want to be wrong about him.”

Jeonggukie had a serious look in his eyes as he spoke. I admired how protective he was over his loved ones.

Mi Mi thought for a moment on how to answer. “Dae actually likes Tae, but he’s also beginning maturation. He’ll be 17 in four months. He’s a lot more hormonal than normal. He has an emotional connection to Tae, but he’s mostly thinking with his slick right now.”

Jeonggukie’s eyes widened at the omega colloquialism before he spoke again. “Tell him to pursue Tae emotionally before he tries to get his knot. I know Tae would be happy to spend Dae’s maturation heat together if they’re dating first.”

“Shit, his maturation heat is coming up. Oh, goddess. I can’t imagine how much of a thirsty bitch he’s going to be.” Mi Mi laughed at the thought of Dae’s first heat after being fully mature. For many omegas, it was the most intense one they would ever experience.

“Well, I’m going to leave you two now. If I don’t, then we’ll just talk all night. I’ll be back by 4 pm.”

We hugged our life mate goodbye and he gave me a short kiss. I grabbed Mi Mi’s hand before we started walking around the trail.

“So,” she said with a small voice, “you have an alpha now.”
“I do. Is that okay?” My tone matched the softness and caution of hers.

“I’ve known he was your alpha since the day he charmed you. I’ve also been trying to convince the two of you to date since then. Why would I be upset about you accepting him as your alpha? The only thing I’m mad about is that you’re not dating and he hasn’t claimed you yet.”

I carefully studied her as she spoke. Mi Mi may think that she’s good at hiding the subtle ways her mouth curls downward when she’s upset or the lack of sparkle in her honey flecks when she’s sad, but she isn’t. Maybe, it’s because I’ve been with her for so long. It’s possible that I’m the only one who notices these changes. But, as much as she may not want me to, I do notice. Every time I’ve seen those signs, I hated it. Now that I’m the cause, I not only hate the situation but myself as well. I’ve been her protector for so long that my natural instinct is to kill whatever is causing her pain. My first thought is to stop being with Jeonggukie and she’ll be happy again. My brain and my omega refused to entertain the idea. Logically, I knew whatever was wrong wouldn’t be fixed by giving up my alpha. It would make her more miserable because she would feel guilty. My inner alpha thought it was a great idea, but I’ve more or less learned how to tune him out since he submitted.

“You’re lying. I don’t know why but I know you are. You can tell me anything. Please explain to me what’s going on. We don’t have secrets, Mi Mi. Don’t start keeping them now.”

She sighed and nodded. We walked up to a bench and she motioned for me to sit down. When I got situated, she plopped herself into my lap and wrapped my arms around her. I released calming pheromones when I could sense how nervous she was.

“You know, your scent is so weird now. I still like it, but it’s different. You don’t smell all alpha anymore. Now, you smell like Alphabet.” I could tell she was trying to make small talk, trying to ease herself into whatever topic she seemed to be afraid of.

“I’ve always been Alphabet, so I guess smelling like it is a good thing.”

She nodded and silence enveloped us for a long while. I didn’t know how to breach the subject and Mi Mi was still working up the courage. So, we sat and cuddled. After several minutes of waiting, I heard a loud sigh and a muttered: “fuck it.”

“I’m not upset in the way you think I am, Ji Ji. I’m not mad that you have an alpha or that you’re going on dates. I don’t think you’re breaking your promise and I know you’re not abandoning me. If you were, you wouldn’t be here right now. I’m sad and angry because… fuck! Why is this so hard to say?” She let out a frustrated growl as she hit the bench next to us. I rubbed her arm in the most comforting way possible while I waited for her to continue.

“I’m just going to fucking say it. I’m jealous. I’m mad you found your mate before I found mine and I’m sad because he’s an alpha. You had all odds against you to find a mate, Ji Ji. An alpha who is strong and patient enough to deal with you and make you submit? That seemed just as impossible as discovering a female alpha. I knew that I wasn’t going to find an alpha. I made peace with it years ago. I always thought you’d end up saying fuck being alone and date an omega. It was nice to think that we would both end up in omega-omega relationships. It was good enough for me that we’d go through that pain and ridicule together. If we’re being shunned by society, at least we’re going to do it together. But, through some fucked up grace of the goddess, your alpha found you. The thing is, I’m happy for you. I’m so beyond ecstatic that I feel like a shit person for being so envious of you. I never thought I’d be in this place. As bad as it sounds, I thought I’d be in your shoes right now.

“I thought you would be mad at me for finding my omega and I would be reassuring you that I’m not going anywhere and we’re still in it together forever. I imagined helping you fight your omega instincts to find some cute boy who was undeniably omega, someone like Dae. Maybe you’d want a
girl so you could have kids, but I always imagined it would be a guy. I knew it would take years to get you to finally choose someone but my mate and I would be super patient and loving and caring. And, eventually, the four of us would be so fucking happy together. Somehow, I ended up on the receiving end of the pity. Now, I’m the sad one that needs to be comforted and convinced that it’s okay to take time to find someone. I also have to go it alone. I’m the only one who has to shoulder the scorn of being in an omega-omega pairing. I’ve been trying to get over that lately. I’m slowly realizing that I don’t care about it too much, at least right now. I’m sure it will bother me when I see someone whispering about me.

“The thing that’s affecting me the most is that I’m feeling lonely. I’ve never experienced that before. I’ve always had you and you’ve always been enough. I know you felt that way too. But, you can’t tell me that I’m still all you need. If Gukie disappeared tomorrow, there would be a massive piece of you missing. I know it’s true. It hit me when I saw you two today. You really care about him and he’s managed to take a spot in your heart that I could never get to. I can see how close you are. I want that too but I’m scared. I’m terrified that I won’t find anyone who likes me enough to deal with the drama of being with another omega. I’m worried I’ll fuck up. I don’t know how to be a girlfriend. I don’t know how to be a mate. What if I fall in love and she leaves me? What if I think she’s my mate but the pack hates her? What if Gukie hates the way she smells? There are so many different things that could go wrong. There’s so m—"

I cut Mi Mi off by putting my hand to her mouth. Normally I wouldn’t interrupt her when she’s pouring her heart out, but I knew letting her continue in this downward spiral of negativity wouldn’t help. She said enough for me to understand what the problem is. I squeezed her tightly for a moment, still keeping her from talking. We both needed a minute to steady our thoughts before we had this discussion. Truth be told, I didn’t know the best way to comfort her. I didn’t think I’d end up in this position. I didn’t think I’d find someone who is a potential mate. I never would have guessed that I’d find an alpha of my own. I’ve always been under the same impression that Mi Mi was, except I didn’t really consider dating anyone. I figured she’d find her mate and then it would be the three of us. I thought I’d be content just being with Mi Mi forever. I could see why she feels lonely now. The relationship between Jeonggukie and me is so different than the one Mi Mi and I have. It’s actually surprising how attached I am to my alpha. I completely understand why my favorite omega is upset.

It took me a while, but I eventually started talking. “Look, I don’t really know what to say right now. I know nothing I say is going to make you feel better or make this situation easier. No matter what happens, we’re still life mates. Jeonggukie and I may be sort of together, but we’ll always be here for you. If you’re lonely, let’s find you a cute little omega girl to hold your hands and give you kisses. We will scour all of Asia if we have to. Whatever it takes to make sure that my beautiful, wonderful, amazing life mate finds the girl of her dreams. We could be like the omegas in movies—have a group sleepover and talk about cute alphas and paint our nails and gossip. I mean, Dae and I can talk about Jeonggukie and Tae. Then, we’ll gather up all of our intel on hot omega chicks and figure out who is totally slick-worthy.” My smile increased as I kept talking, to the point where I could barely keep myself from laughing. I knew the last few sentences would make her giggle, which is exactly what I was going for.

“I like this idea. I want to paint your nails sparkly pink. I also want you to wear my fuzzy robe.” She burst into a fit of laughter at the thought.

“Make it sparkly purple and you’ve got a deal. Purple matches my eyes and hair better,” I said with a smile.

She looked at me with searching eyes, trying to determine if I was just messing around. “Are you serious?”
“If it will make you happy, why not? I’ve never painted my nails, worn makeup, gossiped, played spin the bottle or whatever bullshit omegas do at sleepovers. But, I’m willing to do all but one of those things to make you happy.”

“Spin the bottle? What kind of sick, alpha-gaze porn plot is that? I can see the video title now, ‘virgin omega slick party’ or some dumb shit. Also, do I get to pick which one you don’t do? I’d love to see Gukie beat your ass for making out with Dae or Chi.”

My face screwed up in disgust at the porn reference and I stuck my tongue out at the thought of kissing either of our omega friends. “I’ll pass on the porn and the kissing. I’m not interested in either. I definitely don’t want to see a jealous, rage-fueled super alpha. I’d like to live to see my next birthday, thank you. Plus, I doubt either one of them would be as good a kisser as Jeonggukie.”

“So,” Mi Mi began with a smug smirk on her lips, “what I’m hearing is that Gukie’s got you whipped. If I would have known that a knot was all it took to turn you soft, I would have pawned you off a long time ago. That alpha didn’t just tame my baby. He put you on a fucking leash. Turns out Park Ji Min is just some alpha’s toy.”

I knew she was trying to get a rise out of me to lighten the situation. We loved to pick on each other as a form of endearment, but usually I would get angry if she went too far. I was determined not to let her win this time. I pursed my lips and looked at my nails, channeling every sassy omega I’ve ever seen. I gave her a hateful glare and cut my eyes at her as I looked her over.

“It’s sad that you’re so bitter. Don’t be mad that I found a knot. Jealousy is a disease, bitch. Get well soon.”

Mi Mi stared at me with wide eyes and an open mouth. It was the first time I had not stopped the game to defend myself. Allowing her to hurt my pride a little was a true victory if it meant that this stunned silence was my reward.

“Who are you?”

“Just some alpha’s toy apparently,” I said with a shrug. “At least my leash holder is slick-worthy. I’ve seen the way other omegas look at him. I’m apparently not the only one who would hop on his knot.”

Her eyes got even bigger after I spoke again. It took all of my composure not to crack up laughing. I wanted to shock her as payback for all the years she’s managed to anger my inner alpha with her silly words. I bit the inside of my cheek until I tasted iron, hoping that it would help me keep up the act.

“How are you just sitting there talking about knots and slick like this is normal for you? A week ago, you couldn’t even be near Gukie. Now you’re saying he’s slick-worthy? You can’t even make slick! You’re talking like some slutty omega who’s gagging for a knot but you can’t even do the most basic of omega functions and self-lubricate.” She tried switching up her tactics to break me, still completely surprised by the conversation.

“My alpha didn’t seem to mind when he was giving me all these marks and spending his rut with me.” I showed off my neck a little to illustrate my point.

Mi Mi narrowed her eyes at me. The suspicious and incredulous look she gave me let me know that she was trying to figure out exactly what was going on. “I’ll ask you again. Who are you? My Ji Ji would say the shit you’ve said. He’s not nearly as fun as you are.”
“I’m still me. Just because having an alpha has made me a little less defensive, doesn’t mean I’m not still the same life mate you’ve always known. There’s a boy that I kiss now. That’s all that’s changed. I’m not suddenly a flirty omega who throws my rank around, like Dae. I’m not magically a shy, quiet omega like Chi. I’m still Alphabet. I’ll still kick an alpha’s ass if I have to. I just also happen to have a crush on one.”

“You WHAT?” Mi Mi shrieked as she looked at me.

“I like Jeonggukie,” I replied with another shrug. “He likes me too. I guess that’s more than a crush, isn’t it? I don’t know the terminology for this stuff. We like each other, whatever the hell you call that.”

“What the hell did he do to you in your rut? Is his knot that damn good?” She chuckled a little to show she was both joking and serious.

“I realized my feelings for him the first day of my rut, but my inner alpha wouldn’t let me admit them. We got a lot more comfortable with each other during the last couple of days. Even though we haven’t had sex yet, we still have that kind of closeness now. It’s… nice? I guess nice is the right word for it.”

“Yet? You mean you’re actually planning on having sex?”

“Yeah. We kind of have to. My heat is coming up and we’re not going to be able to stay away from each other. It’s not really as big a deal as I thought it would be. I don’t think I care about it as much as I figured I would.”

“Do you actually want to have sex with him?” She asked as though she couldn’t believe the words she was saying.

It took me a minute to fully think about what I wanted to say. There were a lot of different aspects to consider. “I do. Maybe I wouldn’t have chosen to do it so quickly, but I actually do want to sleep with Jeonggukie. He wants to have our first time before my heat so that it’s special. He doesn’t want me to regret that I lost my virginity during my mating cycle. He’s really good to me, Mi Mi. During our ruts, he found a way for both of us to be taken care of without pushing me into doing something I wasn’t ready for. He even tried to convince me not to spend my heat with him because he was worried that it was too soon for us to have sex. I’m attracted to him, I like him, I can barely kiss him without getting horny, and he’s agreed to taking everything at my pace if I want him to. Why wouldn’t I want to sleep with him?”

The admission seemed to surprise both of us and we were quiet for some time. After an eternity of sitting and staring at the ground, Mi Mi spoke again. “I’m really happy for you, Ji Ji. I honestly never thought this day would come. I’m jealous, but there is nothing in this world that could mar how wonderful I think you having an alpha is. It’s a dream come true for both of us even if it was a dream that neither one of us dared to have. You finally get a shot at a somewhat normal life with a mate who is your perfect match. I finally get to see you let all of your walls crumble and see you actually happy. My best friend, my life mate, my everything finally gets to be happy. It makes me so fucking excited that I can’t even stand it.” The violent rush of tears instantly quieted the rest of her speech.

I held Mi Mi tighter and dried her face. I patiently waited for the sobs to stop, realizing that her tears weren’t born from sadness. She really was glad that I have an alpha.

“So,” I said after I was sure that she was fine, “I’m calling upon the pack to find some of the cutest omegas in the school. I know they’re good at recon. They found out about my RHDS before we even spoke to each other. Do you want a girl who’s taller? Shorter? Younger? Older? We can find
cute, hot, nerdy, sexy, girly, tomboy, literally anything you want. Tell me about your dream girl.”

“I’ve always imagined her to have long hair, pretty eyes, and be girly like me—but not too girly. I don’t want her to be constantly touching up her makeup and worrying about her hair. Girls are way prettier when they don’t have all that mess on. I don’t want a shorter girl, but I’d be okay if we were the same height. I don’t care about age as long as she’s within my age range. If we’re talking about finding her now, I want her to already have gone through maturation. I don’t really care what her figure looks like as long as she’s got nice boobs.” She paused to laugh at the face I made when she said that. “I like boobs. Sue me.”

“I can’t say much. Apparently, I’m into guys. Who knew?” I chuckled and motioned for her to continue talking.

“I’d forgo all of that if I fell in love with her personality. For me, that’s the most important. I know it sounds cliche, but I’ve had a long time to think about this. I like women but I’m an omega. I’m already fighting biology to want slick instead of a knot. That’s going to be such a hard thing to do if I’m not head over heels for the girl. In order for the more intimate details of our relationship to work, we both have to love each other enough to battle our DNA. So, call me a romantic, but she has to have a great personality.”

“And great boobs.”

“Great boobs are a must. It’s like personality is here.” Mi Mi held her hand up to illustrate her point. “And boobs are here.” She held her other hand a finger’s width lower than the other. It made me laugh.

We continued to discuss Mi Mi’s ideal girl until I had to pee. I had Mi Mi follow me to the restrooms and wait outside. I didn’t trust people and I could still smell the slight sweetness of her heat lingering. My time relieving myself was cut short by a sudden surge of cinnamon wafting into the room. That only meant one thing. I swung the door open to find two alphas standing way too close to my life mate. She was carefully backing away, stalling for time until I came out. They weren’t particularly impressive alphas but they were still alphas. She might have been able to handle one of them by herself. I knew she couldn’t take them both on, no matter how sharp her teeth are.

“You smell so sweet, omega,” the taller alpha said while getting closer to Mi Mi. “I can tell you’re in heat. We’d be happy to give you a knot or two.”

His friend snickered and chimed in. “We know you want it. Even on your Emmeryn, you can’t hide the fact that you just want to be stuffed full.”

I flung myself at the closest alpha, meeting his jaw with my fist. The crunch I heard as his head snapped back was satisfying but didn’t do enough to quell the bloodlust my inner alpha was feeling. If I couldn’t beat my alpha, I could at least make mangled messes out of these two. The alpha I punched growled at me and tried to hit me too. I responded by slashing over his eye, making it so he couldn’t see. The other wolf decided to jump in the fight and grabbed me by my hair when I was distracted. I growled loudly and grabbed at his other arm, that he so stupidly held out towards me. I heard a crack in his wrist when I twisted it. The pain was enough for him to let me go. He immediately slumped to the ground to cradle the probably-broken limb. I kicked him twice in the head. I don’t know if he passed out or not, but he didn’t get back up after that. The alpha with the bloody eye was trying to run, but I stopped him. I punched him again and he dropped. I climbed on top of him and slammed my fist into his face a few more times. Right as I was about to deliver a final blow, I felt a terrifying growl rumble through my chest. I looked up to see my alpha running towards me.
Within a second, I hopped off of the other alpha and greeted Jeonggukie. He was livid. The scarlet in his eyes was glowing brighter than I had ever seen before. I saw him quickly survey the scene before checking to make sure and Mi Mi and I were all right. When he got closer, he sniffed deeply and snarled. He walked to my side, careful not to touch me, and whispered in my ear.

“When we get home, you’re going to take a shower and scrub every inch of yourself until you can’t smell them anymore. Take everything you’re wearing, including your shoes, and put them immediately into the wash. I’m going to leave you clothes to wear. After you’re done, come to my room.” His voice was extremely low, more of a growl than speech.

He spun around and walked towards his house, silently demanding that we follow. When we arrived, I followed Jeonggukie’s directions and Mi Mi went to Tae’s room. I didn’t miss the violent slamming of my alpha’s bedroom door before I started the shower. After I was finished bathing, I cautiously entered my life mate’s room. His scent was overwhelming and filled with anger. My omega immediately began releasing calming hormones, mixing my smell with his. Even though the light was off, I easily found him in his bed, staring at the ceiling. I immediately cuddled up to him, not sure of how to proceed. He turned towards me and started to run his nose across my neck.

“I’m sorry you had to see that. I had to protect Mi Mi. I went to the bathroom and when I came out they were trying to convince her to come home with them. They could smell that she’s in heat. We both know what they would have done to her if I didn’t.”

“It doesn’t make it any easier for my alpha, though. I know you didn’t do anything bad. I even saw a little bit of the fight as I was walking up, but my alpha can’t help assuming things after I find you smelling like two other alphas—especially since you were horny before you left. Again, I know you didn’t do anything. I don’t think you would ever give yourself to someone else, but my alpha isn’t logical. Right now, he’s telling me I should teach you a lesson.” His speech sounded more normal, but there was still darkness laced within his voice and eyes.

“I would never do something like that to you. I’m only interested in you. If it helps your alpha feel better, you can claim me right now.” His words made my omega surface, intrigued by his threat. My wolf knew that allowing Jeonggukie to have me would quell all of his alpha’s insecurities.

“No. I can control it. Plus, this doesn’t count as special.”

“At least scent me more and leave some marks. You’ll feel better after that. Once you calm down some, we’ll figure out the whole teaching me a lesson thing.” I smiled and gave him a quick kiss.

He pulled me close and ran his nose beside my scent gland. He left a few kisses on my neck that quickly led to licks and bites. I couldn’t stop the quiet moans from escaping as he left even more marks on my neck. I briefly wondered if his mission was to make my throat look like one giant bruise. After a few minutes, he stopped and pulled away.

“Feel better?”

He nodded. “I’m sorry. Sometimes, no matter how hard I try, I can’t control it.”

I placed my hand on his face and looked directly into his eyes. “You don’t have to apologize for who you are, especially not to me. I know how hard you struggle to keep your alpha in check. You’re the strongest person I know because you always manage to keep yourself together. Even when your alpha should be able to take control of you at any second, you still find a way to fight back. I appreciate everything that you do and everything that makes you who you are. I want you to know that you are my alpha and I’m not going to do anything with anyone else. I’d say I wouldn’t cheat on you, but that’s not exactly the right terminology.”
“Speaking of,” Jeonggukie said with a low voice, “the pack has made me promise that I’d have the ‘what are we’ talk with you. They’ve been bothering me since the moment our ruts were over.”

“I don’t know what we are. I like you, you like me, we’re going on dates, and we’re cycle partners. All signs point to boyfriends, but I don’t know if I’m totally ready for that title yet. All of this has happened really quickly. I’m sure of how I feel about you yet I’m not sure how I feel about the idea of being someone’s boyfriend. It’s a lot to process in the span of three days. Could I have some time to sort everything out?”

I was suddenly very worried that he wouldn’t be okay with wanting to wait. Will he still want to be with me after I said I wasn’t ready to be his boyfriend? Will he not want to be my alpha anymore? I tried to stop the rush of thoughts that came through me after I realized they were my omega’s self-conscious fears. A strong floral scent knocked me out of my worries.

“I’ve told you a million times, I’m fine with whatever you want to do. If you need time to process, then you need time to process. This is a lot for me too. I’ve never had these feelings before. I’ve never had a cycle partner, a potential boyfriend, or a potential mate. You’re not the only one who needs to figure out what all of this means. We’ll stay life mates for now.”

I couldn’t stop myself from pulling him into a deep, emotional kiss. It meant the world to me that he was willing to give me time. I don’t know any alpha that’s so calm and kind and patient. I may not be able to express those things with my words as well as I want, but I hope Jeonggukie can feel it in my kiss. I reluctantly stopped myself before I started to lick at his lips. This wasn’t the time to get worked up.

“You’re too good to me, alpha.”

“Only because you’re good to me, little omega.”

He held me close for a few more minutes, placing small pecks along my cheeks and lips. I could tell he was trying to distance himself a little. It was almost time for me to go home, even though I’d much prefer to lay here with my alpha.

“Do I have to go?”

“Yes. Your mom likes me. I’m not going to keep you here and give her a reason to change her mind.”

“But she’d be fine with it because she likes you.”

He smiled at my argument and jokingly tried to move me out of the bed. I pushed him back. He chuckled in response and gave me another shove. Our playful battle turned into a lazy wrestling match, which abruptly ended in me pinning him to the bed. I knew he let me win, but it made me happy anyway. I dipped my head down to steal a victory kiss. He wiggled his hands out of my grasp and placed them on my waist. He pulled me back a little to break the kiss, right as his tongue met mine.

“We’re leaving in five minutes,” he said before he leaned up and started sucking on my bottom lip.

Chapter End Notes
I hope you enjoyed it. Please tell me about your thoughts, theories, questions, or concerns. Thank you for reading!
First Meeting

Chapter Notes

Thank you, as always, to Sarah for reading this and giving me feedback. Also, thank you to RaychieT for giving Jae Seok the nickname "that asshole guy." I'm probably going to end up calling him that more than his actual name.

Trigger Warnings: Sexual harassment, violence

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“How was talking to your mom?” Jeonggukie asked when he picked me up for school.

“Can a conversation be painful, embarrassing, and adorable at the same time?”

“That bad?” His comment made us both laugh.

I tried to figure out the best way to describe everything that happened. “Saying she was happy is probably the biggest understatement I’ve ever heard. She just squealed and jumped up and down for the first five minutes I was in the house. There was a lot of screeching when I told her about our fight and ruts. Mom wanted to know every small detail of everything. That’s not abnormal, but I’ve never had to talk to my mom about sexual stuff before. It was kinda weird. Then, I told her about our life mate being jealous and she was sad. For a second, I thought she was going to run over of Mi Mi’s house just to give her a hug. It was a good talk, but now she’s in excitement overload. I can’t tell you how many times she said stuff like ‘my Minie finally has a mate’ or ‘my baby’s all grown up.’ I didn’t have the heart to explain for the twelfth time that we’re not dating or mating right now.”

“She’s just happy. She never thought you would find someone, so she’s taking it extra seriously. I’m not surprised.” He chuckled as he took my hand.

“I know. It’s a lot but I’m not upset with her. She’s lived her whole life for me since I was born. The least I can let her do is let her gush about how happy she is her baby ‘finally found a mate.’”

We turned the corner onto Mi Mi’s street and I wondered for a moment if I should let go of Jeonggukie’s hand. I immediately decided not to. What purpose would that serve? She greeted us and fell in step. I knew this was as good a time as any to solidify our plans for finding Mi Mi a girlfriend. My alpha and I have already talked about the plan, but it was only mentioned in passing.

“Could you tell the pack to keep an eye out for any cute omegas? I know we sort of talked about finding someone for Mi Mi, but I’m serious about it. Keep an eye out for a sweet, girly omega that has long hair, is taller than Mi Mi, and has finished maturation. No prissy bitches.”

“You guys really don’t have to do this. I’ll be all right,” Mi Mi said dismissively.

“Bullshit. I have an alpha, Jin and Joon are mated, Yunie has an omega, and I’m pretty sure Dae and Tae are going to be a thing. If you’re feeling lonely just around Jeonggukie and me, then it’s only going to get worse from there. I know you want a girlfriend. You can’t lie to me and tell me you don’t.”

She nodded and sighed because she knew she was defeated. We talked a little more about how we
should go about gathering information. We knew that a lot of the omegas in school wouldn’t be open to the idea of dating an omega. They want alphas and that’s okay. We needed to figure out which ones were single and which ones were open to being in an omega-omega pairing.

Before we walked onto the school grounds, Jeonggukie stopped us. “We’re going to search for an omega for Ranie, but you guys have to do me a favor. Keep this a secret from Dae and Chi. I know that sounds shady as fuck. I promise I have my reasons.”

Mi Mi and I looked at the alpha and then at each other. It was an odd request. It made me curious and a little nervous. However, I knew that our life mate wouldn’t do anything like this unless it was necessary. Mi Mi and I both nodded at the same time.

“I take it this is one of those instinctual, uber-alpha things that we’re just going to have to go with until it gets explained later?” I asked as we walked into the building.

“Yeah. I’m sorry. I know it’s hard for you to just listen to me without an explanation, but I have to confirm some things before I can tell you.” He looked worried, like he was expecting me to be mad or demand that he tell me.

“I’m really curious and a bit afraid of what it might be, but I trust you. If you tell me it’s for a good reason, then I’ll do my best to get over that.”

“Me too,” Mi Mi chimed in.

“I swear it’s nothing bad. I’ll tell you both as soon as I can.”

We parted ways with a group hug and a small peck on my cheek from Jeonggukie. I got a few stares and realized this was my first time being in school after we’ve been more intimate. No one was used to seeing me holding hands with someone other than Mi Mi. I’m glad that I’ve had a couple of days to get used to this type of attention from the pack and my mom. It might have been off-putting if I was just thrust into the wide-eyed stares of my schoolmates. Many of them kept eyeing my neck. I forgot that I was completely covered in hickeys. I’m sure this will start some interesting rumors. I wonder how many people are going to ask me if Mi Mi and I broke up or how I could cheat on her with someone. Maybe, this is for the best. I’m positive no one will want to be with Mi Mi if they think we’re dating. It may be a little messy explaining the relationship for a while, but it will make it so she’s able to find someone. In the back of my mind, I also wondered if that meant more alphas would bother her. They’d probably think that I’m not going to protect her anymore if we’re not together.

I stopped the descent into overthinking by texting my life mates about my concerns. They both responded with encouraging words and promises to talk later. With that, I began my classes for the day. I picked up the missed work from my cycle days and proceeded to the next lesson. It was an uneventful morning, save the whispers I could hear from some of my classmates. I took my school blazer off and adjusted the neck of my t-shirt to hang a little lower. If they wanted to talk, I might as well give them something to talk about. I caught a few of them staring and waved. Their scandalized looks made me laugh. I wanted to go up to a couple of them and say “if you’re going to gawk at someone, don’t be embarrassed when you get caught.” I found myself running late to my third class because my instructor wanted to thoroughly explain a project that he assigned while I was out. Although I was annoyed about being held up, I appreciated the extra attention. It was worth a large portion of our grade.

On my way, I was met with a sight that immediately made my temper flare. Kwon Jae Seok, Sung Ji Tae, and two other alphas I didn’t recognize were standing outside of my classroom. It was obvious that they were waiting for me. What the fuck could he possibly want? Wasn’t the scar on his face
enough of a sign to leave me the hell alone? I rolled my eyes as they all took a step towards me. I was a little nervous, but I controlled my scent well. I can fight two alphas at once, maybe three. I’ve never tried to take on four. As long as they don’t all attack at the same time, I should be fine. Even if they do, I have a secret weapon. I let them corner me against a wall. It’s better for me to know they can’t attack me from behind while I’m trying to figure out what’s going on. I looked Jae Seok in the eye and waited for him to speak. I know he’s the ring leader of this fucked up circus. The other alphas were just his clowns.

“Your scent’s different, Alphabet. You smell like an omega now. Apparently, you smelled so good that someone tried to eat you.” He pointed to the marks on my neck before continuing. “You reek of alpha and rumor has it you’ve got one. What about Mi Ran? Does she know you’re cheating on her?”


The crimson in his eyes flashed and his sick smile faltered for just a moment. It seemed like I struck a nerve. Don’t tell me he’s actually upset about it. Goddess, that’s pathetic. I laughed at the thought. The noise pulled him out of his thoughts and he scoffed.

“You wish. I’m just surprised. You’ve been playing hard to get and hating on alphas for so long that we thought you were off the market. We figured you were one of those omegas who isn’t attracted to alphas. Now that it’s obvious you let someone claim you, we’re just here to get our turn. I promise we’ll treat you well. You’ll love taking a real alpha’s knot.”

I couldn’t help laughing at his words, also working to stave off the nausea I felt at the thought of anything related to Jae Seok’s dick. If he wanted to talk shit, then let’s talk shit. “You’re not a ‘real alpha’, Jae Seok. I’d be more of an alpha than you in the middle of heat if my omega took over. Did you forget that I’ve already kicked your ass? That scar should be a pretty good reminder. You’re not even worth my time to fight, let alone my alpha’s. But, it’s really sweet of you to be concerned with my sex life and wanting me to have a knot. When school’s over, maybe I’ll take my alpha home and let him fuck me so I can do just that. I bet you and your little crew couldn’t even pop knots—probably wouldn’t know what to with an omega if you had one.”

“You’re such a mouthy bitch. Claiming you is going to be fun. Let’s see how mouthy you are when your face and your ass are stuffed full of cock. Your pathetic alpha probably left you all needy, huh? Don’t even try to stop us from taking care of you. You may be feisty, but you can’t take on the four strongest alphas in the school. I bet the pup who took the first turn couldn’t stop us either.” All four of them took a step closer to me.

I tried to steady my mind for the inevitable clash, but rage and disgust surged through me. He thinks I’m a joke, that I’m easy, that I’m a whore. He also seems to think that Jeonggukie is some sort of weakling. Both of those thought processes angered me. He wants to talk about being a real alpha? As far as I’m concerned my life mate is the only alpha.

“Seriously, my alpha would end you. It’s comical to think of really. I’d love to see it. There’s a reason he’s the alpha I chose to be with, but that doesn’t matter. I’m your opponent today. I don’t need an alpha to fight my battles and you know it. You live with the proof every day.”

Jae Seok and one of the others rushed at me, leaving me an opening to get away from the wall. I grabbed one of the unknown alphas and punched him a few times in the face. Luckily, they were doing what alphas always do during fights. They were waiting for their turn. They walked around me, trying to keep me within reach. I caught the same guy I already hit and knocked him to the ground. Normally, I would straddle him and draw things out for a little while. Unfortunately, I’m not
in a position to be able to do that. Now isn’t the time to play with my food so to speak. I stomped on
the alpha’s head until he stopped moving and quickly went back to watching the other three. Jae
Seok tried to grab me, but I slipped away from his hold. While I was getting away from him, the
other alpha I didn’t recognize punched me in the face. I wasn’t expecting it to be such a strong hit.
That brief moment of surprise was enough for him to lunge at me. We both toppled to the ground
when he wrapped his leg around the back of my knee. I wrestled with him, our limbs crashing
together in a fury of fists and claws. After a while, he ended up on his back and I was straddling him.
As I pummeled any touchable part of his body, Jae Seok and Ji Tae surrounded us.

“You’re going to wish you had come peacefully, Alphabet. I’m going to claim you, Mi Ran, and
whoever else I fucking want to. You may think you’re stronger, but I’m in charge here. No matter
how many times you beat me, I’ll keep coming back. No omega is safe from me.” I growled at Jae
Seok’s words. I wasn’t about to let him intimidate me, but I couldn’t help worry about the way he
and Ji Tae were starting to work together.

The punches to my back don’t hurt that much, but the ones to my chest are extremely painful.
Whoever it is that’s hitting me manages to find every bruise that Jeonggukie left on me. The alpha
below me is already done for—he stopped moving three punches ago—but I can’t get off of him. I
tried pushing the two alphas away from me, swinging my fists and scratching at them wildly. Being
in this situation wasn’t safe. I need to regain my footing and get some sort of vantage point. That
thought immediately left when three fast punches connected with the back of my head. A few more
knocks like that and I’m actually going to black out. I tucked my head down and put my arms over
my neck to avoid more direct blows, taking a moment to calm my breathing. I had to count backward
from 10. It wasn’t easy to clear my mind when I was being hit. I knew it was going to take a lot of
concentration to change my scent. I wondered if the newfound vanilla sugar and honey would
impact the effect of my clouding. Before I managed to start altering the aroma, I felt strong arms pull
me away from Jae Seok and Ji Tae. I didn’t even have to look at or smell my savior to know it was
Jeonggukie. I’m grateful that he showed up, but I’m also a little bitter he stopped me when I was
about to break free.

He sat me against a wall and growled something that sounded like “stay.” I watched him pounce on
Ji Tae. He grabbed the unsuspecting alpha by the hair and threw him against a locker. When the
dazed alpha tried to throw a punch, Jeonggukie squeezed his throat and slammed his head into the
hard wall. The crack that echoed through the hallway was sickening. Blood streaked over the paint
as Ji Tae’s limp body slid downward. My life mate immediately turned his attention to Jae Seok,
showing zero regard for the damage he caused to the unconscious alpha he just finished with. It was
a little terrifying to watch the slow, calculated way that Jeonggukie stalked toward his prey. I
couldn’t see my alpha’s face, but I could see Jae Seok’s. He was pale and his eyes were wide with
fear. So much for not being able to stop him from taking me. I reveled in the loud pop when my life
mate’s fist met with the other alpha’s jaw, as well as the limp way it hung away from his face. It was
obviously dislocated, probably shattered too. Jeonggukie swooped on him when he fell to the
ground. I watched the first few hits with a twisted sense of satisfaction.

That pleasure quickly turned to worry when it became apparent that my alpha wasn’t going to stop.
Even when Seok, Joon, and Tae found us and tried to pull him off of Jae Seok, Jeonggukie kept
hitting. I could tell this wasn’t a normal fight for him. He wanted to hurt the other alpha, he wanted
that bastard to suffer. I did too, but I didn’t want my life mate to go to prison for it. I tried calling to
my alpha, tried getting his attention. He was too far gone. I knew there was only one thing I could
do.

“Guys, when I count to three hold your breath. As soon as you see Jeonggukie stop moving, pull
him away.”
A small crowd had gathered at this point, but I didn’t have time to focus on them. I calmed my breathing and counted to three. I focused every ounce of energy I had on making my scent as strong and sweet as possible. After a moment, I saw my life mate’s body freeze. His packmates yanked him away from the bloody alpha on the floor. He stayed motionless for a few seconds. By the time he was lucid, some teachers were carrying Jae Seok and the other alphas away.

“What was that asshole guy messing with you?” Tae asked.

“Jae Seok and his lackeys were trying to claim me.”

A deep growl emanated from Jeonggukie’s chest as he tried to push past the four of us. I could tell my admission of Jae Seok’s true intentions made him want to rush after the teachers and finish what he started. When his body came in contact with mine, I cried out in pain. That sound immediately snapped my alpha out of his rage-induced trance. His eyes were tender and cautious as he surveyed me for damaged. Obviously displeased with what he found, he scooped me into his arms and carried me back to my house.

I didn’t protest or try to speak when Jeonggukie set me down in the bathroom and removed my clothes. He ran a cool bath and gingerly put me in the tub. He wordlessly washed me, being as gentle as possible. Caring for me in this manner seemed to be calming to him. My life mate released several angry, discontented growls when he saw the bruises and open wounds, especially the blood matted in my hair. When he was satisfied with how clean I was, he pulled me out of the bath, dried me off, and helped me into a pair of underwear. I quietly sat in my boxers and allowed him to disinfect and bandage the various cuts and scrapes I had sustained. Now that my adrenaline has died down, I realize exactly how much those chest and head blows hurt. My alpha carried me to bed, laid me down, and sat next to me.

“I should have come sooner,” he said with a deep sigh.

“I’m surprised you came at all. Your class was halfway across the building. You shouldn’t have been able to smell me.”

“I’m attuned to your scent. I thought I smelled you a few minutes before I ran out of class, but I convinced myself that your scent was just lingering on my jacket. When it hit me again, it was bitter and filled with anxiety. I knew something was wrong. I’m glad the pack felt me losing control. I’m also thankful for whatever the hell you did to me because I wouldn’t have stopped otherwise. My alpha told to keep going. Even now, he’s telling me that if anyone who’s tried to claim my omega is still breathing, I haven’t hurt them enough.”

This was one of only a handful of times that I’ve seen the real darkness that my alpha possesses. It was evident in the way his eyes shifted to an almost black color and in the hateful, coldness of his voice. I reached for him, wanting to placate him, and hissed at the horrible feeling of moving my torso. He was in my arms in a flash. After admonishing me for trying to move, he placed sweet kisses over some of my bruises.

“You need to clean yourself up, Jeonggukie. You’re covered in blood. Take a shower and I’ll grab some clothes for you.”

He didn’t let me move. Instead, he took some clothes from my closet and disappeared into the bathroom. I tried to find a comfortable position to lie in while he was gone but I was unsuccessful. Everything hurt so much. When my life mate came back, he helped me move to my side and tucked blankets and pillows underneath me to cushion the pressure on my injuries. He chuckled when he looked at me.
“What’s so funny?”

“You look like you’re nesting. I don’t know much about omegas, but I’ve heard about them nesting before.”

“I’ve never made a nest, so I’ll take your word for it.” I laughed when he asked if he could disrupt my nest before he laid next to me and carefully wrapped his arm around my waist.

“So,” he said after a few minutes of rubbing his face over my shoulder. “What is that thing you did to me? I couldn’t move, I couldn’t talk. The only thing I could do was think about you.”

“Have you ever heard of clouding?”

I paused for a moment when he shook his head, trying to think of the best way to explain it.

“Clouding is an omega mating tactic. We can concentrate our scents to make all of the alphas in a vicinity look at us. We literally cloud your senses with our smell so that you only want to focus on us. It increases the likelihood that we’ll find a viable mate when we’re looking for one. I’ve never really thought about why but my clouding works a little differently. Instead of getting alphas to pay attention to me, I can make them freeze for a few seconds. I was actually about to use my clouding on Ji Tae and Jae Seok before you came out. I was going to stun them and get into a better position. My clouding still works similarly to normal clouding but with a twist. Kind of how your charming works differently than a normal alpha’s. You’re not supposed to be able to control everything I do with charming. It’s supposed to be more of a strong suggestion than an order, but your pheromones are too strong. I guess my clouding works the way it does because I have two scents.”

“How did you even figure out you could do that?”

“In sex ed, the instructors taught us how to use our rank specific techniques. We were paired up with someone of the opposite rank to test our skills on. None of the alphas could charm me, but every single one of them who could smell me went motionless for like five seconds. So, I learned my clouding was different than that of other omegas.”

“That’s kind of cool. Plus, I think it’s nice that you have a built-in failsafe.”

“What do you mean?”

“I guess it’s two things really. If you get into too bad of a spot with alphas, you can stop everything and get away. Also, you have a way to stop me. You’re literally the only person I’ve ever met who could prevent me from doing something when I’m angry. I like that you have that ability. I’m always terrified that I’m going to accidentally hurt you.”

I took his hand and squeezed it gently, still not wanting to move too much. “I don’t think you have to worry about that. You were homicidal when you found out that Jae Seok tried to claim me and I know you were going to chase his body down and kill him. I have no doubt in my mind about that. But, when you hurt me trying to get past me, you immediately stopped. You didn’t care about trying to get revenge anymore because you had caused me pain.”

“Well, taking care of my omega is the most important thing I can do. As much as I don’t like it, that alpha can do whatever the hell he wants as long as you’re okay. When I pushed you and you cried out, making sure you were safe was the only thing I cared about.”

He gently kissed the side of my head, steering clear of the bumps there. The feeling of drunken butterflies erupted into a painful rumbling in my chest. Now is not the time for purring, but my omega didn’t seem to care. “Fuck this hurts.”
“Stop purring, then,” Jeonggukie said with a playful tone.

“This is your fault. If you didn’t make my omega happy, this wouldn’t happen.”

“Sorry! Umm…” He thought for a moment about something that could get my mind off of how sweet he was being. "I got a new project in my literature class today. I have to research a traditional Korean writer and compare their work to a modern Korean writer. I think it’s really an excuse to get us to read more because we have to compare five different works from each author. I think you were really on to something when you said that these teachers are tricking us into learning things.”

Jeonggukie continued to ramble about his classes until he was completely certain I was done making noises that hurt me. To torture me into never purring again—or “to prevent further bruising” as my alpha put it—he applied every cold pack we had to my injuries. Once he had successfully frozen the part of my vocal cords that can produce purring, he wrapped me up in a blanket and cuddled up to me. It was pleasant and I found myself drifting off to sleep. I woke up to the smell of rice and bulgogi.

“I know we missed lunch because we left early, so I wanted to make sure you ate. I didn’t bother with the side dishes because I knew you’d have a hard enough time eating. I figured it would be best to stick to something filling and then make you some soup for dinner.”

Jeonggukie feeding me and taking such good care of me made me think about the stark contrast in his behavior and that of other alphas. “Do you ever wonder what makes you different? As far as I know, you’re the strongest alpha ever but you’re not a dick. People like Jae Seok and Ji Tae act like they’re as strong as you are. It doesn’t make any sense to me.”

“I’ve had a long time to think about it. I’m sure all of the medication and therapy has had some impact on it, so it’s probably not all me just being a different kind of alpha. But, I think a lot of it has to do with the fact that I am so strong. Alpha wolves are dominant, aggressive, and insecure. I’m only two of those things. I don’t need to be unsure of myself because I’ve realized that I am incredibly powerful. I’m not the only alpha to have HADD and there’s a good chance I’m not the strongest one ever, but that’s okay. I’m comfortable in my abilities to defend myself, take care of my pack, and provide for my family. I don’t need to show off because I don’t care if other people know how good I am. I don’t have any feelings of inadequacy and I don’t need other people to validate me. Well, I need the pack’s approval and yours, but not anyone else’s.”

“Why mine?” I was confused as to what solace my words could offer him.

“You’re my significant other. Even if you’re not my boyfriend or my mate, you’re the closest thing I have. Alphas have to know they’re taking good care of their mates and that their mates are happy. My alpha sees you as his omega, so doing everything I can for you is an innate urge.”

“Is that why you’re feeding me?”

“That and I don’t think it’s a good idea for you to move too much right now.”

We ate in silence and I couldn’t help remembering all of Jae Seok’s threats. He doesn’t scare me, but I feel like he meant what he said. Does the pack have the capacity or time to watch over each omega in the school? I know we could easily stop him if needed but constantly babysitting every vulnerable wolf would be exhausting. Jeonggukie grabbed my hand and squeezed it three times.

“Want to talk about it?”

“Jae Seok said that he’s going to keep harassing me and the other omegas. He said that no matter
how many times we beat him, he’ll just keep going.”

“Why would he put himself through that? He obviously doesn’t stand a chance.”

I sighed and shook my head. “I think it’s me. This is going to sound crazy, but I think he’s doing it to get back at me. Or maybe to get me? I don’t know.”

“What do you mean?” I felt my alpha’s body tense because of my words.

“Before the fight, he mentioned that I was playing hard to get. He said now that an alpha claimed me, he wanted his turn. I thought he was just being an ass, but he actually looked bothered when I started playing along and saying that I was going to take you home to have sex. I asked if he was jealous and his face froze for a second, like he was really upset. It made me think of all the times we’ve interacted and it actually makes a lot of sense. Other than calling me Alphabet and poking fun at me, he’s never been mean to me. It was always directed towards Mi Mi. I think he’s got a crush on me? It’s like this whole time he’s just been trying to get my attention. That’s so fucking dumb.”

“Well, he can’t have you.” My alpha offered no other words on the subject but none were needed. The change in his face and scent let me know that he wasn’t very partial to the idea of Jae Seok liking me—or still breathing for that matter.

“Even if I didn’t already have an alpha, I sure as hell wouldn’t want him to be my alpha. I’d pick probably any alpha on Earth before him, including Beom from the dog cafe and my literature teacher.” The thought made me purse my lips to hold back a smile.

“You mean that 70-year-old guy who was yelling at Tae and Joon for laughing in the hallway during the break between classes?”

“Yes. He’s a much better candidate for my alpha than Jae Seok. Then again, I think I’ve got the best alpha ever. Just know, if you start to slip, I have options.” I couldn’t keep a straight face when I said it, bursting into a fit of giggles that only caused my ribs to throb.

“I’ll take my chances. I think you’ll find that neither of them are quite as awesome as I am.”

“You’re probably right.” I smiled and motioned for him to come closer so I could give him a kiss.

We sat next to each other for a while and discussed what we could do to make sure the omegas were safe. I could handle myself, Mi Mi, Dae, and Chi. The pack could take care of themselves and a few omegas each, but that left so many unprotected. As many times as I’ve fought with some of Jae Seok’s friends, I wasn’t dumb enough to think that he wouldn’t find a way to hurt someone even if he wasn’t around. We eventually decided that the OPC was the best way to make sure as many people were looked after as possible. We hadn’t had an official meeting since the club’s inception but now was a perfect time. Jeonggukie and I set out to make some fliers advertising the meeting we that decided would be held at the end of the week. We made a few phone calls to see what room we could use at the school and what time would work best for the pack. We also decided to create a trustworthy alpha list. We wrote down the names of every alpha in the school we knew wouldn’t take advantage of an omega. I texted Mi Mi and told her to recruit as many omegas as she, Chi, and Dae could find for the first meeting. As fast-paced as the planning is, I’m thankful to have something to distract me from how much pain I’m in.

The pack volunteered to contact the alphas, find more, and invite them to the meeting. They were an important part of our plan. Jeonggukie tried to freeze me to death again while he cooked soup for dinner. I know he swears it was to help, but I’m pretty sure he was just being a dick. When my mom got home, she was equal parts upset that I was injured and excited that she didn’t have to make food.
The rest of the night faded into conversations about our plans for the OPC and ways that I could heal faster. I tried not to allow my mom to talk too much when she said that I shouldn’t move more than necessary. I wouldn’t put it past my life mate to carry me everywhere for the next week. He actually suggested it, but I told him no. When he argued, I eventually settled for letting him carry all of my stuff until I felt better. My life mate made me go to bed early. He insisted that my body would repair itself quicker with proper rest. I wanted to disagree but I was actually really tired.

The week leading up to the first OPC meeting was fairly uneventful. My bruises healed and we got the news that both Ji Tae and Jae Seok were in the hospital. Jeonggukie was pleased when he heard that asshole guy—the name Tae encouraged us to call Jae Seok—wouldn’t be back in school for at least a month. We posted the fliers all over school, invited as many people as possible to come, and decided on an agenda. Everyone unanimously decided that I would be the president because I’ve been the one-man OPC for years. I crowned Mi Mi as the vice president and Jeonggukie as the secretary. No one else wanted any leadership roles, so it was just the three of us in charge. Mi Mi made a point to announce that she wanted our alpha life mate to lead meetings that I couldn’t attend. She didn’t like talking in front of too many people. The pack, Dae and Chi were involved in all of the major discussions regarding the OPC. We wanted to make sure alphas and omegas included in every step of the process because protecting omegas is the duty of both ranks. Everything was in good shape for the meeting on Friday.

We also found out why Ji Ae’s nickname is Chi. Apparently, her uncle is an English professor at Kyung Hee University. When Ji Ae was younger, he explained to her that there isn’t a standardized way to write Korean names in English. He showed her that the name Jung could be written as Jung, Jeong, Joung, Chung, Chong, Cheong, or Choung, depending on who was writing it. She thought that meant all names that started with a J could also start with a Ch in English. So, she decided her name was Chi. Even though her name is one that can be spelled with a Ch, her uncle tried to explain that it doesn’t necessarily work that way. It became an inside joke with them and the name stuck. Now, her family and closest friends call her Chi. It’s pronounced the exact same as Ji, but we put an extra emphasis on the Ch sound to make her feel like it’s different. She appreciates the effort and always laughs when we go overboard.

Before we knew it, Friday’s meeting was upon us. As we set the room up, I mused about how excited I was. I also worried that people wouldn’t want to listen to me. Neither the alphas in school nor the omegas exactly like me. What if they don’t want to take my suggestions to stay safe? By now, rumors of Jae Seok’s craziness have spread all over. Everyone knew he was a danger, so I knew they wouldn’t doubt the need for protection. But, would they allow me to show them how to defend themselves? It’s one thing to be okay with someone saving you as you’re being attacked. It’s another to listen to the words of someone you don’t actually like. As I absentmindedly worried, I felt an arm tangle around my waist and my head being tilted back. Jeonggukie gave me several upside-down kisses and told me to shut up. The pack, who were all there except Jin and Yunie, began making inappropriate comments until we stopped. It was probably for the best. People would be showing up any second. Within a few minutes, we were joined by 13 omegas and 7 alphas. I was really impressed. I wasn’t expecting 20 people for the first meeting. When everyone was settled down, I cleared my throat and addressed the group.

“Hello, everyone! I’m sure you all know that my name is Park Ji Min, also known as Alphabet. I’m the President of the Omega Protection Club or OPC for short. I’ve made it my personal mission for the last two years to protect the omegas of this school. Because of my recent fight with four alphas, I’ve called together the OPC to make sure as many omegas are safe as possible. You all know what kind of person Kwon Jae Seok is and I’m sure you may have heard about the direct threat he made towards the omegas. Even if he’s not around, he’s got friends who like to cause just as much trouble as he does. The mission of the OPC is to keep omegas safe by teaching them methods to defend themselves and by putting some of the responsibility on alphas. That’s why we’ve invited both ranks
here. It’s an omega’s job to try their hardest to stay safe. It’s also an alpha’s job to make sure they
don’t put any omegas in dangerous situations.

“By fostering a good relationship between the ranks, we’ll all learn valuable lessons and achieve our
goal of making our school a peaceful environment for everyone. I’m aware that not everyone here
knows me well or even likes me. You’ve probably all heard rumors about me. Maybe some of them
are true and maybe they aren’t. I want to open up the floor to answer your questions and clear some
of the ill will that you may have. Afterward, we’ll introduce ourselves and go over some basic omega
protection techniques—the buddy system, contact alphas, and scenting. So, does anyone want to ask
me anything?”

It was quiet for a few moments. Some people were obviously nervous to voice the things on their
mind and others didn’t seem to wonder anything. I was about to move on when I saw a hand dart up.
It was a female omega that I wasn’t familiar with.

“I heard that you’re with an alpha now. Does that mean that you and Mi Ran broke up or are you
cheating on her?” She looked a little smug, almost as if she thought she was starting some drama
with her question.

I can’t say that I was expecting anyone to ask about it, but I wasn’t exactly surprised either. People
here love to gossip. I guess this was as good a time as any to clear the air and get the real story out
there. “Mi Mi and I were never dating, so I’ve never cheated on her and we never broke up. I do
have an alpha. Next question?”

“Who’s your alpha? I thought you hated alphas.”

“I hate asshole alphas, not all of them. If my alpha wants to introduce himself as such, he will. I’m
not putting him on the spot.”

Jeonggukie stood up and wrapped his arms around my shoulders. “Hello, everyone! My name is
Jeon Jeong Guk and I’m his alpha.”

He kissed the top of my head and sat back down. There were several exasperated and annoyed
noises from some of the omegas in the room. It made me smile that my alpha chose me over some of
the other, more appealing omegas.

“Does that mean that Mi Ran is single?” An alpha from the side of the room asked. “I’ve always
thought she was really pretty, but I never wanted to bother her. Plus, I always thought you two were
dating and I didn't want to mess with someone's girlfriend”

I looked at Mi Mi and she stepped forward. I grabbed her hand to support her. “I am single, but I’m
not interested. It’s nothing against you. I’m sure you’re a great alpha, but I’m actually a lesbian. I’m
not interested in guys. That’s why Ji Ji has always tried so hard to protect me.”

“So, you’re only into omegas? That’s disgusting,” another omega called from the back of the room.

I snapped my attention in that direction and replied forcefully. “Anyone who is against omega-omega
or alpha-alpha pairings can get the fuck out. I want you all to stay safe, but you need to leave if
you’re intolerant of love in all its forms.”

Three omegas and three alphas got up and walked out the door. Good riddance to the people who
don’t accept my family. “Sorry to be rude, but my life mate is a lesbian and one of my packmates is
mated to someone of the same rank. I won’t allow anyone to be here that isn’t okay with the people
who are closest to me. Does anyone else have any questions?”
No one else raised their hands. Before we began the introductions, a female omega I’ve never seen joined the group. “I’m sorry I’m late! I’m new here and I got lost.”

“It’s all right. You haven’t missed much. I introduced myself and kicked out anyone who doesn’t like same-rank relationships. Do you have a problem with them?”

She shook her head as she found a seat at the back. I nodded in acknowledgment and moved to sit next to Jeonggukie and Mi Mi.

“Now, we’ll begin our introductions. As I said before, I’m Park Ji Min. I’m the President of the OPC and I’m an omega.”

“My name is Kim Mi Ran. I’m an omega and the Vice President of the OPC.”

“I’m Jeon Jeong Guk. I’m an alpha and I’m the Secretary of the OPC.”

The pack, Chi, and Dae introduced themselves to the group. The various alphas and omegas followed suit, giving their names and ranks. It was nice to see everyone trying to get along.

“Now, I want everyone to put their chairs into two lines—alphas on one side and omegas on the other. While we’re doing this, I want to know if there is anyone who is opposed to scenting someone, being scented, or giving out their phone number. I’m talking type 1 scenting, no tongues or kisses. One of our safety measures is having trustworthy alphas scent omegas. You have the right to opt out of participating in any of these activities, especially if you have a significant other. I don’t want any crazy alphas or omegas coming at me because I encouraged their boyfriend or girlfriend to trade scents or give out their number.”

A few people said that they would rather not trade numbers or scents, but most of them were open to it. I noticed that Nam Jang Mi, the omega who came in late, kept staring at me. It didn’t make me uncomfortable, but it was weird. I couldn’t tell what it was that she was looking for. Even Jeonggukie noticed and mentioned it.

“The first thing I want to suggest to you all is finding a walking buddy or traveling in groups. I know that seems really obvious, but it helps. If an alpha is coming for one specific omega, he’s less likely to bother them if they’re surrounded by other people. The next thing is to have an emergency alpha. Would all of our alphas who are open to giving out their number to help an omega if they need it please line up over here?”

I continued speaking as the alphas moved into position. All but four of the alphas lined up. “An emergency alpha is exactly what it sounds like, someone you can call in case of an emergency. If an alpha is bothering you and he won’t go away, you’re walking somewhere and you’re being followed, or you’re unsafe in another way, you can call your emergency alpha to help you. This doesn’t mean the alpha will always be available. This also isn’t about being social. It’s fine if you guys want to be friends and hang out outside of being emergency contacts, but the purpose of this is to provide security if it’s absolutely necessary. I don’t want anyone abusing the privilege. If an omega is being bothersome and contacting an alpha for things that aren’t emergencies or an alpha is pestering an omega to hang out or do something they don’t want to do, I’m going to step in. I don’t want anyone to feel uncomfortable. Omegas, I want you to pick your emergency alpha. I’m sure no one is surprised to learn that I’m also going to be an emergency contact. Try not to bog down one alpha. I don’t think any alpha should have more than two omega contacts.”

Five omegas opted not to have an emergency alpha, but the rest seemed excited about the prospect. The next 20 minutes or so were spent having small conversations and exchanging contact information. Jang Mi approached Jeonggukie to ask if he would be her emergency alpha. I was a
little surprised that she didn’t ask me, but she honestly couldn’t have picked a better person. A male omega named Oh Byung Wook asked me to be his emergency contact. I recognized him as a third-year who was bothered by some nameless alpha earlier this year. Unsurprisingly, Dae chose Tae as his emergency alpha. Once everyone was paired up, I introduced the most interesting tactic for keeping omegas safe.

“All right, everyone. Now is the point where we pick scenting alphas. Anyone who is uncomfortable with trading scents, please sit down. The same rule applies to this as before, don’t crowd one alpha. Also, I’m not going to be a scent alpha because I don’t exactly smell like an alpha. Before you make your choices, I need to make a few things very clear. First, omegas don’t have to pick their emergency alpha as their scent alpha. That’s ideal because then you will associate their scent with safety, but it’s not required. If your scents don’t mesh well, don’t push it. Second, and I cannot stress this enough, these omegas do not belong to you, alphas. Just because this omega is allowing you to scent them, does not mean they are your omega. You are helping them with something, you are not laying claim to them. Anyone who might have an issue with that needs to sit down now. Third, this is not a traditional scenting. We’re doing cheek-to-cheek scenting for this. I know that means you’ll have to trade scents more often, but it eliminates the risks that come with scent drunkenness and the emotional dependence that traditional scenting creates. If I find out that any alpha is being possessive over their partnered omega or trying to force traditional scenting, getting kicked out of the OPC will be the least of their worries. Do you all understand?”

I waited for each of the alphas to agree before I told the omegas to pick their scent alphas. I was surprised to see that Joon chose to be a scent alpha. Then, I heard him mention that Jin encouraged it. I suppose he doesn’t have anything to worry about since they’re mated and fated. Mi Mi decided that Joon was the best choice for her scent alpha. I couldn’t help laughing at her because she giggled throughout her scenting. Dae and Tae paired up again. Jang Mi again approached Jeonggukie.

“I’m not a scent alpha,” he said blankly.

“Aww… why not, alpha?” She asked with an over exaggerated pout. Her rose and cocoa scent sweetened. It seemed like she was trying to coax him into agreeing.

“I’m taken and I only scent my omega.”

“That’s such a shame. What pretty girl has the honor of being your omega? Is she prettier than me?” Jang Mi fluttered her eyelashes and it’s all I could do not to slap that saccharine smile off her face. I don’t care if I’m a guy and I’m stronger than other omegas. I’m not afraid to show her my teeth. She was pretty, but she knew it and used it to her advantage—not like Chae, who was humble despite how attractive she was. Jang Mi’s hair was light brown and came to just above her shoulders. She had on heavy eye makeup and bright red lipstick, which actually made her look more alluring. It bothered me how good she looked, how nice she smelled, and how comfortable she seemed talking with my alpha.

“It’s me,” I said, standing between them when she tried to get closer. “I’m the pretty girl.”

Her eyes widened and a snarl replaced her stupid smile. “You don’t have to lie just to protect your friend. He doesn’t have to lie about having an omega either. He can just say he can’t handle me as his omega.”

My alpha and I both growled, surprising Jang Mi. Jeonggukie spun me around and pulled me towards him by my waist. He wasted no time in attaching our lips. I decided to embellish a little, wanting to put on a show for the bitch who thought she was going to take my alpha. I pressed my body against my life mate’s and wrapped my arms around his neck. He caught on quickly and
moved his free hand to the side of my face. He opened my mouth with his thumb and stuck his
tongue inside. Right as I was about to suck on it, Mi Mi interrupted us. We had both forgotten we
were in a school-sanctioned club.

“Sorry, everyone,” I said as I collected myself. “That was incredibly unprofessional. I should not
have done that.”

Most of the group was amused, but Jang Mi definitely was not. Good. I walked to the front of the
room and made sure to pass by her on the way. I bent down to whisper something in her ear before I
addressed the whole room.

“So, that’s it for the first meeting of the OPC. You all are welcome to meet with me, Mi Mi, or
Jeonggukie to ask questions individually. Our next meeting is next Friday at 6:30 pm. I’m going to
demonstrate some self-defense techniques and then we’re going to practice them. I hope to see you
all next week!”

People trickled out of the room after saying their goodbyes to their friends and new acquaintances.
Jeonggukie gave me a back hug as we waited for anyone who might have questions. Eventually,
they all left. The last one out was Jang Mi, who was glaring the whole time. I waved to her as she
walked away.

“She must have pissed you off, Ji Ji. I’ve never seen you like that.”

“That bitch tried to seduce Jeonggukie into being her scent alpha, called him a liar for saying he had
an omega, called me a liar for saying I was his omega, and had the audacity to say my alpha
wouldn’t be able to handle her as his omega. I don’t regret what I did. She’s fucking lucky I wasn’t
in a violent mood or else that pout would have been scratched right off her face.”

“I think I like omega Ji Ji. He’s much more entertaining than alpha Ji Ji,” Mi Mi couldn’t stop her
giggles. Neither could the rest of the pack.

“I noticed that you whispered in her ear before you dismissed the meeting. What did you say to her?”
Jeonggukie asked as we were cleaning up.

“That you spent your rut with me and it’s a real shame she’ll never know what your knot feels like.”

My alpha chuckled and pulled me into another kiss. “Your spitefulness is showing, little omega.”

“If she can learn to play nice, maybe I will too.”

“About that… I’ve got some bad news for you.”

“What?” I didn’t like the tone of his voice when he said that.

“She smells like she’s up to something, which means we need to watch her. What better way to keep
an eye on her than to ‘befriend’ her?”

“Is this some of that ‘keep your friends close and your enemies closer’ bullshit?”

“Yes,” he said with finality.

“Something tells me I don’t have a choice.”

“I’ve always liked how smart you are.”

“Do I have to be nice?”
“You have to be decent, definitely not nice.”
“Can we still make out in front of her?”
“Of course.” He pecked my lips for emphasis.
“Fine, but I’m not happy about it.”
“I’ll make it up to you.”
“You better.”

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading! So, how did you like it? Why do you think Jeong Guk doesn’t want Dae and Chi to know about Mi Mi's omega search? What do you think about the fight and Ji Min's clouding ability? What do you think Jang Mi is up to? Please leave your questions, comments, concerns, and thoughts.
Today is my birthday! Celebrate with a little over 10k words of things getting a little crazy.
I changed the text format to make it easier to read on mobile. Please tell me if it looks all right.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

I found myself cuddling up to Jeonggukie as we walked to lunch. Jang Mi was in his literature class, so she was standing with him while he waited for me and Mi Mi. She was a little too close to him for my liking, but I’m not worried. I’m a little jealous she’s around him, but he’s my alpha. Jang Mi doesn’t understand that my life mate couldn’t be with her. Even if he wanted to be, I’m the only omega who can handle him. He’s genetically linked to me in a way that neither of us can ignore. That doesn’t mean I’m not going to be agitated when I see her batting her fake eyelashes and calling him by his rank. When we got into the cafeteria, she followed us. It was part of Jeonggukie’s plan to befriend her. I didn’t have a choice but to play along, despite the fact that everything about her made my skin crawl.

“We need to get another chair, Jeonggukie.”

“Why?”

“There’s only 10 here.”

“You always sit in my lap anyway,” he replied, pulling me to sit on him.

“Good point. Guys, this is Jang Mi,” I said reluctantly as she sat between Chi and Dae. “Jang Mi, this is our pack. You’ve met everyone except Yunie and Jin.”

“Hi. You can call me Seok Jin,” the alpha waved as he spoke.

“I’m Yun Ki.”

Neither of them looked very amused by her presence. I could tell they didn’t necessarily want to be pleasant with her, but they tried. They didn’t even offer for her to call them by their nicknames. That sentiment wasn’t wasted on any of us. We brought out our lunches and started eating. It became fairly regular for Jeonggukie to feed me after the “kinky daddy” moment we had two months ago. He didn’t do it every day, but today he chose to. I assumed it had something to do with our latest omega addition.

“So, Chae wanted to know if we all would like to meet up tomorrow for a group date,” Yunie said after we were all settled.

“Is that like we all go out on dates as a group?” Mi Mi asked with a slightly confused look.

“I think so. She said the whole pack is pretty much all couples now, so she wanted us to go out as a group but also on dates. I don’t pretend to understand everything she says. I just told her I’d pass along the message.”
“Sunday is date day for me and Manggae, so we’ll be going out regardless.”

“Who’s Manggae?” Jang Mi’s tone was a little confused and irked. It pleased both my inner alpha and my omega that she seemed bothered by him calling someone such a cute pet name.

“Ji Min is my little manggaetteok omega, so I call him Manggae.” Jeonggukie bit my jaw lightly, making me giggle. He gripped my waist tightly as a sign of possessiveness. I didn’t miss the slight growl in his voice as he said it.

Jang Mi scoffed. “I don’t see why you would call him that. He’s not very little. He’s almost as big as you are. He’s not very squishy either.”

“You say that because you haven’t seen my ass,” I snapped back a little more harshly than I intended. The rest of the pack burst into laughter.

“Min does have the best ass I’ve ever seen, no argument,” Tae said. The pack all agreed, earning a warning growl from Jeonggukie.

“Hey, we didn’t say we wanted it. His ass is completely yours. We all know that.” A few of the alphas threw their hands up in surrender.

A satisfied hum came from my life mate as he fed me a few bites of food. I could tell his alpha was happy with their consensus that I belonged to him. My phone buzzed in my pocket and I quickly fished it out. The only people who ever contact me are sitting at the table. I figured it must be my mom. I looked at the name and a bit of panic went through me. It was Byung Wook, my contact omega.

“How’s it going?”

“Hey, Ji Min. I hate to bother you but I’m in the cafeteria and these two alphas won’t leave me alone. I keep telling them I’m fine by myself, but they won’t go away.”

“I’m in the cafeteria too. Where are you?”

“I’m at the opposite end from where you usually sit.”

“I’m on my way.” I stood up but Jeonggukie walked in that direction before I could take a step. He must have heard the conversation. “Well, Jeonggukie is on his way. He’ll bring you over here. Just stay on the phone with me, okay?”

“Thank you. I keep walking away but they just follow me. Oh, wait... I see Jeong Guk. He made them go away. Thank you!”

“I’ll see you in a second, Byung Wook.”

I ended the call, grabbed a chair, and brought it to the table. A slightly frazzled looking omega followed my alpha when he came back. Byung Wook sat down next to us and brought out his lunch.

“Everyone, this is my contact omega, Oh Byung Wook. Some alphas were bothering him, so he’s going to sit with us.”

The new omega smiled and waved. His black hair hung a little in his face, touching his chubby cheeks. He was shy, cute, and tiny, exactly what you think of when you think of a male omega.

“Hello! Thank you for letting me crash your party,” he said with a giggle.

Everyone greeted him kindly and Yunie reminded us about the group date that Chae wanted to set
up. It was hard to ignore the fact that most of the pack was paired up now, but there were still several who didn’t have someone. Even Tae and Dae, who were looking incredibly friendly, weren’t officially a couple.

“Are you single?” Seok asked the new omega suddenly.

“Yes,” Byung Wook answered while blushing.

“Will you be my date for a group date thing tomorrow?”

“If you’d like me to be.”

Seok grinned and nodded at the flustered boy across from him. “Can we call you Byung? We all have nicknames and I want to call you one too.”

“My friends call me Yungie because we have an alpha in the group named Byung Hyun and they call him Byung. You can call me Yungie too.”

“I’ll get your number from Min and text you the details for tomorrow.”

“Sounds good, Seok.” Yungie’s face lit up and he bit his lip.

“That clears up finding Seokie a date. Now, we just need dates for Chi and Miranie,” Jin said with a smile.

Chi shot a strange look to Jeonggukie and he cleared his throat. “I kinda figured they’d be each other’s dates,” he said after a moment. “Chi doesn’t feel comfortable with alphas and Ranie is a lesbian. I thought that worked out nicely.”

“I’m cool with that,” Mi Mi said with a shrug. “I’d much rather hang out with Chi than some random chick I found just to keep me company for a few hours.”

“So, we’ve got six couples for Sunday?” Yunie pulled out his phone to text Chae.

“Wait a sec, Yunie,” Jeonggukie stopped him from letting her know the total count. He whispered into my ear. “Do you want to do the group date, little omega? I think it could be fun but I understand if you just want to do our own thing. It’s our date day, after all.”

It made me smile that he was willing to forgo spending time with the pack to uphold the tradition of our Sunday dates. It really meant a lot to me, as evidenced by the butterflies that decided to stretch their wings inside of me. I turned to whisper into his ear. “I’m fine with it as long as we can go see Nabi in the morning. I haven’t seen her in two weeks and I need to make sure she doesn’t hate me. She ran away from me the last time I saw her and I miss her.”

“We can do that,” my alpha replied with a smile.

I gave him a kiss on the cheek and he chuckled. I was really learning to appreciate these random moments of affection from both him and myself. “Six couples, Yunie. Let Chae know. I’m sure she’s setting up a reservation or something.”

“Yeah. She tries to be a plan ahead person and I love that about her. She’s not usually surprised by much.”

“Would I be able to tag along?” Jang Mi asked with an uncharacteristically small voice. She almost seemed nervous about the answer.
“Do you have a date to bring?” Jeonggukie questioned, skeptical of her reasoning.

“No. I don’t know too many people here. Do you have any other friends that I could go with, alpha?”

“My name is Jeong Guk. Call me Jeong Guk or don’t call me. Manggae is the only person who’s allowed to call me alpha.”

“He doesn’t have ownership of your rank. He can’t be the only one who can call you that.”

“You heard what my alpha said,” I retorted, annoyed at her attitude.

She curled her lips at me, almost in disgust. It was all I could do not to smack that stupid look off her face. “You don’t have to be rude. I wasn’t even talking to you.”

As if he could feel the rage bubbling up within me, Jeonggukie grabbed my hand and held me close. This would typically be comforting to me. Right now, there wasn’t much that was going to keep me from responding to Jang Mi’s words. It only took a second look at her sneer to convince me to say fuck my life mate’s plan of being nice. I took a steadying breath and unleashed the pent up feelings I’ve been harboring ever since she thought it was a good idea to hit on my alpha.

“Look, bitch. I don’t know who the fuck you think you are or who you were wherever you came from, but you’re nobody special. You’ve been nothing but rude and condescending since the moment you walked in yesterday. All of these people sitting here? These are MY friends. These alphas here? They’re MY pack. The OPC? That’s MY club. This particular alpha that you can’t seem to control your goddess damned slick over? He’s MY alpha. You’re in my fucking territory, so you better take a fucking second to correct yourself. You want to get an attitude with me and be bitchy? You want to think you’re accomplishing something by slathering on a fuck ton of makeup and pouting at my alpha like you’re going to seduce him? You want to call him by his rank like that’s going to get you his knot? You’re fucking delusional. I’m here to introduce a little bit of sense into that thick head of yours because, apparently, you don’t get it.

“You might have been queen bitch where you’re from and maybe you had alphas trailing behind you begging for it. It’s possible you even had a gang of little omega lackeys at your beck and call. Here, no one gives a fuck about Nam Jang Mi. You’ve come into my world and tried to take over. That’s not going to happen. In my pack, I’m the strongest omega. If anyone at this school is queen bitch, it would be me. You want to take my spot? Challenge me. I’d love to see you fucking try. If you don’t want to, then you better reassess how you approach me and mine. If you want to keep going the way you have been, you’re going to be lucky if I don’t slap you so hard that even the best facepaint can’t cover up the bruises. I’m not afraid to put any person in their place if they take half a step out of line. We’ve all been nice to you up until this point. We’ve been trying to befriend you. If you want to continue to have a problem with me, you can get the fuck out. I promise no one will miss you when you’re gone.”

I could smell a spike of fear and anger in her scent and I matched it with my own agitation. At this point, I was hoping she was dumb enough to challenge me. I usually wouldn’t fight an omega but I was eager to make an exception for her. The rest of the table was completely silent as they watched our interaction. I couldn’t read the expression on her face. It looked like a mixture of embarrassment and pure spite. I couldn’t wait to hear what she had to say.

“You may not know who I am, but I am someone special. I’m Nam Jang Mi and my family owns half of this fucking city. You want to talk like you’re some sort of treasure or like you’re in charge around here. I bet you’re not shit without your alpha and your little pack to back you up. No matter how many people stand in my way, I always get what I want. If I can’t fight them, I buy them. If I
can’t buy them, I end them. You caught the eye of the hottest alpha in the school because you spread your legs? Guess what. That doesn’t make you unique. You let him fuck you during his rut and you feel like that’s an accomplishment? Alphas will fuck any hole during rut. He’s probably just keeping you around because you’re easy access and nothing better has come along until I got here. I’m the best thing that is ever going to happen in your alpha’s life. I’m beautiful, I’m rich, I smell great, my slick is addictive, and I’ll do anything to please my alpha. You just need to face the fact that what’s yours is about to become mine.”

I laughed wholeheartedly at her statement, wondering where this burst of self-centered courage came from. She obviously didn’t know what she was up against. I wriggled out of Jeonggukie’s hold and walked over to her chair. I yanked her up by her arm and brought it behind her, using it to pin her to the table. She tried to free herself but she couldn’t move. “As cute as all of that was, I’m going to have to stop you. I don’t care about whatever power you seem to think you have. Go ahead and try to fight, buy, or end me or my alpha. I fucking dare you. In fact,” I pulled her up and made her face my life mate. “Try to seduce him. Make your little faces, appeal to his ego, change your scent, you can fucking slick yourself for all I care. Do your worst and see if he’s interested.

“But,” I tugged her hair with my other hand and forced her to look at me, “if you so much as think about touching him with that disgusting mouth of yours, I swear to the goddess it’s going to take all 10 of the people sitting at this table to pry me off of your bloody body. Now, go. Try to make my alpha yours.” I pushed her towards Jeonggukie and she stumbled in front of him.

She took a moment to collect herself and knelt in front of Jeonggukie. She looked up at him with a cute pout and changed her scent. She was trying to cloud him. I could tell he was completely unbothered by the action, even though a couple of the pack members seemed to be affected. Jang Mi ran her hands up my alpha’s legs, towards his dick. When she got too close, he stopped her.

“Don’t touch what’s not yours,” he barked with a low tone.

“I promise I could make you feel good, alpha. Better than he can.”

“I already told you not to call me alpha.”

She trailed her finger down his neck and onto his chest. “Just let me show you, Jeonggukie.”

“You aren’t allowed to say that either. I told you to call me Jeong Guk or don’t address me at all. You don’t listen very well, do you?”

My wolves and I were conflicted by the scene in front of us. Part of us was incredibly bothered by another person’s hands on our alpha. Another part of us was amused by how frustrated Jeonggukie was becoming. I knew I should have discussed this with him first, but I also knew that this was the best way to handle the situation. He’s not going to get turned on by her antics. If anything, she’s just going to piss off his alpha because she’s not obeying him. I was not-so-patiently waiting for the moment he snapped at her.

Jang Mi grabbed his hands and put them on her chest. As soon as she let go, he moved his hands away. She huffed and decided to take a different approach. The omega sat on my alpha’s lap and moved her hips in little circles over his cock. She moaned softly for a moment as the smell of slick and arousal leaked from her. No one missed the fact that her scent was the only one that indicated arousal. My life mate just smelled annoyed. It took all of three seconds for Jeonggukie to push her off of his lap.

“Keep your slick to yourself. I don’t want you or your scent on me. I’ll say it in no uncertain terms so that you can understand. I’m not interested in you and I never will be. You are completely
unappealing to me in every way imaginable. I don’t like the way you look, smell, or act. It’s actually a huge issue for me that you even touched me. If I didn’t know I’d break you just by poking you, I would have thrown you halfway across the room the second you got close. Now, I smell like you and it’s pissing my alpha off. Manggae, come here. You need to fix this.”

I walked over to my alpha, pushing Jang Mi out of the way, and straddled him. He immediately buried his nose in my neck and began lightly scenting me. I turned to look at her. “It looks like you were unsuccessful. Such a shame. Unless you want to properly challenge me, which I promise you will lose very badly, I suggest you walk away. Good luck with the next alpha because you obviously couldn’t get mine.”

I ran my nose along Jeonggukie’s face, erasing any lingering touch from the other omega. I didn’t like seeing someone that close to him. I hated the way her smell mixed with his. It was all wrong and my omega was incredibly eager to cover it up with my own scent. I began kissing and nipping at his neck to lay a visible claim to what was mine. After a few moments, my alpha grabbed me by my hair and put his mouth to my ear.

“You will never do something like that again. Do you understand me?”

“I’m sorry, Jeonggukie. I won’t do it again,” I squeaked out through my surprise.

“You want to try that again?” I could tell his alpha was in his dominant mindset, demanding that I cater to his wishes.

“Yes, alpha.”

My omega whimpered and lowered his head in submission and my inner alpha was nowhere to be seen. I didn’t want to anger him further, so I sat still and resisted the urge to bear my neck. As if he could tell what I was thinking, Jeonggukie turned my head to the side and roughly bit my throat. I pursed my lips to try containing the moan that built in the back of my throat.

“Since you’ve woken up the dominant side of me, you’re going to have to deal with the consequences.”

The smell of his arousal hit me when he grabbed my hips and pulled them against his dick. He was hard and my omega wanted nothing more than to present himself for his alpha. I struggled with what to say for a moment. My wolf was practically begging me to tell him to claim us.

“Yes, alpha.”

He stood with me still wrapped around him. As he walked out of the cafeteria, he slammed his shoulder into Jang Mi a little too forcefully to be on accident. It made me happy that he was still trying to show her he wasn’t interested. His lips, teeth, and hands traveled all over me while he walked back to my house. I wrapped my legs around Jeonggukie’s waist and tried not to be too loud. He was making it difficult with the way he left so many marks on me. When we finally arrived, he slammed my back against my front door. He shoved his hand into my pocket to retrieve my keys, grabbing my dick in the process. A high-pitched whine escaped me, surprising me and causing my alpha to chuckle. He unlocked the door and kicked it shut after we got inside. He wasted no time in taking me up the stairs and throwing me on my bed.

“You will never tell another omega to touch me ever again. Do you understand?” My life mate’s voice was low as he ripped the shirt off of my body.

“Yes, alpha.”
I watched as he took his own shirt off. I decided to let him do whatever he needed in order to feel better. He pulled my pants and boxers off in one motion.

“You’re also not going to test me like that ever again. You are my omega and I am your alpha. You are not allowed to tell someone to try to come between us. Do you understand?”

“Yes, alpha.”

He removed his own pants as I responded, and grabbed my jaw. I felt the dull prickle of his claws resting against my face. Jeonggukie ran his tongue over my bottom lip and proceeded to bite it. When I moved to kiss him, he pulled away.

“Get on your hands and knees, omega.”

I slowly turned around and got into position, trying to guess exactly what he was going to do. I tried not to wonder if he was going to claim me. Despite my best efforts, I couldn’t push away the thought as he took the lube from my drawer and poured it over my ass.

“Don’t worry, little omega. I’m not going that far. I told you that your first time would be special and that is a promise I intend to keep.”

My alpha spread the lube between my cheeks and over my thighs, brushing his fingers over my hole as he moved. The touch made me moan. That strange emptiness settled within me again and I wondered if there was a way to make it disappear without being fucked. My omega whimpered at the idea of not being taken by our alpha. I couldn’t stop the noise from escaping my lips. I was so caught up in the feeling of Jeonggukie’s hands running over me that I didn’t notice how close he had gotten. When I felt him push my legs together and plant his knees on either side of mine, my body prepared itself to be mounted. My hips subconsciously moved backward when I felt the tip of his cock slide down the crack of my ass. My life mate stopped right as he got to my entrance and pushed against the rim slightly. I couldn’t stop the broken moan that slipped past my lips.

“Alpha…” I tried to speak but the words caught in my throat.

“I’m here, little omega,” he said quietly, circling the clenching muscle one last time before moving downward.

My omega and I both whimpered when we felt the loss of pressure. I barely registered the hardening of my own dick until I felt Jeonggukie’s rigid cock slide underneath it. He had buried himself in my thighs. The friction against my erection made me moan. He thrust experimentally a few times, slowly pulling his hips back and forth. The touch was foreign but the snap of his pelvis against my ass felt more right than anything else I’ve ever experienced. My body craved this type of contact. The way the tip of his cock dragged under mine gave me just enough to want more. My balls moved back and forth every time he pushed back in, giving me even more unknown stimulation. He seemed so big against me, his dick feeling as though it was pushing my legs apart. The low groans and pants that my life mate released made me wiggle my hips a little to coax more out of him. An unexpected finger against my hole sent a jolt running through me. Small whines and loud moans poured from me as his finger dragged over my entrance.

“Fuck!” was all I could manage to choke out over garbled versions of my alpha’s name.

His thrusts became faster and harsher as he placed his other hand between my shoulders and pinned my chest to the bed. “Don’t move. Do you understand?”

“Y-yes, alpha.” The words were broken by a loud moan because of added pressure against my hole.
He removed the hand from my back and grabbed my waist instead. This allowed him to slam his hips into me faster, causing more friction for both of us. Jeonggukie moved a second finger to my entrance and used them to slightly pull me open. The sensation had me clawing at the sheets. I could feel the expectant fluttering of my muscle, as if it were begging for something more. My alpha wrapped his hand around both of our cocks and began to pump them in time with his thrusts. He maintained the pressure against me, opting to push both fingers against the rim to match the snap of his hips. I felt weak from the overwhelming pleasure. The burning desire that pooled in my gut gave way to the tension that built within me. Everything in my body tensed as I cried out to Jeonggukie. I could barely form the words I wanted to, but a trained ear might be able to hear my alpha’s name, “please”, and “fuck.” As my orgasm unexpectedly crashed upon me, I heard my sheets ripping.

“Gu..ku… alpha…” My body trembled and I struggled to catch my breath as I covered my chest and blanket in cum.

He took his hand away from my ass and used it to steady his thrusts by grabbing my hip. My life mate also released my dick and wrapped his fingers around his own. His movements became more erratic, the tip still caressing the underside of my cock and causing aftershocks of sensitivity. After a dozen or so more pumps, my alpha came onto my cock and the bedding underneath us. He hunched over me and laid his head on my back. I was still panting as his warmth flooded my system. It was more than I could handle and I collapsed right onto the mess of cum.

“Goddess, that’s disgusting,” I chuckled lightly in between breaths.

“Give me a bit and I’ll clean you up.”

A few minutes later, I felt a sudden rush of cold as Jeonggukie moved away and retrieved a wet rag. He moved my body to wipe me off, the warm cloth making me less chilly. He did his best to clean off all of the lube. When he was finished, he gathered the dirty blanket and put it into the wash. He threw my clothes at me after returning to the room.

“I’d love to stay here and take a nap, but we’ve got to get back to school. I’m thinking we’ve only missed half of our next class.”

I sighed and started getting dressed. I knew he was right, but I didn’t want to go back. The thought was ruining the post-orgasm giddiness that I wasn’t used to feeling. He opened the window in my room slightly and we left the house.

“I didn’t want your mom to come home to a ton of sex smell. That’s a huge surprise to anyone who isn’t expecting it,” my alpha laughed as he spoke.

“I’m sure she’ll appreciate that. Although, knowing her, she’d probably be happy because her ‘baby’s finally been claimed’ or some shit.”

“True. Tae just told me that Ranie put our stuff in your locker. We’ll have to grab it on our way in.”

We held hands on our way back to school, smiling about the random “sex” break we took in between classes. It was such a juvenile and irresponsible thing to do, but it somehow felt right. As we walked into the school, Jeonggukie got my attention.

“You called me something that I really liked and I want you to start calling me that from now on.”

“What did I say? I could hardly form coherent thoughts, let alone words. I don’t even think I managed to get your name out completely.”

“You didn’t. You said Guku on accident, but I think it’s really cute. Will you call me Guku,
Manggae?"

It sounded silly and I wanted to deny his request, but the adorable, pleading smile that graced his lips didn’t let me refuse. He looked so sweet and innocent. It was a stark contrast to the subject at hand. He was asking me to call him something I unintentionally screamed out during an orgasm as if it was the most harmless nickname I could have imagined. It was cute though and I liked the way it sounded. Guku and Manggae, the combination made me smile before I could stop myself.

I stood on my toes to give him a kiss on the cheek and giggled at him. “Come on, Guku. We have to get to class.”

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“So, what are we going to do about Jang Mi?” I asked my alpha as we ate breakfast. Nabi was peacefully curled up in my lap, after having to smell me for a couple of minutes to make sure I was who she thought I was.

“Well, we did a little research and she’s apparently that asshole guy’s step-sister. I’m assuming whatever she’s up to has something to do with him. My best guess is that she’s trying to break us up. We won’t really know unless she tells us.”

“A lot of good that did her. She can keep trying, as far as I’m concerned. You’re mine.” I said with a deciding bite of my muffin.

“That’s true, but I’d prefer it if she didn’t. I really can’t stand her and I just wanted to break her hands when she touched me.”

I laughed at the thought. “I wouldn’t have minded, honestly. If you still want to, I give you full permission.”

He shook his head and scratched behind the ears of a black and white kitten that hopped onto the table. “That’s not a good idea. I’m only in the business of breaking alphas if I need to. If she really persists, I’ll leave it to you to fight her. I’m sure you’d love that.”

“You’re not wrong. I’d love the chance to put her in the hospital right next to her brother.”

“You’ll have to control yourself, my violent little omega. We still don’t know what her goal is. I doubt we’ll be able to be friends with her now, but we still have to watch out. I don’t think putting her in the hospital is the best idea.” My life mate said as he watched the kitten walk around the table.

“I guess. I still think it’s a great plan.”

“If she persists, I’ll let you do anything to her that doesn’t land you in jail. How does that sound?”

“Spectacular.”

Guku scooped up the kitten and cradled it in his arms while laughing at my response. I really loved watching those little paws bat at my life mate when it was done with him scratching its belly. I also loved watching Nabi get jealous of the attention the other cat was getting. She stretched and sat on top of Guku’s lap, putting her paw on his arm. I snuck up behind him and stole the kitten, leaving him and Nabi slightly confused. The little kitty meowed at me and I couldn’t help giving it a bunch
of kisses all over its face. That kitten was one of the cutest things I had ever seen in my life. After another hour of cuddling and playing with the cats, my alpha told me it was time to leave.

“We don’t have to be there for another three hours. Why do we have to leave now?”

“First, we have to go buy clothes. Then, I have a project I’m working on with Chae before we all go out.”

“Clothes for what? And what are you working on with Chae?” I grumbled as Guku helped me off the floor and I gave a final kiss to Nabi.

“The clothes are for our date thing. Chae wanted us to wear something in between dressed up and t-shirts. I know for a fact that you only own two shirts that aren’t t-shirts. I wanted to get something to wear too. You’ll see what the project is. It’s a surprise for Ranie.”

“What could you and Chae possibly be doing for Mi Mi?”

“What part of it’s a surprise don’t you get, little omega?” He chuckled

I narrowed my eyes at him. “Fine, dick.”

He laughed at me and pushed me into a clothing store. “Don’t be all pouty. You’ll see soon enough.”

We went to the men’s clothing and found a lot of sweaters and jackets. It was still a little cool outside, but it would warm up a lot in a month or so. Guku picked up a sweater that looks way too small to fit him. It had a v-neck and it was light blue. The knitting design on it was nice, but I didn’t think it was exactly his style. He put it in his hand and moved to another rack. The next sweater he picked up was the same material and design as the first, but it was a teal colored turtleneck. This one was definitely bigger than the other. He pulled me over to the dressing room, handed me the light blue shirt, and forced me inside.

He followed me and changed into the teal sweater. My alpha looked at me expectantly and I begrudgingly put on what he gave me. It fit but it was a lot tighter than what I’m used to. It hugged my body, yet it was still sort of loose. It made me look small because it outlined my frame instead of hiding it like my other shirts. When my alpha stood behind me, I saw the size difference between the two of us. He made me seem tiny in comparison. The sweaters looked enough alike to seem like we were trying to match and that made my omega very happy. Our alpha was claiming us with clothing. Guku changed back into his clothes and told me to wait in the dressing room. He returned with three pairs of pants and two boxes of shoes.

“I didn’t know your size for either, so I grabbed a couple of options. The jeans aren’t supposed to fit like sweatpants. Don’t complain when your ass is visible.”

I sighed and started trying on what he brought. “You’re so very lucky that I like you. You know I don’t like showing off. I don’t want anyone to get any ideas.”

“If anyone gives you a second glance, I’ll break their face. You’re not showing off for anyone but me. You dressing like this is for my benefit only. I love the way you look in whatever you’re wearing, but sometimes it’s nice to see you like this.” My alpha gave me a sweet kiss after I had buttoned up the pants that he determined fit the best. I didn’t miss the shameless way he stared at my ass before looking at me in the mirror.

I put on the shoes and stared at myself. The light blue of the sweater was really bright against my skin and black hair. The dark blue jeans were tight and the black Timberlands pulled it all together. It was vastly different than anything else I’ve ever worn, but it looked nice. I replayed Guku’s words
and I couldn’t stop myself from smiling. I could show off for my alpha. That was okay with me. I
turned towards him and wrapped my arms around his neck. I didn’t know why the thought of having
my life mate like the way I look made me happy, but it did. He gave me a quick peck on the lips and
told me to get changed. When we exited the dressing room, he put back the clothes that didn’t fit and
grabbed himself matching jeans and shoes. He bought everything and we made our way back to the
bus stop.

“Why do you always pay for everything?”

“I didn’t pay for the date that you planned. But, to answer your question, I like buying stuff for you.
I’ve been told it’s an alpha thing. I can stop if you want.”

“If it makes your alpha happy, then I’m okay with it. It’s just weird for me.”

He nodded as we boarded the bus. “I’m taking you to Ranie’s house. Make sure she looks pretty.
I’m going to trust that the two of you can make it to the restaurant by yourselves. That’s going to
drive me crazy, but it will be okay. I’m needed at the house to help Chae.”

“This surprise better be worth all the curiosity you’re giving me right now. If not, I’m gonna be so
mad at you.”

“Oh, really?” Guku said with a chuckle and an eyebrow raise. “What are you going to do about it?”

I thought for a moment and wondered what I could do to him. I can’t beat him up. I can’t even
threaten him in a way he would take seriously. The only thing I ever do to that affects him is give
him affection. Wait. I can withhold kisses and snuggles. “I won’t give you kisses for a whole day.”

My alpha paused for a moment and looked slightly shocked by the comment. He looked as though
he never would have thought of that as a punishment. “That’s just mean,” he said after a few
moments of silence.

“Don’t disappoint me and you won’t have to suffer.” He laughed at my fake haughty attitude and
better-than-you face.

“Two can play at that game, little omega. You’re not the only one who can make threats like that.”

I was going to respond, but the bus arrived at our stop and Guku pulled me out of my seat. “Lucky
for you, I’m not as mean as you are.” He wrapped his arms around me and walked behind me the
whole way to Mi Mi’s house. I enjoyed how well he fit against me and how natural it felt for us to
walk together in a back hug.

“Be at the restaurant in two hours. Don’t be late because I will lose my shit and panic that you’ve
been kidnapped or something equally as stupid. Make sure you both look nice. I’ll see you soon,
Manggae. I’m excited about this and not just because Ranie is probably going to freak out.”

I turned to him and pulled him into a kiss. When he grabbed my waist, I bit his bottom lip. Guku
pulled away and I pouted. He’s always stopping our kisses right as they get interesting. He grazed
my lip with his teeth and gave me another peck.

“I’ve really gotta go. I’m sorry, little omega. I’ve gotta run a couple of errands for Chae before I get
back to the house and that’s gonna take a little bit. I don’t know shit about makeup, but I’ve been
sent to grab some.”

“How is this for Mi Mi?”
“Just trust me, Manggae. I’ve gotta go. I’m gonna have to run now. I’ll see you soon!” My life mate took off before I could say anything else.

The next two hours consisted of me helping Mi Mi pick out her clothes, which I know nothing about. I know she’s a pretty girl, but I don’t really know what clothes look better than others. Eventually, we decided on a fitted purple long-sleeved shirt tucked into a pleated black skirt. She put on some tights and boots with it. I couldn’t deny how adorable she looked. Mi Mi put a bunch of random powders on her face—most of which I know she’s told me the names of and I’ve forgotten—and she looked somehow cuter than before. She put on bubblegum pink lipstick and a little black beret to finish the look. Then, she insisted that I let her do my makeup. I wasn’t thrilled about it, but I wanted her to be happy. She put subtle amounts of grey stuff on my eyes and a little bit of eyeliner. Then, she put a little bit of pink on my lips. I was glad she stopped there. If she had tried to cover me in all of that mess, I might have freaked out. Just this much is weird enough. She styled my hair away from my face and parted it again. I looked good, but it was really strange to me. We left with enough time to get there a little early. Part of me wanted to tell her that there was going to be a surprise, but I knew better. When we got there, everyone except Guku, Chae, and Chi were waiting.

It was odd seeing everyone in something a little dressier than normal. Tae looked particularly nice in a striped button-up and some fairly heavy eye makeup. I assumed that’s because the cute little omega he was locking hands with was dressed exactly the same. Dae and Tae were being all flirty as they waited for the others to arrive. Jin and Joon were both wearing turtleneck sweaters, Jin’s was a cream color and Joon’s was black. Their hair was styled similarly and it made me happy to see how excited they were for the date. Seok’s hair was brown now and he was wearing a t-shirt with a button-up over it. Yungie was wearing an oversized sweater that completely covered his hands. Seok kept cooing over how little he looked in his clothes. Yunie was wearing a black sweater with a black overcoat and thick-rimmed glasses. Just as Mi Mi was starting to get annoyed about how long the others were taking, I saw Guku walking with two girls. He looked really good in his teal turtleneck and it made my omega happy that we were matching. His hair was wavy again and styled to the side, just like it was on our first date. The butterflies started swirling so much that they made my heart skip a beat. Chae wore a flowy black dress that was tied at the waist and her blond hair was hanging over her shoulders, slightly curly at the ends. Her makeup was more pronounced than the last time I saw her, but it wasn’t overkill.

I didn’t recognize the other girl until she got closer. It was Chi, but she didn’t look like herself. She was wearing a long-sleeved navy blue dress with a white collar and white around the bottom of it. It even had little white cuffs and buttons to match. Her hair was pulled back into a curly ponytail, but a little bit of it was hanging to frame her face. She had on really pretty eye makeup and bright red lipstick. She was swaying her hips and her heels clicked on the sidewalk. This must be the surprise Guku was working on. I looked at Mi Mi and could tell that it definitely caught her off guard. I don’t think any of us knew Chi looked like this underneath her baggy blazer and hair hanging in her face. Well, I guess my alpha and Chae did. When the three of them joined us, Mi Mi’s eyes scanned all over the other omega. I didn’t miss the long stare aimed at the little bit of cleavage that Chi was showing.

“Sorry we’re late,” Guku said with a small wave. “I had a hard time finding the best red for Chi’s skin tone. Side note, I’m never going to a makeup store again.”

“I guess it’s a little reassuring there’s something you’re not perfect at,” I responded with a smile.

Guku looked at me and he blinked a few times, unsure of how to process the makeup. “How did Mi Mi manage to make you even prettier?” He gave me a quick peck. My omega preened himself at the compliment. Our alpha thinks we’re pretty.
“Now, you’ve got pink on your lips too.” I giggled when he moved his lips together to spread the color around.

“How does it look?”

“It’s great. It matches your sweater.” I laughed.

He flashed a beautiful smile and I could feel my eyes disappear as a response. “Good. Now, we’re dressed alike even more.”

We both watched Mi Mi continue to stare at Chi for another minute. It was almost painful how awkward she looked with an open mouth and huge eyes. She had no idea how to deal with what she was looking at. No one else commented on the transformation because they were content to let my life mate enjoy the moment.

“You’re fucking gorgeous,” I heard Mi Mi say with an exhale. Something told me she didn’t actually mean to say that out loud.

Chi giggled and linked her arm in Mi Mi’s. “Thanks! This is actually how I used to dress until I hit puberty. My brother wouldn’t let me dress up anymore after that. He already knows I have issues with alphas and he thought this would just attract attention.”

“Well, he’s not wrong. You’re stunning. There’s no way you wouldn’t get someone’s attention.”

“Does that mean I got yours?” Chi said with a sassy head tilt.

Mi Mi’s eyes went wide and she nodded. I could tell she didn’t know what to say. I was impressed with Chi’s new confidence and Chae’s handiwork. The shy little omega who didn’t talk much was nowhere to be found. This beautiful girl in front of us was a flirty princess who managed to shock my life mate into silence. It’s not easy to shut Mi Mi up, I would know. Somehow, Chi managed to do it with a wink and six words. The group walked inside with everyone split into their respective couples. I looked around and saw small tables with grills on them. It was a barbecue place, but the tables were way too small for all of us. When I saw a group of six, I understood. The tables are for each individual couple, but they put them in a circle to accommodate however many people are in the group. So, it’s a group date and individual. Each couple grills their own meat and has their own little area, but they can interact with the others whenever they want. It was a weird concept, but it was interesting.

“This place is cool, Chae!” Dae and Tae called out at the same time. They laughed and nuzzled each other’s noses. I was glad they were getting closer to each other.

The staff pushed six tables together into a circle and we all took our seats. It was nice to spend some time with everyone outside of school. While we had monthly movie nights and I hung out at the pack’s house frequently, it was rare that all of us were together like this. We were usually missing at least a couple of the omegas or Jin and Yunie were at school. I watched the couples interact after we ordered our food. Dae and Tae were facing each other and talking animatedly. Seok and Yungie were having a quiet conversation, probably trying to get to know each other. Jin and Joon were looking at everyone too and cuddling up to each other. Chae had her head on Yunie’s shoulder and he had his head on hers. They were talking a little, but not much. Mi Mi’s and Chi’s table was by far the most entertaining to me. Chi was talking to Mi Mi and my life mate could barely manage to stutter out her responses. I’ve never seen her flustered and I swore I’d never let her live this down.

“You think she’s enjoying her surprise?” Guku asked as he pulled my legs into his lap. I loved the ease of the closeness we had. It’s become second nature to sit in his lap or be attached to him in some
“She’s panicking and it’s hilarious. She wanted a girlfriend. She even had a whole list of what she wanted. The second it’s in front of her, she doesn’t know what to do. How long have you known that Chi was Mi Mi’s dream girl?”

“I could tell something was up with her when I started talking to her that day at lunch, so I gave her my number. We started talking and I found out she’s had a crush on Ranie for over a year. I enlisted Chae’s help in making Chi more confident. We’ve been working with her for a month. Chae set this whole thing up to force them to spend time together after we thought Chi was ready. The last thing I had to do was pick up Chi’s dress and makeup today. Chi’s brother threw out all of her cute clothes and Chae’s lipstick apparently didn’t look right on her. I thought it was fine, but they both threw a fit when I said that—something about stupid alphas who don’t know highlighter from concealer. They’re right. I don’t know what either one of those things are. I will say, watching them put everything on made me very happy it doesn’t take you six years to get ready to so somewhere. Makeup is cool. It’s just not my thing. I’d actually have to try to learn about it if you were into it. That way I could help you with your makeup. I’m still glad you don’t really care for it. There are too damn many creams and powders. Chae has this huge case with all of her stuff in it. I swear the thing is bigger than she is.” He laughed as he moved his hands to demonstrate how big Chae’s box was.

I just stared at him for a moment before I could think of what to say. He never ceases to amaze me. I leaned up and kissed him a little more forcefully than I meant to. For some reason, that seemed like the appropriate outlet for my emotions. It was becoming my regular response for any surge of positive emotions that he caused and I couldn’t respond to with words. I hoped he understood. He smiled and broke away, saying something about how we shouldn’t make out in public. I pouted a little, but he just chuckled and gave me a peck.

“Is that why you didn’t want to tell Dae and Chi about us looking for an omega for Mi Mi?”

“Yeah. I actually hadn’t told the pack about you guys wanting to find an omega for Ranie yet because I already knew who her omega was. Call it a weird hunch, but I think Chi is Ranie’s mate.”

“I trust your instincts, Guku. You’ve never been wrong.”

“I like that nickname. It’s cute.”

“Who would have thought that the world’s strongest, most dominant alpha likes to be called cute names?” I teased with a smile.

“Everyone likes to be called cute names. Why do you think your omega gets all excited when I call you Manggae? I’d venture to say that you enjoy it too, don’t you, little omega?” He nuzzled behind my ear and my wolf begged me to bear my neck.

Our moment was interrupted by the arrival of our food. I tried not to think about how frustrated I was getting by continuously being stopped from having makeout sessions with my alpha. It was too much for me, especially when I had never been horny before a month ago. I watched Jin and Joon take turns getting their food ready while Chae cooked for Yunie. Tae and Dae were playing around with the vegetables. Chi fed a few pieces of meat to Mi Mi as soon as they were finished and I’m pretty sure I saw my life mate blush. Seok cooked Yungie’s meat and Yungie cooked Seok’s. Guku taught me how to tell when the meat was done and not burn myself while cooking it. After we were done eating, we sat for a while and spent time with our dates. I curled into my alpha’s lap and he wrapped his arms around me. It puzzled me how the rest of the world melted away when he was around. Even now, when I know that there are 10 other people around me, it feels like it’s just us. I nuzzled my face in his neck and laid my head on his shoulder.
“This sweater is soft. It looks good on you too. I know I didn’t say that earlier, but it does. You look nice today, Guku.”

“If my omega can show off for me, I figure I can return the favor,” he said with a kiss to the top of my head.

I smiled and kissed him on the cheek. “I like doing couple things with you. My omega is super happy that we’re matching.”

“My alpha and I like it too.”

My omega and I were happy in this moment, glad to be cuddled up to our alpha. It was innately pleasing on a level that I couldn’t quite explain. My phone vibrated and I checked the message.

Mom

You probably forgot because I told you a few months ago, but I’ve got an anesthesiology convention the week after next in Japan. It starts next Friday, so I’m leaving that Thursday night. I won’t be back until the following Tuesday

Me

I’m glad you reminded me. I totally forgot

Mom

I want Jeong Guk to stay at the house with you

Me

I’ll probably just go over to the pack’s house so he doesn’t have to uproot

Mom

No, he’s coming to our house and that’s final

Me

Why?

Mom
You two will be more comfortable there

Me

I’m comfortable at the pack’s house

Mom

I swear to the goddess I will ground you if you’re still a virgin when I come home. Do you want to have sex at the pack’s house with all of them there?

Me

Ok, mom. Guku will stay at our house from Thursday until Tuesday

Mom

Good. I’ll go shopping to make sure there’s food in there

Me

I love you, even though you’re crazy

Mom

How am I crazy?

Me

You literally just threatened me if I didn’t have sex

Mom

I’m doing you a favor. Now you have plenty of time to have your special moment

Me

I’m on a date, mom. We’ll talk about this later
“Guku, look at this.” I handed him my phone. As he read, his arm tightened around me.

“I guess we need to talk about everything, then,” he responded in a quiet voice.

“What do you mean?” My tone was equally as low. This was a sensitive subject and I didn’t want everyone to hear us.

“Communication is the most important thing about sex, Manggae. You’re a virgin and I might as well be one, so we need to talk about preparation, what’s okay, and what’s not.”

I let out an uncomfortable laugh. “I honestly thought it was kinda like building furniture. Peg A goes into Slot B and you’re done.”

“There’s more to it than that if you want to do it properly. I don’t want to hurt you any more than is completely necessary.”

I figured that having sex for the first time would probably be painful, but hearing it confirmed worried me for some reason. “I have high pain tolerance, but how much pain are we talking?”

“I don’t know.”

“That’s helpful.” I playfully scoffed at him.

“Sorry that I’ve never had a dick up my ass,” he replied with an eye roll.

“How about I fuck you first and you tell me how much it hurt? That way I’ll be prepared.” I couldn’t help laughing at my suggestion.

Guku nibbled on my neck possessively and I could hear the growl that caught in the back of his throat. I knew his alpha wouldn’t go for that. “Even if my alpha would let me accept your offer, there’s a slight flaw in your logic.”

“What’s that?” I tilted my head to give him more access but not enough to make him think I was submitting.

“We’re different sizes.”

It took me a second to realize what he meant. Of course, he’s bigger than me. “Fucking alpha genetics.”

He chuckled at me and pulled my ear lobe with his teeth. I’ve never seen his dick before. I don’t really have a good frame of reference for the size. It made me wonder what it actually looked like.
Everything we've done so far has involved Guku being behind me. “Unfortunately for you, you’re dealing with HADD alpha genetics. Whatever you know about my muscle mass and body build also translates to the rest of me. That’s why we need to figure some things out. It’s not really going to work if I just try to use a couple of fingers to prep you. Even if you made slick, it wouldn’t be easy.”

“Keep biting my damn neck and we’re going back to your house,” I threatened when he started sucking marks behind my ear. The topic change served two purposes. First, it eased my nerves. Second, it let my alpha know I was getting horny.

“Maybe that’s for the best. I’ve gotta start getting you ready. You also need to learn about cleaning yourself.”

“Cleaning?”

“Yeah. Usually, it’s not a problem for omegas. Slick cleans you so you don’t have to do it. You’re not that lucky. I also need to figure out the best way to ease you into being prepped.”

“There’s a lot to this, huh?”

“Yeah. I’ve done a ton of research to make sure I don’t do anything wrong. I was actually going to suggest we talk about it soon. Your mom’s conference just sped up the process a little. Don’t worry, little omega. Everything will be all right.”

He responded to the slight alteration in my scent with a kiss. I let my concerns go as quickly as they came, knowing that he would take care of me. No matter what it is, Guku is going to make sure that I’m okay. I could tell from the way that he wanted to start almost two weeks early to ready me for intercourse that he was dedicated to keeping me as safe as possible. Even if there was more to sex than just the fucking, I was excited to experience it with my alpha. I’ve been getting increasingly horny lately and I’ve been wanting to do more things with him. It made me think of how it felt to have him thrusting into my thighs. I loved the sensation. I wanted to feel it again. I wanted to feel every bit of stimulation that my life mate could give me. My omega was especially eager to feel something inside of me, anything that would quell that obnoxious empty feeling that became pronounced anytime I started to be aroused. Just that small bit of pressure against my rim from yesterday was enough to have me reeling. I can’t imagine what it’s going to feel like with my alpha’s fingers or cock inside me. A harsh bite to my throat and a hand over my mouth to block my moan was all it took for me to slide off of Guku’s lap and pull him out of the restaurant. We might as well start our preparations now.

Chapter End Notes

So, this chapter was a lot. I didn't intend for Ji Min to fight with Jang Mi like that, but it happened. Also, Jeong Guk got a new nickname! I've been waiting to give him this name for like 7 months. Guku is a stylization of Kookoo, just like Jungkook is a stylization of Jeong Guk. Here is a link to real-life Jeong Guk calling himself that if you've never seen it: Guku

Mi Ran finally found her omega! I know you've all been waiting for it. Ji Ae has been there the whole time. In fact, she was in the first chapter. I hope you enjoyed Mi Mi being a flustered mess. Also, it will be Ji Min and Jeong Guk's first time soon! Are you excited? Thank you all for reading! Please tell me what you think.
Hello again, everyone! Be sure to set aside some time to read this chapter because it is 20k words and a lot happens in it. I put a link to a video in the chapter in case you wanted to see what I was talking about. It's not necessary to watch the video. It's really just there for visual aid.

TW: Mentions of attempted rape, mild Love Stage!! spoilers (but the plot was changed from gender to rank), and blood during sex (not from serious injury or anything bad)

**Note on alpha penis size: Alphas are bigger than humans and Jeong Guk is bigger than an average alpha. Please keep that in mind when you read the chapter. It may seem silly that I have to write this, but I don't want anyone to freak out about it.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Six hours, one very awkward trip to a sex shop, five articles on anal sex, six videos on how to clean myself, seventeen makeout sessions, and half of a bottle of lube after we left the group date, Guku managed to stick two fingers halfway inside me. We both agreed that starting the preparations as soon as possible was the best idea. So far, it has hurt and felt really odd. I don’t know if uncomfortable is the right word because my omega absolutely adored the feeling of our alpha being inside of us in any form. I, on the other hand, don’t like it at all. It just felt weird and painful if I breathed deeply or moved too much. If this is what sex is like, I don’t see the appeal. Throughout this process, I’ve had to remind myself to keep going to prepare for my cycle. No matter how bad it feels now, I’m going to want this during my heat. I could be seriously injured if I’m not ready for it by then. My alpha pressed his fingers slightly farther into me and encouraged me to exhale. According to all of our research, relaxation and breathing—coupled with a fuck ton of lube—were the most important parts of getting ready for anal sex. I counted backward from ten and willed myself to unclench my muscles.

“How are you feeling, Manggae?” Guku’s voice was worried and regretful.

“I’ve been better. It’s not excruciating, but it doesn’t feel good either. It’s just weird and hurts. It burns a little and the stretch is painful. It’s hard to explain. My omega likes it, but he’s supposed to. I’d say you were doing it totally wrong if he didn’t want it.” I laughed, trying to convince myself this wasn’t as bad as it seemed.

My life mate tried to chuckle, although I could tell this was just as foreign and odd for him. He seemed upset about having to do this when he knew I wasn’t enjoying it. After the next push, my muscles tensed and I couldn’t get them to stop. Guku tried to push a bit more, hoping they would loosen with a little more movement. They just tightened further as a result. He froze and thought about the best way to proceed after he realized I wasn't going to be able to relax.

“I’m going to do something that should help, but it might be a little weird. Just trust me, okay?”

“If I didn’t, do you think you’d have two fingers in my ass right now?” I rolled my eyes at his comment, but hoped my tone didn't come off as too angry. I wasn't upset per se, just really uncomfortable and mildly anxious.
He laughed and nodded in acknowledgment. I was glad he didn't seem affected by my attitude. “Good point. Are you comfortable? You need any more pillows or anything?”

“I'm as good as I can be in this situation.” I propped myself up on my arm to see him sitting between my legs. It made the pain worse, so I decided to lay back down.

This whole ordeal was inconvenient and unpleasant, but the closeness it provided was actually nice. Even though I enjoyed the development of intimacy, I really hated having to go through all of this. If we were both normal people, we wouldn't have to prepare. There wouldn't be an embarrassing and compromising build up to sex if I made slick and Guku didn't have a huge dick. I guess that's the joy of being a genetic freak from Busan. My alpha shifted his weight to move closer to me, drawing me away from my thoughts. He nuzzled against my knee, which was bent to allow more comfortable access. He started kissing up the inside of my leg and left small marks and bites. The motions were calming until he got to my upper thigh. Something about the kisses there made me feel flushed. My life mate could feel the slight tensing of my muscles when he bit my hip. Instinctively, I moved towards him. My body had gotten used to stimulation enough to seek it out when something was close to an erogenous zone. Guku kept trailing kisses all over my pelvis and I was starting to get a little flustered. His hair brushed against my dick and it made me want him to do a lot more than give me kisses.

I understand what a blow job is and that it's supposed to feel good, but the first touch of my alpha's tongue to my cock confused me. It caught me off guard. I honestly thought he was just going to kiss and bite at my hips until I calmed down. It wasn't until the third or fourth lick that it started to feel like anything. I assumed that was due to a combination of surprise and the fact that this whole fingering situation eliminated any arousal I felt earlier. As an omega, I'm supposed to want something in me more than I want penile stimulation. I tried not to dwell on the thought that it's been the exact opposite so far. Everything finally started to feel good when my alpha wrapped his lips around the tip of my semi-hard dick. After the first bit of suction, Guku applied, my body relaxed. It was smart of him to use this as a way to get my muscles to release. Although I knew he had never done this before, he seemed comfortable with the act. He moved his tongue up and down my shaft, sucking hard over the head. It took just a few minutes for me to be fully erect. With how fast and hard he was going, it took only a little while longer for me to feel the coiling in my stomach that indicated I was about to come.

“Guku... Guk... stop. I'm gonna...”

He wasn't deterred by my warning and kept going until I came in his mouth. He kept sucking until my cock stopped jumping. I heard a gulp and he looked up at me while wiping his mouth.

“Did you just swallow that?” He nodded in response.

“Why?”

“Instinct I guess,” he said with a shrug.

“How did it taste?”

“Absolutely disgusting. Honestly, I almost threw up. My alpha kind of liked it though. As weird as it sounds, I think I could get used to it. It’s hard to explain.”

“You're gross. You should brush your teeth and eat a pack of mints or something.”

“I will once I put your plug in.”
“How? You haven’t even gotten two fingers all the way in yet.”

Guku wiggled his fingers slightly and I could tell that there was more in me than before he made me come. “The blow job was a distraction to open you enough for the plug. I’ve got three fingers completely in you.”

“I guess that works,” I responded with a shrug. I really didn’t know what else to say.

My alpha removed one finger from me and inserted a syringe/plunger thing, although he called it an applicator. He said it was to put lube directly inside of me. I watched him oil up the plug and position it between my legs. He gently pulled his fingers from me and inserted the silicone toy. The plan was for me to gradually work up to being able to take something as large as Guku’s dick. I was going to be wearing a plug almost 24/7 for the next week and a half to stretch myself. We’re planning on increasing the size of the plug every few days.

“I’m not looking forward to wearing this at school,” I said after my life mate had returned from brushing his teeth.

“I know and I’m sorry that you have to. If we had more time, I’d let you wear it for a little bit and then take it out. Unfortunately, we have to do it this way to make sure I don’t hurt you.”

I nodded, knowing that this really was the only option to safely have sex. “I’ll live. If I can beat the shit out of alphas, I can deal with a plug in my ass—even if I’m not happy about it. I just hope it starts to feel good eventually.”

“It will. I’ll find a way to make sure you enjoy it. We won’t have sex if I can’t.”

The next day at school was hell. My ass stung and every small movement I made jolted the plug inside of me. A few people asked me if I was all right during classes, including Mi Mi. I hadn’t told her about the plan yet because I wasn’t sure how she would respond. We never talked about sex. I didn’t really know how to start now. Not including that issue, I had a variety of complaints during the first half of the day. Because I couldn’t find a comfortable position to sit in, I spent the majority of my classes standing. At times, the burn was so painful that I wanted to take the stupid thing out. It wasn’t pleasant at all, but I kept reminding myself that it will get better. Guku said he’d make it better. I also wasn’t allowed to touch the plug. My alpha made me promise that he’d be the only one to mess with it, even if I had to call him in the middle of class to take it out. He said something about his wolf wanting to be the only person who touched me in that way. I thought it was a little silly that I couldn’t do it myself, but I complied. If it makes his wolf happy, I’ll do my best to go with it. As I made my way to the cafeteria, I wondered if my alpha had told anyone. Would the pack be able to notice?

“You don’t have to sit on me today, Manggae,” my life mate whispered when I moved to take my usual spot.

“Even if it’s not by much, you’re softer than the chair.” I tried to chuckle to release my own tension, but it didn’t work very well. “Did you tell anyone?”

“Of course not. Our business is our business unless we decide to let them know. The only thing they’re aware of is that I’m going to claim you before your heat. I didn’t give any details.”

“Thank you. All of this sex stuff is weird enough for me. I don’t know how I feel about anyone else knowing.” I gave him a kiss on the cheek to show my gratitude.

The rest of our group slowly joined us at the table and I took my lunch from my backpack. I rolled
my eyes when an unwelcome scent wafted through the lunchroom—roses and cocoa. I’m really not in the mood to deal with her shit right now. I don’t think I ever would be, but especially not with my current condition. She cautiously sat next to Chi and Dae, watching Guku and me. I tried to continue eating and talking with everyone normally, but Jang Mi was lurking in the back of my mind. Even the sweet kisses and soft touches my life mate gave me weren’t able to make me forget about her completely. After 15 minutes of her blank looks, I decided I couldn’t take it anymore.

“What the fuck do you want? I thought I had already made it clear that no one wants you here. Your presence is an even bigger pain in my ass than the other stuff I’ve got going on right now. I didn’t think that was possible. Why are you still hanging around and staring? Is your face stuck that way? Do I need to fix it for you? I’m done with your shit. Speak, bitch, or I will end you.” I got up and stood next to her chair to show her I wasn’t having it today. If she thought I was bad on Saturday, she definitely won’t like what I was about to do to her.

“Look,” Jang Mi said as she stood in front of me. “You don’t like me and I respect that. I know you’re probably intimidated by how pretty and rich I am, but you don’t have to be an ass. I really just came here to take your alpha, but you’ve managed to train him well. He even controlled his scent when I was on him. Since you’ve decided to be so aggressive in your objections of me being here, I’ve decided to observe your skinship and dynamics. I just want to see what makes him so loyal and obedient. I’m sure the easy access you’ve given him doesn’t hurt, but it has to be more than that.”

I pushed the omega back into the chair and hunched over her, locking her in place with my arms on either side of her body. Something in my brain snapped when I stared down at the smug look on her face. I could barely keep my omega at bay. “I don’t think I can express this to you enough—you aren’t worth the time and effort that I’m putting into not breaking your neck. First off, the silicone plug in my ass is prettier than you. Second, your family isn’t shit. You say you own half the city, but that can’t be true when Jin’s family owns a solid 60% of it. His family has stocks in, are the owners of, or are important executives at Samsung, LG, SK Group, Kia, and Hyundai—not to mention their own personal ventures in the medical and entertainment sectors. Your family owns one business that barely manages to support the 2,000 employees who work there. The Kwons, who are only your family by marriage, own two businesses. One of those companies is in danger of going bankrupt and being bought out by Jin’s family, of all people. Why do you seem surprised? You thought I didn’t know how to fact check? I don’t know where you got this pampered princess act from, but it isn’t cute. You’re not that damn pretty and you sure as hell aren’t rich. Maybe you were 10 years ago, when your family hadn’t run their business into the ground, but not now.

“Also, how dare you have the audacity to say ‘I just came here to steal your alpha’? That may be a game wherever you’re from, but I take that shit seriously. If you want him so badly, challenge me for him. I don’t even know why you’re trying to take him when you don’t even appreciate how amazing he is. You only want him because he’s good-looking. He’s so much more than that. He isn’t trained or obedient, but he is definitely loyal. I didn’t force him to reject you. He did that on his own. If he told me right now that he wanted you instead of me, I wouldn’t be able to stop him. Guku is the strongest alpha in the world, both mentally and physically. He can’t be tamed. He truly doesn’t want you. I know that might be hard for you to understand but this wonderful, magnificent, hot ass alpha is completely uninterested in you. Which is actually pretty funny considering I’m a virgin and you probably wouldn’t hesitate in presenting yourself for him on the spot. Yep, you heard right. He and I haven’t had sex. He spent his rut with me and I helped him through it, but he’s respectful enough to not push me into doing something I’m not ready for. That’s actually why I’m wearing the plug I mentioned before. See, this alpha you’ve been thirsting after happens to have a really big dick. Since I was completely untouched before meeting him, I’m having to work up to it. I’m telling you this to illustrate the fact that this so-called ‘easy access’ you talked about isn’t why Guku likes me.

“It’s also to make you feel bad for having probably slept with half of your last school, but I won’t
directly call you a whore. That’s offensive and I try to be a nice guy. I guess what I’m really trying to say is that Jeon Jeong Guk is mine, I’m the only one who’s going to be seeing or touching his cock, and you can challenge me if you don’t like it—if you think you’re omega enough to handle me. If not, I’d appreciate it if you just stepped the fuck off. I’ve got bigger problems to worry about, like the fact that I can’t fucking sit down without hurting. Honestly, me having a hangnail would be more important than dealing with you. I can’t stress enough how insignificant you are. This is the last time I’m having any conversation with you. If I see or hear from you again, I’m coming for your throat. And, in case you’re wondering, there’s only one person in this school who is strong enough to stop me. Ask your fucking brother where he got that scar from.”

Her eyes got wide with fear and recognition. “Yeah, that was me. The only person here who could prevent me from breaking every bone in your dainty little body is my alpha. He’s powerful enough to hold me back. Guku also happens to be the one who put your brother in the hospital and almost killed him because he tried to claim me. This guy not only hates your family, but you’ve already pissed him off. You didn’t listen to him the other day when he said to leave him alone. I don’t really think he’s going to have much sympathy for you.”

“I definitely wouldn’t stop you, little omega. If anything, I’d keep other people from breaking up the fight until you felt like you’ve done enough damage. The only reason I’d pull you away is if you were going to kill her. I like you too much to see you go to jail over someone who isn’t worth it.” My alpha’s voice was deep and it was obvious he meant every word he said.

Everyone at the table, including Jang Mi, was staring at me intently. I hadn’t realized my scent was overpowering and my nose was almost pressed into hers. I felt Guku pull me backward and hug me tightly. It was very comforting to have his arms around me after I got so worked up. I don’t know what it is about Jang Mi that drives me crazy, but I can’t stand her. Everything about her puts me on edge.

“I recommend you leave before I decide that you’re ignoring my omega’s generosity,” my life mate said after she remained standing there. “He said he’d give you one last chance before he hurt you. I wouldn’t take that lightly. Manggae’s favorite pastime is beating up alphas. He wasn’t joking or exaggerating when he said that I’m the only one who can stop him. He’s way stronger than you might think, even though he always says I’m the powerful one. If I’m the strongest person in the world, then he’s a close second.”

In stark contrast to his harsh tone, Guku left a few quick kisses on my neck and nuzzled his nose behind my ear. It made me giggle and try to push his face away, even though I didn’t want him to stop. I looked up to see Jang Mi still staring at us, but it her face was different somehow. Her eyes were glossy and she didn’t have the arrogant smirk painted on her lips. I instantly wondered if watching our affectionate moments hurt her in some way. I didn’t really think she had the capacity to feel pain, but I guess I could be wrong. I opted to test it. I kissed my alpha’s cheek and the tip of his nose. He moved to put his hand on my face and tilted my head up. I lost myself in the warmth of his lips against mine and I no longer cared that there was an audience. He squeezed me tightly and the plug inside me shifted. I squeaked and pulled away.

“You okay, Manggae?”

“You made the plug move.”

“Sorry,” he said, offering little cheek kisses as an apology.

“Why did I agree to this again?”

“Because your heat will be a bitch if we don’t prep you first.”
“Right. You’re lucky that I like you enough for this.” I rolled my eyes in mock frustration.

“I am.” He trailed more kisses and bites down my throat.

“You’re literally the only person in the world I’d even let touch me like this.”

“I know.”

“This shit sucks,” I said trying to get into a more comfortable position. The last shift of my weight pushed the plug back into place. “If you weren’t my life mate, my cycle partner, and my alpha, I’d kick your ass for putting me through this.”

He chuckled and nipped at my shoulder playfully. “I’m sure you would, Manggae.” I was grateful that he decided to ignore the obvious flaw in my threat.

When I heard a sudden noise, I looked up to see tears in Jang Mi’s eyes. She was trying to hold in her sobs as she watched Guku and me. This bitch honestly doesn’t make any sense. In an effort to be a decent human, I figured I should ask her about it.

“Why are you crying?”

She didn’t answer my question at first. It looked almost like she couldn’t. After a minute, she collected herself and patted the tears away. I could tell she was trying to do minimal damage to her makeup. “Jae Seok’s been obsessed with you for years and I couldn’t ever figure out why. Even looking at you and Jeong Guk, I’m not sure I understand the appeal. But, somehow, you’ve managed to catch the attention of the only two guys I’ve ever liked.”

“You like your brother?”

“Our parents got married after I started liking him. We all went to school together as pups, but I moved away when my dad died. You and I didn’t have classes together, so you probably don’t remember me. I always had a crush on him and it just got worse over the years. We hung out all the time outside of school. A year ago, our parents started dating, and they got married three months later. They can’t mate, but they love each other. When they made their relationship official, I knew I had to let Jae go. It hasn’t been very easy. He was put into the hospital and asked me to come here to break you guys up. After that didn’t work out, he wanted me to figure out what I could about the two of you. I don’t really know what he was planning to do with the information. I transferred here last week and my omega developed an instant attachment to Jeong Guk when I first saw him.”

“You may be a bitch, but I don’t wish being in love with Kwon Jae Seok on my worst enemy. Technically, he is my worst enemy but that’s not the point. He’s a piece of shit. He’s the reason I fight alphas in the first place. He tried to rape Dae two years ago and he’s been getting alphas to attack omegas ever since. I don’t like you. I think you’re a horrible bitch, but I hope you get over that asshole guy soon. As for Guku, he’s mine. Your omega might like him, but my omega only came out for him. I wouldn’t even have one if it wasn’t for his alpha. I actually really pity you for caring about asshole guy. You must really love him to change schools in the middle of the year and know absolutely no one. If you think you can manage to stop being a bitch, I’ll tentatively let you hang around us. However, I want you to know I meant what I said about you causing trouble. If you can’t stop being a pain, I’ll hurt you. I’m not usually such a nice person, but I just really think it’s sad that you’re in love with Jae Seok. I don’t want you to mistake my kindness for weakness. If you start shit again, you’ll be spending time in the hospital with your brother.”

The pack was quiet and surprised that I would be nice to her after everything that happened. I was too, but it probably had something to do with how pathetically hopeless of a situation she was in. It
was almost comical how depressing the circumstances are. No one should be doomed to a life of having an emotional attachment to asshole guy. As long as Jang Mi can keep her slick in her pants, I don’t see a problem with us trying to help her get over her feelings. I can’t really lose, no matter what happens. If she keeps up her antics, I get to beat the shit out of her. If she can be an actual person, we might make a new friend. Either way, I can feel good about trying to do something nice for someone.

“So,” Guku said as he pulled me to sit on top of him and eat. “What happened to not wanting anyone to know about the plug?” He chuckled as he gave me half of my sandwich.

“I don’t want anyone to know, but apparently I overshare when I’m angry.”

“That’s an omega instinct,” Dae said with a laugh. “You weren’t oversharing. You told Jang Mi all of the things you knew would hurt her. That’s a standard omega strategy. Omegas fight each other with our words first. You followed every step like you were reading off of the checklist. You told her how amazing your alpha is, how he likes you more than her, how big his dick is, how well you two go together, and you insulted the shit out of her. You even went a step further and called her a whore while emphasizing how he hasn’t touched you yet. Congratulations, Min. You’ve graduated Omega 101!”

The pack erupted into applause and sarcastic cheers at the thought that I’m now a full-fledged omega. Mi Mi even began fake crying and holding her chest. I couldn’t stop myself from laughing.

“I never thought I’d see the day when Alphabet had an omega fight instead of an alpha one.” Chi giggled as she spoke.

“Blame this one,” I said, motioning to my alpha. "My inner alpha and I were content with the way things were until Guku showed up.”

“You really have an alpha and an omega?” Jang Mi asked with wide eyes.

“Yep.”

“I thought that was a rumor.”

“Nope. I’m the first person in the world with both. It makes me stronger than other alphas and omegas. That’s why Guku is the only one who can handle me.”

We spent the rest of the lunch period in an awkward state of trying to get to know Jang Mi without being overly friendly. It turns out she left her visual arts school specifically to do asshole guy’s dirty work. That made me feel even worse for her. I may not like her very much, but I wasn’t about to let anyone deal with Jae Seok if I could help it—even his awful sister. Sometimes I hate being Alphabet, the alpha with a savior complex and the omega with a soft spot for others in tough situations.

The next week passed by too quickly for my liking. My impending loss of virginity was looming ever closer, but I was glad that our sexual encounters were at least becoming more comfortable. They didn’t start to be pleasurable until I had my first prostate orgasm. Contrary to what I heard from Yungie, the prostate is not “a little button inside of you that just feels amazing and you want to come the second it’s touched.” It was weird and I didn’t like the feeling the first dozen times Guku tried to poke around. Most of the time, I made him stop. After a while, I started to like it but I kept asking him to quit before I came—despite the fact that I didn’t actually want him to. I’m a lot more sensitive than either of us anticipated. It got so bad that we had to come up with a safeword to indicate that I actually needed him to stop. Our safeword is blueberries because neither one of us are fond of them. My first orgasm took 45 minutes. Apparently, that’s normal when you’re not used to prostate stimulation. The next ten orgasms or so managed to cut my time to somewhere between 15 and 20
minutes. Now, having the plugs in me felt good, especially when they brushed against that bundle of nerves. I grew to appreciate feeling full and I felt a decent amount of pleasure when Guku took the toys out and put them back in. After a quick calculation of the remaining steps, we decided that I'd be completely ready on Sunday. Uncoincidentally, that happens to be our date day. I’m pretty sure it was planned that way, but I kept that theory to myself.

On Thursday, my life mate finally put in the second-largest plug. My omega was proud that I’d be able to take my alpha soon. I no longer had a hard time functioning at school or handling any of the normal things I do in a day while undergoing anal training. It was a boost to my wolf’s ego to know I could adapt so quickly. That night, my mom left for the conference and I was faced with a new challenge—the dildo. Guku insisted that plugs were good for stretching, but not for imitating what sex would be like. He also said the shape of our plugs won’t properly prepare me for a penis. I had to trust that he knew what he was talking about. I tried not to eye the toy sitting on my bed as I climbed into my alpha’s lap and bit at his neck. I felt he was hard underneath me and I moved my hips over his cock. The motion jostled the plug inside of me and it made me want him even more. I longed to see him and touch him but he never let me. Usually, I would bring it up and drop it when he looked uncomfortable. Today, I wasn’t going to let it go without an answer.

“Can I see you now?”

“Not today.”

“Seriously, what’s up with you? I’ve been completely naked every time we’ve done something—which makes me feel really uncomfortable, even with you—and you’ve had all of your clothes on. I’ve already seen you in your underwear, so I know it’s not because you’re shy. I don’t know what’s going on, but it’s really starting to piss me off.”

Guku sighed and grabbed my face, gently tilting it so that my eyes met his own. “I’m sorry. I’ve been avoiding telling you this because I thought you’d get mad or something. One, I’m really worried that you’ll get nervous if you see my dick. I know it’s dumb because you’ve worked up to almost the same size, but I keep thinking that it will make you panic and change your mind. Two, I don’t think I’ll be able to control myself if I’m naked. It was easy to stop myself during the stuff we did throughout rut and right after, since you’d never had anything inside of you. I was able to ignore my urges because I knew I’d hurt you if I didn’t. Now that you’re almost ready, I can barely touch you without my wolf telling me to ‘pin you down and fuck the life out of you.’ Those were his words, not mine. Keeping my clothes on has helped me restrain myself. They’ve been a physical barrier between us, reminding me that I can’t just claim you. I didn’t know how you’d react to me telling you that I don’t think I can keep my wolf in check. You seem to believe I can do anything. I was worried you’d think less of me if you found out I can’t.”

His words made me feel guilty. I hadn’t imagined that he was afraid my opinion of him would change if he was open and honest with me. Even though this whole sex ordeal has been stressful and strange, it has brought us closer. We’ve had to get better at communicating in order to make sure we were being as safe as possible. I have to be direct with what I want and how I feel. He has to be straightforward with what he’s going to do and how he’s going to do it. This experience has built a lot of trust between us. I’ve learned that he’s going to take care of me no matter what.

“I wouldn’t think less of you, Guku. I do think you’re capable of anything, but that doesn’t mean you have to be strong all the time. Just the fact that you’re holding yourself back proves my point. You were able to find a way to control yourself even when you shouldn’t have been able to. I love the fact that you’re still very human although you’re the ideal alpha. I’m not upset that you were concerned. That shows me how much you respect me. I just wish you would have told me. We’re in this together, you know? I want you, your insecurities, your flaws, and your perfections.”
He nodded and kissed me deeply. I could feel the gratitude and unspoken emotions in his kiss. My alpha’s tongue ran along my bottom lip. He sunk his teeth into it as he moved his hand to the base of the plug. The jolt caused me to jump. That reaction seemed to pique Guku’s interest because he grabbed the toy and twisted it inside of me. My head fell to his shoulder and I moaned. He tapped on the base a few times before experimentally pushing it farther in me and pulling it out slightly. A slight shock radiated from the plug with each motion. It was more than I was used to and I found myself spreading my legs subconsciously. Usually, my life mate uses his fingers when he’s trying to make me come. The plugs have always been used to prepare me. The drag of something bigger inside of me had me lifting my hips to get more stimulation, my cock completely forgotten in favor of a more appealing type of pleasure. My body seemed to move on its own, probably just to spite me. I couldn’t deny that I enjoyed it more than I thought I would.

“Does it finally feel good, Manggae?” My alpha asked with slight amusement and pride in his voice.

“Yes,” I said between sharp breaths.

“Yes, what?”

“Yes, alpha.”

I had gotten used to Guku’s demanding demeanor and insistence that he be called alpha in bed. He only got this way when he was horny. I understood and accepted that his wolf was closer to taking over in these moments, so I did everything I could to appease him. He played with the plug more, paying attention to the faces and little noises I made. He told me that was his favorite part so far.

“You want more?”

“Yes, alpha.”

“On your hands and knees, omega.”

I complied, getting comfortable in the position I had become very familiar with. I heard a bottle open and the squelch of lube being smeared all over what I assumed to be the dildo. According to Guku, the toy wasn’t much smaller than he was. This would be a good test to see if I’m really ready. My alpha gently ran his hands up my thighs and grabbed the thickest part of my ass. He spread the cheeks apart, revealing the toy that was buried inside me. He poked at the base again and each tap gave me a faint surge of pleasure. After he twisted and turned the plug enough to make me hard and needy, he pulled it out slowly. I couldn’t prevent the whine coming from me. I had grown so used to being full that not having something in me felt wrong. I could feel my hole fluttering around nothing and I didn’t like it at all.

“Don’t be upset. You’ll be full soon enough.” To illustrate his point, my life mate pressed the tip of the dildo against my hole.

Just that small bit of pressure had my omega presenting himself and urging me to do the same. I want more of it. I felt his free hand against my tailbone when I tried to shift backward. He was preventing me from pushing myself onto the toy.

“Patience. I don’t want you to get hurt.”

Guku grabbed the weird syringe and inserted it, squirting lube inside of me. Then, he rubbed the toy against my rim—applying slight pressure. He took his time when pushing the head in, making sure that I was comfortable. The moan I let out was instant, my body already anticipating what the whole thing would feel like. He stopped moving after I had taken the tip. I could tell it was a little bigger
than any of the plugs I had used before. It felt nice simply having it in me, but I wanted more. The firm hand on my lower back kept me from prematurely impaling myself on the fake cock, even though that’s exactly what my omega was encouraging me to do. I craved feeling it all the way inside me. I quickly lost my patience.

“More, alpha.”

“What did you say?” I felt his claws dig into the flesh of my ass in response to my words. I could tell by the tone of his voice that his eyes were probably half crimson.

“Please, alpha, more.”

He gradually slid more of the dildo in me and I moaned. It didn’t hurt like I thought it would. Instead, it made me feel more complete the deeper it went. The excruciatingly slow pace made sure I felt every bit of the toy against my walls. These weren’t the sudden rushes I experienced when the plug was jostled. This was a consistently building feeling of fullness that had my wolf drooling. After what seemed like an eternity of sweet pain, I felt Guku’s other hand meet with my cheeks. I held my breath for a moment to fully appreciate the sensation of having something so big inside me. For a while, we stayed like that so I could get used to the size difference. My muscles contracted around the toy and, while I felt like something was missing, I reveled in the sensation. I wiggled my hips a little to indicate that I was ready for him to move, yet he was still. I thought I stopped a whine in my throat, but the pleased noise my alpha made let me know I failed.

“Well, aren’t you impatient?” He said in a playful tone. He seemed to be enjoying this a bit too much.

“Please move, alpha.”

“Are you ready?”

“Yes, alpha.”

My life mate pulled the toy back a small amount and pushed it in, trying to get me used to the motion. It felt amazing. By the fifth time he moved it, I finally understood the appeal of sex. I could feel his breath on my ass and I realized he was watching me swallow the toy. His low, guttural growl made my omega spread our legs and stick our ass out. It was all I could do to keep my wolf from forcing me to push face into the pillows and my ass high into the air. My body started to crave something else and I noticed myself pushing my hips backward whenever he inserted the dildo again. The motion increased the pleasure I felt. I could tell Guku had grown more comfortable with the situation when he started pulling out farther and thrusting a little faster. All my limbs felt flushed after a few minutes and a spark ran through me every time the toy was fully buried. It was so much more than just having something inside me. My alpha sped up to a medium-slow pace. After some more thrusting, he managed to push the toy against my prostate.

“Please right there, alpha!”

It didn’t take long for me to dissolve into a panting, moaning heap on the bed when he was moving right against my sweet spot. The feeling was so much more than his fingers could give me. The fake dick continued going in and out, but my life mate didn't increase the speed any. His movements became more forceful and purposeful over time. When he relentlessly thrust the dildo into my prostate, my legs started jerking. That was the signal that I was getting close. Guku wrapped his free hand over my hip to keep me from jerking away. I typically got so overwhelmed that I tried to pull back. This time was no exception.
“Too much, alpha,” I cried out, almost sobbing.

“You can take it, omega.”

The first dozen times we did this, my life mate would stop every time. It was nice, but I often got frustrated. Sometimes, it was a lot, but I didn't actually want it to end. Now, he just tells me I can take it unless I use the safeword. The combination of how full I felt, the consistent pressure against my prostate, and the strong grip Guku had on me gave me more sensations than I had ever imagined. Even though my legs were shaking so hard that I could barely hold myself up, I kept trying to push back into the toy. I wanted more despite the fact that I didn’t consciously know what that meant. My body was giving me mixed signals. I didn’t feel completely full and something was missing, yet this was enough to reduce me to a whimpering mess—one who was alternating between begging for his alpha to stop and begging for release.

“A-alpha!”

“You can take it. You’re almost there.”

I stuttered out mangled versions of my alpha’s name and rank in between jagged breaths and groans. My eyes were screwed shut from pleasure when my orgasm unexpectedly wracked my body. My legs gave out as the tremors shook me to my core. It was unlike anything I had felt before. I couldn’t even form words when I screamed and my voice was way more high-pitched than I ever remember hearing it. I stayed collapsed on myself for a while, despite the fact that I was laying in my own cum. I struggled and failed to catch my breath. I was so sensitive that I squeaked when Guku started pulling the dildo out. After it was completely removed, I felt empty. I know that feeling is an omega instinct, but I hated it. As if he could hear my thoughts, my alpha put the freshly-oiled plug back in place. I began shaking again when it gently grazed that vulnerable spot inside of me.

“Let’s get you cleaned up, little omega. You did a good job.” My life mate picked me up and carried me into the bathroom to clean me off.

“So, that’s what sex is like?” I asked, still trying to regain my composure.

“Pretty much. It’s going to be a little different because it will be me instead of the toy, but those are the basics.”

“I could get used to that,” I said with a smile and a weak giggle.

I slept really well that night, especially with my alpha cuddled up to my back the whole time. The next day, I had a bit of pain but it wasn’t bad. I appreciated that Guku was sure to go slow so it wouldn’t hurt too much afterward. Despite those efforts, demonstrating self-defense techniques to the OPC was a tad difficult. I kept reminding myself that I’m tough and I can handle it. My alpha was even more attentive to me than normal. I’m sure that was mostly due to him feeling guilty whenever I would wince. The rest of the time leading up to Sunday was uneventful, with the exception of Friday night. I woke up in the middle of the night to pee and caught my alpha masturbating. I took it as an opportunity to see what his dick looked like, but he had something in his hand that was covering it. I left, used the other bathroom, and waited for Guku to finish. He looked very self-conscious when he got back to bed.

“I didn’t mean to walk in on you,” I said, unsure of how to approach the situation.

“I’m a bit embarrassed, but it’s nothing to be ashamed of. It’s been difficult to do all of this stuff to you and never get off.”
“What was that thing you were using?”

“It’s a masturbator. It’s more realistic than using your hand. You’re not the only one who has to get used to the feeling of another person,” he said, ending the conversation by pulling me close and telling me goodnight.

On Sunday, I woke up to knocking on the front door. I noticed Guku wasn’t in bed. I assumed he was in the bathroom. I put pants on and answered the door. I was met with the smiling face of my alpha life mate. He was carrying a few bags and something behind his back.

“I thought you were in the shower.” I couldn’t help but smile at how happy he looked. It pleased him that I was surprised.

“Nope. I had to go get a few things. I also had to leave so I could pick you up for our date.”

I giggled and shook my head at his behavior. It was endearing that he always went through so much trouble to make me happy. He entered the house and carefully hid what was behind his back from me. I tried to get around him, but I wasn’t fast enough. He laughed at my playfulness and told me to go get ready. He handed me two bags, instructing me to wear what was in them.

“What about you?”

“I showered earlier. I just need to get dressed.”

I noticed his hair was already parted and kind of wavy, the way it always is when he washes it and then doesn’t bother styling it. I mentioned one time that I think his hair is cute when it’s like this. Since then, I’ve noticed that it’s the only thing he does with it. I’m happy he wants me to find him appealing. It made me feel special. Recently, I’ve been growing more comfortable in my attraction to him. I didn’t try to hide the fact that I like the way he looks anymore, especially now that his hair is longer. I quickly took a shower and put on the clothes that my alpha picked out for me—a tight black t-shirt, black skinny jeans, black tennis shoes, and a black belt with a shiny silver buckle. It was a little closer to what I normally wear than what I wore last week, but the tightness of the clothes was still odd for me. Tucking my shirt in, like he told me to do, was also strange. I pushed my hair back and added a little spray because I was unsure of what I wanted to do with it.

I went back into the living room when I was finished. My eyes immediately focused on the broad alpha who was dressed exactly like me, with the addition of a leather jacket. His chest and shoulders looked so big with the fabric hugging them. The shirt also accentuated his waist and made him look even more muscular. I don’t know why the thought of him being so strong was at the forefront of my mind. I shooed the thought away and focused on my overwhelming enjoyment of the way he was dressed. I’ve never been one to be taken aback by how nice someone looks and I’ve never had the urge to just stare. Yet, I couldn’t do much else when Guku looked at me and smiled so hard that his nose crinkled.

“You okay, Manggae?” He asked with a concerned tone.

“Yeah. I’m fine. You just look really good.” I didn’t feel as awkward about the confession as I thought I would.

He smiled again and walked towards me. “You do too. I’ve never seen your hair back before. It’s nice. You normally look pretty, but today you look hot.”

He gave me a quick kiss on the lips before he walked me into the dining room. He still had the thing behind his back and I was very curious as to what it was. There were also three boxes on the table.
“I know you’re not really a gift person, but I wanted to get you a couple of things. I really like giving you stuff. First, I got you these,” he said as he pulled a small bouquet from behind his back. “I know you don’t typically like flowers, but I also know that you adore Japanese camellias.”

“How?”

“Your mom let me see your paintings, remember? Most of them were of these.”

I was surprised that he recalled what I painted and even more impressed that he managed to find somewhere that sold them. Camellias don’t usually come in floral arrangements because they grow on bushes. It’s hard to find any of them that are long enough to make a decent bouquet. I smelled them and my eyes disappeared into crescents. They seemed to do that a lot when I’m around my alpha. He grabbed my free hand and led me to the table.

“These are sort of along the same lines as the flowers. I know you’re not typically into sweets, but I know you enjoy these.”

I untied the bow from the first box and opened it to see an assortment of tea cookies. They were arranged in a pretty swirl pattern using the different colors. I love this type of cookie, but I don’t eat them often. My mom is not good at baking and I usually forget to ask for them when she goes to the store. I closed that box and moved on to the next. This one had a variety of different mochi with little tags to indicate the flavor. There was green tea, strawberry, apricot, caramel, and traditional. I didn’t even know they made apricot or caramel mochi. It’s another dessert I love but don’t eat often. Still clinging onto my camellias, I opened the last box. It was filled with smaller boxes of almond pepero—the only kind as far as I’m concerned. He really figured out three of my top five sweets and bought them for me. My cheeks hurt from smiling so much.

“You’re the sweetest alpha ever, Guku.” I wrapped my arms around him in a tight hug. We were so close that my chest vibrated when he chuckled.

“Only to the people I care about. Before you question it, I had to ask your mom and Ranie what kind of deserts you like. I haven’t really seen you eat candy and stuff unless someone offered it to you. You’ve never given me any clues as to what sweets you eat.”

Looking at the gifts made me think of the conversation we had about our relationship status a couple of months ago. He actually showed up with flowers and candy. It made me inexplicably giddy to think of, but I wanted to keep that to myself. I could tell my face betrayed me when my alpha asked why my smile had gotten so big.

“You remember when we were trying to figure out if we were going to date or stay friends? I said you didn’t seem like the type to show up with flowers and candy if you were courting someone. Well, it’s kind of like you’re courting me, Guku.” I motioned to the gifts as proof.

“Can I assume from your smile that you’d like it if I started courting you?” His voice was steady, but his eyes were starting to shine. I could tell both he and his alpha wanted to know the answer.

“I…”

I took a moment to look at my alpha and the presents he gave me. I thought about all of the wonderful moments we’ve shared and the preparation we’ve done for me to be claimed. I really care about him as a person. He’s become an indispensable part of my life. I appreciate everything that he’s done and the kindness he has shown me. Guku is the reason I don’t hate alphas anymore. He’s the reason I have the opportunity to live a somewhat normal life despite my condition. He’s absolutely everything to me. I was brought out of my trance by my life mate wiping a few tears from
my eyes. I didn’t even know I was crying.

“You all right, Manggae?”

“I’m fine. I’d like it if you courted me,” I replied with a genuine smile.

“If you want me to court you, then that’s exactly what I’ll do.”

He placed his hands on my cheeks and pulled me into a kiss. It was deeper than I remembered our other kisses being, despite there being no tongue or teeth involved. My alpha’s arms snaked around my waist and I looped mine around his neck. I didn’t think about the fact that I had just agreed to date Guku with the intention of mating him. I didn’t think about the impending moment where I would give myself to him physically. All my brain focused on in that moment was how good it was to have my alpha’s lips against my own, how happy it made me to have him this close. He broke the kiss after my stomach rumbled.

“Let’s get you some food, little omega,” my life mate said with a chuckle.

“We’ve gotta tell Nabi that you’re courting me. I’m sure she’ll be happy.”

Guku nodded and went to grab a jar to put the flowers in. He laced our fingers together when he returned and led me out the door. “We should tell Beom too,” he replied with a jokingly bitter tone.

“Oh, poor Beom. He’s going to be heartbroken. We’ll have to give him extra treats when we deliver the news.” I laughed at the thought.

He also chuckled. Then, he paused for a moment, appearing to think about something important. “When do you want to tell our families? I’m sure your mom would want to know as soon as possible.”

“We can tell the pack tomorrow. They already know you’re going to claim me tonight, so we’ll tell them about the courting when they inevitably ask how everything went. As for mom, I’ll tell her when she gets back on Tuesday. Last time I texted her something like this, she screamed at work. I have no idea how she’ll react, but I’m pretty sure she’d be pissed if I told her while she’s at the conference and got her kicked out. I can’t even imagine what they’d do if she started freaking out in the middle of a presentation.”

“Good point.”

“So,” I asked as we sat down on the bus. “What changes now that you’re courting me?”

“Not much. We’ll still go on dates and spend time together. The only thing that’s different for us is that I’ll start buying you more stuff.”

“Please don’t go crazy with gifts. I’m really not great at accepting them. Even though I know buying me stuff is part of the courtship process, it makes me feel weird that I’m not getting you anything.”

Guku smiled and kissed my cheek, cuddling me closer. “You’re a good person, Manggae. When an alpha courts an omega, they’re almost obligated to get whatever the omega asks for. It looks bad on the alpha if they can’t fulfill a request and it gives the omega the ability to terminate the courtship. You could ask for almost anything and I’d get it for you, yet you feel bad because you’re not reciprocating. You are a gift to me, little omega. The chance at having a mate, living a more normal life, and keeping someone so precious by my side forever is the best present you can give me. Candy and flowers are nothing compared to that.”
The sincerity in his words left me speechless in the same way the look in his eyes had me breathless for a moment. When I finally could think again, I replied. “I had the exact same thoughts when you asked if I wanted you to court me. That’s why I started crying. You also gave me all the gifts you just mentioned. Because of everything you’ve done for me, I don’t really need anything else. Maybe some lunch if I’m hungry or something, but nothing extravagant.” I locked my fingers in his as I spoke, cherishing the feeling of my alpha’s hand in mine.

“I’ll try not to get you any big gifts, except your courtship ring. I couldn’t skip that if I wanted to.”

“I forgot about that. Please don’t do anything over the top.”

“Have you met me? You should know by now that I’m going to do something nice. I’ve had the same mentality throughout our whole relationship. Whether I’m your first or your only, I want to do things right with you. I’m taking all of your firsts—first date, first kiss, first time, first ring. I won’t let you look back on our experiences together and regret the way we did anything. I promise it won’t be some stupidly expensive ring with a bunch of gems in it, but you know it can’t be just a simple band. Plain silver or gold bands are couple’s rings. Courtship rings have to be at least a little flashy to show the difference in relationship status. If people think we’re just dating, they might think they can take you from me.” His voice sounded a little bitter as he got to the last part.

“I wouldn’t let anyone take me. You should know that by now. As far as the rings go, I trust you won’t do anything too ridiculous.”

“So, no huge rainbow-colored rocks on a super tiny band that would probably snap if you look at it wrong?”

“No! I’d breathe and lose the damn stones. Why would you want to get me a girl’s ring anyway?”

“I wouldn’t,” he said with a laugh. “I just wanted to see what you’d say. You’re not the type of male omega to like girly stuff. Dae, on the other hand, would probably adore that kind of jewelry.”

“I bet he would. Could you imagine how obnoxious he would be if he had a ring like that? Knowing him, he would purposely do stuff to show it off like the bitchy omegas in dramas do when they’re trying to show their single friends that they’re taken.”

“You’re not wrong.” He joined me in laughing at the thought.

We walked into the cafe, sat at our normal table, and ordered our usual breakfast. Somehow, this tradition meant more than it had before. I suppose that’s a side effect of agreeing to be courted. We’re not just spending time together or going on dates anymore. We’re dating with the intention of being mates. If everything goes well, Guku and I will be mates. I might actually have a mate. I don’t even know how to feel about that prospect. My internal repetition of the word mate was interrupted by tiny paws kneading a spot on my lap.

“Hey, Nabi!” I gave her a couple of scratches under the chin. “I’ve got some news for you. You know how Guku is my alpha? Well, now he’s courting me. You’re the first person we’ve told. You should feel special.”

She purred loudly in response. I’m sure that meant she was excited for us. If rubbing her face against ours was any indication, she was giving us her well-wishes. We played with her a little while we waited. When our food arrived, there was a large fish-shaped bread filled with sweet red bean paste included with our order. The writing on the plate said “congratulations on your courtship!”

“I hope you don’t mind,” the server said with a smile. “I heard you talking to Nabi when I brought
your drinks. You two are regulars and you make such a good couple. We wanted to do something special for you. Congratulations again!”

I smiled and kissed my alpha after thanking the server for being so kind. “That was really nice of them.”

“It was. I guess that’s the benefit of visiting the same place over and over. Can I admit something to you? I’ve never had fish bread.”

“It’s good if you like red bean paste. That’s the only thing inside. There’s no actual fish in it.”

He laughed and nodded. I broke off a piece of bread and held it to his mouth. There was something oddly pleasing about watching him eat from my hand while he maintained eye contact. My mind instantly registered that I enjoyed feeding my alpha. My omega just as quickly told me it’s because I’m providing for my mate. That concept didn’t make me panic as much as I was expecting. Perhaps, Guku really was supposed to be my mate. I pushed the thought away by focusing on the day ahead. That possibility was a lot right now and dwelling on anything isn’t going to make it better or worse. I don’t need to stress myself out for no reason.

“What’s on the agenda for today, alpha?”

Guku’s hand tightened on my thigh and I heard the beginnings of a growl in his throat. “Unless you want to go home right now, you’ll stop calling me alpha.”

“Sorry.” I was worried that I had genuinely upset him, but he took my hand and squeezed it.

He took a deep breath to steady himself. His scent calmed down as quickly as it had changed. After a few more inhale and exhale cycles, he finally spoke. “You have nothing to be sorry for. If anything, I should be apologizing to you. My wolf is on edge right now because of what will happen later. He’s been getting harder to control as we’ve gone through preparations. Calling me by my rank just brings him out even more. It’s so difficult to resist him whenever we do sexual things and you’re calling out ‘alpha’. I get so worried that he’s going to take over and injure you. You’re his omega. I know he wouldn’t do anything to hurt you intentionally. But, he could get too carried away and do it on accident. The goal is to claim you, not break you.”

More than feeling touched by his sweetness, I felt a little flustered by his words. My omega was eager to see if our alpha could really break us. It was a prospect that I wanted to test. Not now, of course, but eventually. I was trying not to think too much about the possibilities when Guku gave me a strange look and pulled me into his lap. He held my hips and rolled them back so that the plug moved. I bit my lip to quell the moan that came from me. I also held my body still so I didn’t rock back and forth.

“If I didn’t know better, I’d say you want my alpha to wreck you. That wouldn’t be the case, would it, little omega?”

He continued to move my hips and grind into my ass, jarring the toy that rubbed against my prostate. The top half of my body slid onto the table, causing me to lay my head down. I dug my nails into his thighs and whimpered as quietly as possible. Luckily, no one else was at the cafe right now to witness our display. The waitstaff seemed to expect these types of antics from a newly courting couple because they weren’t around either. Tingles surged through me every time he pulled me back. He dug his fingers deeper into me and demanded an answer to his question. I bashfully admitted that I forgot what he asked, amidst the pulses of pleasure that were coursing through me. He yanked me up by my hair and positioned his mouth next to my ear.
“I asked if I was understanding the situation correctly. Do you want me to break you?”

He began mouthing at my neck, nipping just above my scent gland. He thrust forward when he rolled my hips back. I couldn’t hold back my noises when he forced the plug to press harder against that sensitive bundle of nerves.

“Answer, omega,” my life mate demanded with a particularly harsh bite to my shoulder. His voice was dangerously low.

I struggled to form words as I was smothered by his body heat and the shockwaves each small movement sent through me. I imagined that this is what having sex is like. Right now, I wanted to confirm that theory more than anything. “Y-yes, alpha.”

“You do?” He all but growled in my ear.

“Yes, alpha.” The phrase left me as a soft moan.

“Then, I will. Just not tonight,” he said as he suddenly stopped.

My whole body felt like it had dropped to the floor when I realized that he wasn’t going to keep going. Guku placed a few innocent kisses to my neck and then squeezed me tightly. I turned around to face him and saw that his eyes were mostly scarlet. Those weren’t the actions of my life mate. All of that was done by his wolf.

“Your alpha is a dick,” I said with a frustrated sigh after my gaze was met with more brown than crimson.

“He is. I’m sorry that happened, but I can’t promise he won’t do it again. He says this is punishment for making him wait, which is dumb because waiting wasn’t your fault at all. I’ll try to keep him at bay as much as I can.”

“Please do. I’m not sure I can handle a whole day of whatever the hell that was. My omega would either feel rejected or jump you. I’m not sure which would be worse.”

“I wouldn’t mind you jumping me,” Guku replied with a playfully cocky smirk.

I rolled my eyes and mustered as much attitude as I could. “How very alpha of you to ignore the other option.”

“My alpha wants me to tell your omega something, but I don’t really want to say it out loud. The short version is you should both know that we would never reject you, especially now that we’re courting you. He also said there’s no way in hell he’s not claiming your omega tonight.”

My omega presented his neck in acceptance of our alpha’s assertion and I had to hold myself back from doing the same. I pulled on his bottom lip with my teeth and sucked on it a little. I let some of my omega’s concerns bleed through when I responded. “With as much as your alpha seems to want to fuck with me, he better follow through with his promise. Don’t leave me or my wolf disappointed”

“The only thing you need to worry about is if you can take it, omega.” He growled into my ear and sucked on the lobe. I felt his hands tighten around my hips again before he prevented his alpha from doing more.

Unable to stop my omega, I decided to egg him on. “If what you give me is good enough, I can definitely take it, alpha.”
His claws were in my skin and his teeth on my neck before I could blink. I rolled my hips over his and moaned close to his ear. A violent shaking stopped me in my tracks. My alpha was fighting his wolf so hard that he was trembling.

“We need to get out of here before we end up fucking on the table in front of the cats,” I said with an awkward chuckle. I pulled myself away from him so we could both calm down.

“They wouldn’t see anything. They all ran the second there was arousal in your scent.”

I looked around to see the cats and none of them were around. I tried not to sound disappointed when I responded. “So, what are we doing today?”

“The plan was to go to an escape room, do karaoke, eat an early dinner, and then go back to your house to watch movies until we decide to do other stuff. In light of my alpha’s sadistic side surfacing, we might need to figure out something other than karaoke. Being alone might not be a good idea.”

“I never would have thought you enjoyed doing mean stuff like that, Guku. As for the karaoke, I’d like to go. We’re adults. We can manage.”

“We’ll still go, then. Just so you know, I don’t like doing those things. My alpha does. I want to hold your hand and cuddle you to sleep at night. My wolf wants to work you up until you can’t function and then fuck you until you’re crying. I want to give you anything you could ask for. My alpha wants to bring you to the edge of orgasm so many times that I could look at you and you’d come. That’s the toned-down version of the shit he says, by the way.”

“I thought he wouldn’t hurt me because I’m his omega. I think having sex until I cry sounds painful.”

“It’s supposed to be a pleasurable pain from what I’ve gathered. Basically, he wants to make you come until you pass out and then we’ll snuggle you while you sleep and make you breakfast in the morning. He still wants to take care of you and do anything he can for you. He also wants to ruin you for any other alpha who might try to catch your attention. Honestly, I’m hoping that he’ll calm down when you and I finally have sex. He’s been a pain in the ass for a while and it’s been getting worse since he knows he can have you.”

“I don’t think anyone else could ever pull my focus from you. In case everything we’ve gone through hasn’t been enough of a sign, I’ll tell you in no uncertain terms now. I’m completely yours. You’re the only alpha as far as I’m concerned. Also, tell your wolf I’m pissed that since he’s fed up with being a pain in your ass that he’s trying to be a pain in mine.”

“Keep saying shit like that and he’s going to show you how much of a pain he can be.”

I could tell his resolve was starting to crack, so I changed subjects. “Let’s go, Guku,” I said while standing up and taking his hand.

We needed to leave because my omega began taking too much interest in what my alpha was saying. I didn’t want to end up actually considering having sex in public—for the second time today. We got onto the bus and headed to our first stop. I linked my arm in Guku’s and laid my head on his shoulder. I couldn’t risk sitting on him and getting turned on during the bus ride. We arrived much sooner than I was expecting. I was surprised that the escape room building almost looked like a doctor’s office on the inside. There was a main waiting area and then a hallway that had several doors leading to individual rooms. We looked over the different plot options and decided to pick the space theme. The story was that Guku and I went to Mars to figure out what went wrong with the trip before ours. The starting clue was a mission log that gave us information from right before the crew lost contact with Earth. It was a lot of fun trying to decipher the clues and discover what might
have happened.

After we were finished exploring their spaceship, we had to crack a code to get back out. The keypad opened the wall and let us explore the surface of Mars. We got stuck once because we missed a hint on the bottom of a rock. We had to radio mission control for guidance. My life mate and I were proud that we only had to use one of our three calls for help. In the end, we found out that the other ship had sustained damage from an asteroid. Their life support was affected by the hit and they weren't able to repair the systems before their oxygen supply ran out. With that knowledge, we were able to get into our rocket and return to Earth. We finished the challenge in 47 minutes and 38 seconds, a new record for only two people. I accredited our good teamwork to the amount of communication and trust we've been developing lately. Five months ago, I wouldn't have been able to be in a room with Guku for 10 minutes—let alone solve puzzles with him to escape a lifeless planet.

We boarded another bus and talked about the escape room while we were on our way to the next destination. I was excited to do karaoke with my alpha again. We hadn't gone since our first date, which made a little sad. I really liked hearing my life mate's voice. It calmed me, just like everything else about him. To be fair, he sings to me whenever I ask him to. I just don't request it often because I don't want to bother him too much. We decided ahead of time that we were only going to do girl group songs for the first half of our session. There's something about singing dramatically lovestruck lyrics and dancing to overly cheesy pop beats that was very amusing to both of us. Of course, not all of the songs were like that but we focused on the ones that were. I picked "Nobody" by the Wonder Girls for Guku to sing and couldn't stop laughing at his over-the-top gestures and facial expressions. He did so many cutesy poses that I could hardly breathe. I needed a few minutes to collect myself after the song stopped.

"For someone so intimidating, you're really good at looking adorable. I'd never guess you were a HADD alpha if all I knew about you was that performance," I joked.

"I'm flattered you think I'm cute," he said with a smile. "I'd say your point doesn't make a lot of sense though. Stage personas aren't a very good indication of how a person is. You think all the girls who sing these songs are perpetually lovestruck or always innocent just because of the songs and choreography their company gives them?" I could tell he knew I was playing but he wanted to give me a hard time.

"That's not what I meant, punk!" I said as I playfully hit him.

"All of your performances have been silly. Does that make you a silly person? Does that mean you couldn't be sweet or sexy if the song changed?"

"I could probably do sweet. I don't see me pulling off sexy."

"I bet you could do both. Let me pick a song for each and I'll let you know how you do."

I rolled my eyes but agreed. When "Oh!" by SNSD popped up on the screen, I couldn't help but smile. I never told Guku that my mom and I used to have a family day every month. I would try to help her cook dinner and then we put on miniature pop concerts. Mi Mi often joined in on the fun after we became life mates. He had no idea that "Oh!" happened to be one of my mom's favorite songs, which is why I learned all of the choreography for it. I was never an omega that liked to be cute and flirty, but it amused my mom and Mi Mi. The least I could do, after everything they've done for me, is prance around like an idol and make exaggerated movements. At our other karaoke date, I was just messing around and having fun. I wasn't actually trying to display my knowledge. If my alpha wanted to see me act coy or sexy, I could do that. It seemed like a good form of payback for him riling me up earlier. I opted to put down the microphone and look at my life mate. I immediately
delved into the steps when the music started, even though I was a little out of practice. I saw his face visibly tighten when I switched my hips and flipped my hair during the beginning of the chorus. I took that opportunity to wink at him and bite my lip. I could see the slight sparkling in his eyes and I knew that I was doing a good job. I brought one leg up and put my hands on my knee, close to the end of the song, and blew him a kiss. After I was finished, I laughed at his expression.

“So, how was my sweet performance?”

“What did you learn?” He asked in a state of disbelief.

“You know how your family does movie night? Mine used to do idol performance night. Mom, Mi Mi, and I would pick random songs, sing them, and do the dances. ‘Oh!’ is one of mom’s favorites, so I learned it for her.”

“You did amazing, but I would say that might have been a bit too sexy for it to be sweet.”

I chuckled a little as I grabbed the remote to find the seductive song I was looking for. “You say that now. I’m sure you’ll change your mind when I do the sexy one. Close your eyes. You’re not allowed to look at what I pick. Before you ask, Mi Mi wanted me to learn this one because she says I have a good ass for it. Tell me if she’s right.”

I made my selection, laid on the floor, and hit the play button. I saw my alpha’s eyes shoot open as the music began. He must recognize it. Anyone who’s heard Rania’s “Dr. Feel Good” probably would. It’s a suggestive song with an equally sexual dance. Any time I had performed this before, it was robotic. I hit all of the steps, yet there was no drive behind it. The whole song was about being turned on and wanting sex. As someone who had never experienced that before, I had no inspiration to draw upon. Now, I do. I moved up to my knees before the singing started and arched my back. The pressure of the plug against my prostate sent enough pleasure through me to fuel the sexiest rendition of this dance I’ve ever done. Looking directly at Guku, I sang all of the lyrics. I ran my hands over my body as I thrust my pelvis. I took every opportunity to roll my hips and shake my ass more than was called for in the choreography. I wanted to show him that I could do these things for him, even if I wasn’t necessarily comfortable. He made me feel secure to the point where I can open up. He made me feel like I could do or be anything. My alpha’s eyes trailed after each step. They started to glow brighter as he tracked my movements like I was his prey. I made sure to put on a show leading up to the second chorus, sticking my ass out when I flipped onto my stomach.

As soon as I dropped to my knees and began opening and closing them to move up and down, I heard a deep growl echo in the room. My life mate had me on my back, legs wrapped around his waist and hands pinned to the floor before I could register that I wasn’t dancing anymore. A rough bite to my throat accompanied the rolling of his hips. The plug was moving inside of me whenever he pressed his hard dick against me. Another growl vibrated through my chest and went straight to my cock. I pulled him closer with my legs, my wolf wanting to test exactly how soundproof these walls are. My hips moved to meet his and each thrust jarred me in the most electrifying way. I wanted him to take me now—to claim me on the floor of a karaoke room. The stimulation was making it hard to think.

“I-how did I do, alpha?” I stuttered out. My breathing was labored as I tried to hold back as many moans as possible.

“Well enough for me to contemplate bending you over that chair and fucking you until you can’t walk for a week.”

His words made me whimper. They also surprised me until I saw the crimson slowly overtaking the brown in his stare. He closed his eyes for a moment and took a deep breath. His hips stopped rocking
into me and I could feel a slight tremble run through him. Guku opened his eyes again and I could see them returning to normal.

“I think it’s best if we go home, little omega. I promised I’d make this special. Although having your first time in a karaoke room might be memorable, it wouldn’t exactly be special.”

“You’ve already made everything special for me. You got me flowers and desserts, you took me to see Nabi, you’re courting me, we had a lot of fun at the escape room, you let me show off my hidden talent for girl group dances, and you just proved to me that you’ll always put my wellbeing before your alpha’s desires. I honestly couldn’t think of anything that would make this better than it already has been. You’re the best alpha in the world and I’m lucky that you’re mine. I think it’s time for us to go home so you can make me yours.”

The low growl and sudden floating of my body let me know that he agreed with my idea. He effortlessly carried me bridal style and I was unnecessarily shocked by the display. I wrapped my arms around my alpha’s neck to keep myself steady.

“For some reason, I keep forgetting how strong you are.”

“I usually don’t have a reason to use my strength, so it’s easy to forget. It’s not like I’m doing a bunch of manual labor every day to show it.”

“I like that you’re so strong. It makes my omega happy. Apparently, my omega likes being taken care of and he thinks the fact that you’re stronger than us means you can do that. Why is my wolf so typical?”

He chuckled and sat me sideways on his lap when we got on the bus. “All wolves are pretty much alike. There are some differences in trait expression and temperament, but they all tend to want the same things and act the same way. Alphas are protective, dominant, want to provide for their loved ones, and like to be the best. Omegas are also protective, submissive, like to be provided for by their alphas, and like to be appreciated. The real differences in people’s personalities come from the human. The way we interact with our wolves and choose to display their characteristics and our own determine what kind of person we are.”

I stared at him for a moment, surprised again for no reason. He looked at me and smiled. “Did you forget I’m studying to be a therapist too?”

“No. I’m just really impressed by you. You’re barely done with maturation and you’re more grown-up than half of the adults I’ve met. It probably also comes from the fact that you’re two years younger than me and I barely even notice. I guess being in the same grade also makes it seem like we’re the same age.”

“My wolf hasn’t let me get away with much. Either he’s forcing me to be mature or I’m having to be mature enough to control him. There hasn’t been a lot of in-between. I feel like it’s a good thing you don’t notice our age difference. I would feel like I was doing something wrong if it was obvious all the time. As for being in the same class, I moved up a grade and you were held back. It’s nothing too abnormal. That kind of stuff happens all the time.”

“Just let me be amazed. Aren’t you supposed to want to be the best, Mr. All-alphas-are-the-same? Shouldn’t this be feeding some sort of primal praise kink?” He laughed at the phrase.

While doing our sexual research, we stumbled upon kinks. I read a little about them, but Guku said not to focus too much on it right now. He assured me we would have time to explore them when I got used to everything. He didn’t want to overwhelm me when I was trying to experience sex for the
first time. I didn’t see many before he convinced me to stop reading, but a few stuck out to me.

“Alphas sort of have praise kinks. We want you to thank us for taking care of you, we want you to think we’re strong, and we want you to tell other people how good we are. Sometimes, it makes our pride swell and sometimes it goes to our dicks. It probably depends on what the compliments are about. Omegas are the ones with open praise kinks. Next time you’re around a couple, watch what the omega does if their partner says something good about them. I can almost guarantee the omega will get slightly turned on if it’s a decent amount of praise. Even Ranie gets flustered when Chi tells her how cute she is.”

I laughed at the generalization and agreed to look for omegas with praise kinks. I also considered what he said about our omega life mate. The concept of Mi Mi being aroused was foreign to me, but it made me happy in an odd way. It was honestly because I loved the fact that she found someone. That's as far as it went. I refused to think of her and Chi doing anything remotely close to what Guku and I have done. She will always be a cute little virgin in my eyes. There’s nothing sexual about the way I see her and I aimed to keep it that way. One thing did pop into my head and I couldn’t stop myself from voicing it.

“How would their heats work?”

My alpha chuckled and shook his head. I couldn't tell if he was laughing at my curiosity or my ignorance. “They could do a few different things. They could both stay on their Emmeryn during their heats and not be affected, just like they are now. One of them could not take meds during heat and the other could take care of them. They could both go off the pills and let their instincts take over. If you’re asking the logistics of how they’d have sex, it would probably be similar to the things we’ve done so far.”

“I know we’re not supposed to feel weird talking about sex because it’s natural and totally okay, but I’m feeling really uncomfortable with this conversation right now. Can we change the subject?” In general, talking about sex was still foreign and strange but I was getting used to it. Talking about Mi Mi having sex seemed to cross a line for me.

“What movie do you want to watch when we get home?” He asked, seamlessly switching the topic of discussion to something not potentially scarring.

“Umm… can we watch an anime or something? I can’t really think of a movie to watch.”

“Sure. Do you have one in mind?” He asked as we got off the bus and headed towards my house.

“No. Tae is our resident anime enthusiast. Does he have any recommendations?”

“He suggested Love Stage!!”

“What’s it about?”

“An alpha that meets an omega when he’s a kid and falls in love at first sight. They meet again when they’re older and he’s still in love. The twist is that the omega is actually an alpha. He was playing an omega in a commercial because his family made him. The show goes through them trying to figure out if they want to be in an alpha-alpha relationship or not.”

“That’s pretty edgy for an anime.” My life mate hummed in response.

I unlocked the door and walked inside. I stopped when I got to the living room, shocked by the huge blanket fort that was set up in front of the TV. I know this wasn’t here when we left and Guku has been with me the whole time. How did he do this?
“Your mom left me a spare key in case I needed to come back to the house and you were busy. I took the key by my house and asked Tae and Yunie to build this for us as a hangout spot. I didn’t give them any guidelines or anything, so don’t be surprised if there’s something crazy inside. We both know my cousin gets excited about his art projects. That’s what he called it. He said ‘making a blanket fort is a time-honored art form that requires years to properly hone your skills and perfect your technique.’ He also said he was going to steal some of your mochi as payment, but I told him I’d kick his ass if he did. Check the box to make sure none are missing.” My alpha laughed as he went to set up the show and change clothes.

When he returned, he was only wearing sweatpants. I had seen him this way often, but not for a while. He’s started sleeping with a shirt on because being shirtless is too close to being naked. I stared for a moment, hoping he didn’t catch me. Even though this was a familiar sight, the context made it feel different. I tried to avoid letting my eyes linger on the beautiful tone of his skin or the rigid indentations of his muscles. What is with me today? I can’t stop thinking about how well-defined his body is. I distracted myself by searching for the potentially missing mochi. I looked on the dining room table and I didn’t see the sweets that my alpha got for me. I went to the kitchen and living room to see if they were there, but couldn’t find them anywhere.

“I think he took them,” I said when Guku asked if any were missing.

“They’re in the fort,” he replied quickly without looking. “I can smell them,” he elaborated when he could sense my curiosity.

I pulled the flap at the front of the fort back and peeked inside. There were Christmas lights strung up along the back wall and a mountain of pillows piled up against the front of the sofa for back support. I crawled inside to check my mochi count and noticed two things immediately. First, the floor was very well-cushioned. I don’t know how many blankets they used, but it was really comfortable. Second, there were no traces of anyone else’s scents. This little room smelled completely like my alpha and me. While in this position, my belt buckle stabbed my stomach and I remembered that I was still wearing the clothes from our date. I disappeared for a moment to put on one of my alpha’s big shirts. I didn’t bother wearing pants because I knew I wouldn’t have them on for long.

“They must have brought your pillows and blankets with them,” I said when I reentered the fort.

“That sounds like something they would do.” He chuckled as he followed me inside.

It was big enough for both of us to comfortably lay down, with some room left over. There were a couple of cold bottles of water and the desserts in the corner, along with a few snacks. My alpha propped the door open and got everything ready to start the show. I made sure all of my sweets were accounted for when I saw the mochi box. My life mate sat down and situated himself against some of the pillows. I thought for a moment where I wanted to be and decided to wiggle my way in between his legs. He wrapped his arms around my waist, pulling me flush against his chest. I liked the warmth and peace I felt while sitting here with him.

“You ready, little omega?”

I nodded and we began the show. The first episode was cute, even though we both thought the main character was a little too obsessed with LaLa-LuLu. I shifted to curl up in my alpha’s lap during the opening of the second part. His hand immediately went to my bare leg. He absentmindedly ran his fingers up and down my skin as we watched the main characters’ internal struggles. The slightly tingly sensation was nice, albeit a little distracting. I got really frustrated in the third episode when Ryoma decided to be a dick and try to take advantage of Izumi. Ryoma was acting like a typical alpha, especially since he was bigger and stronger than the other guy.
“Who does he think he is sticking his nose in Izumi’s scent gland and trying to undress him to see if he really is built like an alpha? Asshole. What the fuck gives him the right to do that?”

I smelled Guku’s scent change and felt his nose run along my cheek to calm me. I tilted my head to the side a little to give him better access. “He’s a dumbass, but he’s an alpha. They’re kind of all like that.” He said with a bitter laugh.

“You’re not like that,” I said, with a smile.

“I’m a rare case.”

“I like that about you.”

I sat up to give him a quick kiss, straddling him to get comfortable. He kept me from pulling away by grabbing my hips and pulling them forward. The sudden pressure jarred the plug inside of me. I let out a soft groan at the sensation. He pulled at my bottom lip with his teeth and slowly moved my body. My breathing was already starting to speed up with the prospect of what was to come. I ran my hands over his chest, accidentally digging my nails in when my alpha began grinding his dick into my ass. The action earned me a short growl from my life mate.

“Sorry,” I breathlessly whispered.

“Don’t be. I liked it.”

He trailed his tongue over my lip before kissing me deeply. I barely had time to get used to the kiss when I felt him opening my mouth. My body was already flushed. His tight grip on my hips, the slide of his tongue against mine, the feeling of his cock pressing into the toy, and how firm his body was underneath me had me rolling my hips in search of more. Guku’s mouth quieted most of my noises, but I could tell I was getting louder. There was so much going on that I was almost ready to have him take the plug out. I might have been ashamed at how little it took to get me ready if I didn’t have a hot alpha indirectly pushing on my prostate. I felt his teeth on my throat, dangerously close to my scent gland. When he grabbed my ass and poked at the toy with his fingers, I decided it was enough.

“Alpha…” My voice dissolved into a string of pitched moans as he placed his hand into my boxers, moving the toy faster and deeper.

My life mate’s other hand moved to my dick. The added pleasure made me jerk in surprise. We hadn’t explored stimulating both sides before, but it felt amazing. My body sank a little, unsure of how to function.

“A-alpha, I’m gonna come if you keep going.”

He didn’t acknowledge my words but he removed his hands from my underwear. I took a moment to collect myself, basking in the feeling of bites and scratches on my flesh. I rolled my hips forward, dragging both my erection and ass over his hard cock. That was all it took for him to ask if I was ready.

“Yes, alpha.”

“Tae took all your bedding so we’ll have to stay here if you want to do it now. If you’d rather be in your room, give me a few minutes to make your bed.”

I looked around the cute blanket fort that smelled like a mixture of my alpha and me. The faint lights illuminated the beautiful structure of Guku’s face and the lines of his body. He looked even more
attractive when highlighted with a faint twinkle. I gazed into the dark chocolate depths of his eyes and saw the crimson shimmering like a thousand fireflies. He seemed more vulnerable than I had seen him before and I knew that was reflected in my own expression. For some reason, I couldn’t think of a better place than this to lose my virginity.

“I’d like to stay here.”

“Okay. I have to go grab a few things and I’ll be right back.”

He gave me a quick peck as he moved me onto the pillows. I wondered what he needed to get as I played with a string that was hanging from a pillowcase. I knew we needed lube, but I couldn’t think of anything else. We had decided to forgo using condoms because Guku would probably end up breaking them. He tried a couple of times and they were too small, even the large ones. I didn’t see the point in us using condoms anyway. We both got tested to confirm that we are clean and it’s impossible for me to get pregnant. He returned with a bottle of lube, the applicator, and a pair of handcuffs. I can honestly say I wasn’t expecting the last item. He sat down next to me and I got into the same position I was in before.

“Are you going to put those on me?” I was a little worried about the possibility of not being able to move during sex.

“Maybe some other time if you’d like to try that. Right now, they’re for me. I’m still terrified that I’ll hurt you, so I’m giving you all of the control. I want you to put these on me when we’re naked. I’m going to lay down and you’re going to get on top of me. That lets you decide how much you want to take and how quickly. Whenever you’re ready for me to start moving, take the cuffs off.”

It meant a lot to me that he was willing to let me go at my own pace. Giving up the majority of his power had to be difficult. I’m sure his alpha was pissed. “Are you sure? I don’t want your wolf to be mad.”

“He’ll live. This isn’t about him or me. It’s about you being comfortable. He wants you to enjoy yourself too. He’s just very eager to have you screaming so loud that you can’t talk for a month. He wouldn’t mean to hurt you, but I know he would on accident. I’m not going to let him take over. I —”

I cut him off with a kiss, smiling at him when I pulled away. “I know you’ll do everything you can to keep me safe. I trust you, Guku. You’re very careful with me but I’m also a tough guy. You won’t hurt me.”

He smiled and gave me a small peck on the lips. He began to mark my throat with little bites and hickeys as his hands moved into my boxers again. He twisted the plug and I dug my teeth into his shoulder. When my alpha growled, I realized that he enjoyed me being more aggressive.

“You like when I bite and scratch you?”

“We’re wolves, little omega. Biting and scratching is supposed to be part of sex for us. So, yes, I do like it. You do too.” To illustrate his argument, he sunk his teeth in my neck and his nails into my ass cheeks.

I moaned loudly and tangled my fingers in his hair. He chuckled at my response. “Point proven,” I said bitterly.

“Are you ready for me to take the plug out, Manggae?” He asked as he was toying with it, sending bright flashes throughout my body.
“Yes, alpha.” I couldn’t stop a long moan from escaping as he pulled my boxers off and slowly removed the silicone toy.

I was displeased with the emptiness and wanted something to replace it. My life mate chuckled when he heard my unhappy grunt. I squinted at him in a threatening manner, warning him that this was not something funny. Before I had a chance to be too upset, three lubed fingers were shoved into me. The sudden intrusion made me cry out, a wave of pleasure hit me whenever he brushed against my prostate.

“Better, omega?”

“Y-yes, alpha,” I replied while arching my back to allow better access.

“You want more or are you all right with my fingers?”

“More please, alpha.” I tried not to sound too desperate but the desire to be even fuller was clouding my rational mind.

“I’m going to have to take my fingers out to pull my pants off. Can you stand being empty for a few seconds?” I could tell by the way he was talking that his alpha hadn’t started to take over yet.

My omega was not excited about that prospect, but he consented. He knew that having the rest of Guku inside of us was going to be better than his fingers. “Please hurry, alpha.”

My life mate gingerly removed his fingers and took the rest of his clothes off in one swift motion. I got a good look at all of him when he laid back down. His cock was massive. It was easily the width of four of my fingers and as long as two of my hands. I was unsure of what to say or how to feel when I saw it. My omega was practically salivating at the thought of taking it, but I wasn’t sure if it would fit. I stared at it, observing how it stuck straight out and curved slightly at the tip. I was intrigued by how exactly it was so big. I don’t have a small penis, but his looks like it could eat mine for breakfast and probably still be hungry. Guku cleared his throat, obviously uncomfortable with my gaze. I tried to think of something to ease the awkward tension.

“You’re a liar,” I said after a moment. “You’re way bigger than the plug and the dildo.”

His face fell a little and I realized that wasn’t the right thing to say. I crawled next to him and gave him several short kisses. “That’s not a bad thing. I was just saying that you’re bigger. I was just surprised. You said they weren’t much smaller than you.”

“They’re not. The next size toy was actually bigger than me. I would have liked to work up to that one to make sure you weren’t in pain. We just didn’t have time.”

“Is it weird that I like it better this way? My omega loves the idea of you being the biggest thing I’ve ever taken.”

A low growl and a red glow accompanied my alpha tugging me on top of him. I fit nicely against his upper body, loving the way his skin felt against mine. He started to shift, not giving me time to contemplate that this was the first time we’ve been naked together. I felt his hands rubbing my ass and pulling my entrance open. He shook slightly as he inserted the lube applicator and emptied it inside me. He filled it again and repeated the process. My life mate then slicked up his fingers again and used them to spread the substance inside of me. As he made sure every bit of me he could reach was oiled, I pushed my ass back onto his fingers. I was trying to angle myself to get more friction when he pulled them out. I cut my omega’s whine off in the back of my throat when I felt him pour half of the bottle of lube onto his dick and stroke it behind me. He wiped his hand off and brought
his wrists together in front of his face.

“Handcuffs on, omega.”

I sensed that was all of the self-control he had for the time being, so I quickly attached the metal restraints to him. “Too tight?”

He shook his head as he tested how strong the shackles were. “I don’t think I can break them, so you’re safe. Take your time and don’t hurt yourself.”

“Yes, alpha.”

I slid down his stomach until my ass met his dick. It slipped between my cheeks and I pressed against it. The glide of his erection over me made me want to sit on it in one go. I felt more trembling from my life mate and I realized that this must be torture for him. The vermillion was getting brighter in his eyes. I stopped grinding on him, much to my wolf’s dismay, and raised myself onto my knees. I grabbed his wet cock and positioned it to my entrance with one hand. The other was used to spread my ass as wide as possible. I lowered myself slightly, his tip pressing against my rim. I parted my cheeks and pulled my hole open to the best of my ability. I slowly sank down, whimpering when he breached me. I aimed to inch down at a leisurely pace, something akin to the speed that Guku used when he first inserted the dildo. My omega begged me to hurry. He wanted nothing more than to let our alpha fuck us into a coma. It was surprisingly difficult not to succumb to that desire. Whenever my muscles contracted, I stopped and breathed until I was untensed. I loved the gradual build of pressure inside of me, filling me more than I had ever experienced. The pleasure started to take over when he was a quarter of the way inside. I tried to quell the insistence of my wolf, assuring him that it would not end well if we rushed this.

It took several more minutes until I felt comfortable enough to lower myself completely. After I fully sunk down onto my alpha’s cock, I placed my hands on his chest. A deep groan came from both of us when I finally put weight on him. I struggled to catch my breath and try to relax my muscles. I felt so full that I thought I might burst. The stretch was mildly painful as my body adjusted to accommodate his size. I was stuffed to the brim, unsure of how there was even room for him to thrust. His dick satiated my wolf’s thirst in a way the toys could not. I was motionless for a long time as I waited for the inevitable unclenching. I inhaled and exhaled, trying to clear my mind. I looked at Guku and noticed how loudly he was panting and how much he was straining against the handcuffs. I couldn’t imagine the amount of willpower it took to keep himself from thrusting into me before I’m ready. At length, I was comfortable moving just a little. I experimentally rocked my hips forward and felt sparks inside of me.

“Fuck!” I cried out as I leaned forward and he slipped in a little deeper.

Because he was so hard, that little bit of movement put a good amount of pressure against my prostate. My claws dug into his chest as a response. I circled my hips over and over again, each motion pulsing throughout my whole body. The combination of fullness and pleasure made me moan louder than I ever had before. As I shamelessly continued to indulge myself, my legs began to shake. My eyes rolled into the back of my head and my claws sank deeper into my alpha’s flesh. The chase of my release was stopped when Guku grabbed my wrists and let out a warning growl.

“Stop, omega.”

“Wanna come, alpha. Please...”

“Release me and I’ll make you come. If you do it by yourself, I promise you’ll wish you hadn’t.”
His eyes were almost completely red, signaling that his wolf was talking. My omega whimpered and bared his neck in submission. I echoed the sound and contemplated my next move. I was curious and afraid to know what he would do to me if I continued.

“Unlock the handcuffs, omega,” he barked in one of the lowest tones I had ever heard him use.

The way his face changed and his eyes started glowing had me scrambling to find the keys. I didn’t want to anger my life mate more than I already had. When I freed him, he moved his hands to my hips and bent his knees. I hadn’t realized I was still holding myself up until he simultaneously rammed into me and pulled all the way down onto his cock.

“Fuck, alpha!” I screamed, heat and tension igniting something deep within.

He rolled his hips into me, keeping my body still as he repeatedly pressed into my most sensitive spot. His claws dug into my skin hard enough to draw blood as he rocked with fast, controlled movements. I tossed my head back, unable to stop the moans and harsh breaths that spilled from me.

“Is this what you wanted, omega?”

“Yes, alph— Ah!” I was cut off by a change in angle that gave me even more direct stimulation.

A few minutes later, my lower half began vibrating. It was so much that I couldn’t process everything I was feeling. I couldn’t even think about the fact that I was about to come from him simply moving inside of me. I vaguely registered a tightness in my abdomen before I felt something completely new. It was the sensation of too much, not enough, and then a sudden blankness as my orgasm ripped through me—more powerful than any I had before. Cum shot across Guku’s stomach and chest. My vision spotted as I trembled. With no strength left, I feebly toppled into the mess. I fought to breathe normally while laying on my life mate. When my muscles finally stopped spasming, my alpha flipped me over and pinned me to the ground. The unexpected movement made me cry out from oversensitivity because he was still buried deep inside of me.

“I’ve waited as long as I can, omega. Your body is mine now.”

Those words fanned the flame that was started when I released Guku, a primal instinct that I couldn’t quite comprehend. My wolf responded before I had a chance to think about his statement. “Take me, alpha. I’m yours.”

He snarled, causing me to tilt my head slightly. He latched his fangs underneath my ear as he slowly drew back and pushed forward. The sensation added another level of enjoyment I wouldn’t have thought possible. I could feel the blood trickling down my neck before he licked it up. He alternated sucking and biting my throat while gently thrusting in and out of me. As long as he avoided my scent gland, we wouldn’t be mated—a fact that he took full advantage of once he found out that each deep wound caused my muscles to clench and my cock to twitch weakly. I wrapped my legs around his waist when he straightened and pulled away. He yanked my hips upward and slid a pillow underneath them quickly, giving him better access. Each time he bottomed out and rolled his hips, my mouth hung open and noises unabashedly tumbled from my lips. He found a steady, slow pace and focused on rocking against my prostate as much as he could. After a few minutes, it began to be a little uncomfortable.

“Too much, alpha,” I whined in between gasping breaths.

“You can take it, omega,” he replied, snapping his hips again.

“Can’t, alpha. ‘S too much.”
“You will take it, omega,” he demanded with finality.

“Yes, alpha.”

He continued to pull out halfway and thrust back in. Every jolt rippled through me until it hit a wall and reverberated back to its source. Again, it was so much that I ceased to function—teetering on the edge of intolerable and euphoric. As if he could sense the change in my demeanor, my alpha spoke.

“Remember the safeword?”

“Yes, alpha.”

“You’ll use it if you need to?”

“Yes, alpha.”

By this time, my cock had sprung up again and was bouncing between our stomachs. It was a strange feeling but not altogether uncomfortable. My life mate’s grip on my hips moved to my legs as he pushed them towards my chest. He hooked my ankles onto his shoulders and leaned over me, the pressure on my prostate increasing with the change.

“Comfortable?”

“Y-yes, alpha,” I stuttered as he thrust a little more forcefully.

“I can’t hold myself back completely anymore, omega. I have to do more. Hands on my back.”

There was hardly enough time to comply with his request before he pulled out and slammed back in, faster and harder than before. I dug my nails into his lower back as pleasure surged through me. It was still too much, but my omega was determined to take it—determined to be the best omega our alpha could ever have. His speed and intensity increased with each thrust until he was pummeling me so hard it cut off the moans that left my lips. He held my waist and pulled me onto his cock as he fucked into me over and over. My nails dug into him so hard that I wondered if he would scar, fingers slipping slightly on the blood. At some point, something in me broke and the overwhelming oversensitivity became a source of mind-numbing satisfaction. Every stroke sent electricity coursing through me at breakneck speed. I cried out several iterations of “harder”, “fuck”, and “alpha” before his pace increased to something inhuman.

I could no longer form words. Only broken screams and breaths came from me as my body went a type of numb that lit every pathway and nerve receptor in my body ablaze. The harder my alpha impaled me on his cock, the less control I had over my limbs. Eventually, I went limp and completely submitted myself to whatever Guku decided to give me. The action was freeing and uncovered more primitive urges that had been undoubtedly submerged for years. When my eyes met his, he picked up on the willing submission—eliciting a low growl and a thrust that was so deep it felt like it jarred the very fiber of my being. My eyes fluttered and I could barely keep them open as he crashed into me relentlessly. I almost didn’t register the telltale shaking of my legs as he began moving at a merciless pace. Several grunts and another growl signaled my life mate’s orgasm. He came deep inside me, branding me in the most instinctive of ways. The thought of completely belonging to my alpha triggered my own release. Fire flooded every atom of my body as I felt the spurts of his cock inside me. He thrust for a bit longer to fully enjoy the sensations. My omega was more pleased by Guku’s seed filling us than by our own climax. He joyfully proclaimed that we have now been claimed by our alpha, marked by his cum. I ignored my wolf’s thoughts as my veins thrummed with more voltage than I knew humans were capable of. Both my life mate’s and my bodies twitched with aftershocks for a few long moments. After we finished completely, my alpha gently lowered my legs
and collapsed next to me. He laced his fingers in mine as we both waited for our breathing, heart rates, and hormones to stabilize. I have no idea how long we laid there in a post-orgasm haze, but it felt like years. Guku was the first to regain the ability to move, going to the bathroom to grab a towel. I didn’t miss how his legs wobbled when he walked away.

“You still with me, Manggae?” He asked in a raspy, breathy voice.

I tried to find my voice but only managed to let out an affirmative grunt. He chuckled as he ran the damp cloth over my body. He was careful with my sensitive areas, but that didn’t prevent me from whimpering when he brushed against my hole.

“Sorry that I was so rough. You’re going to hate me tomorrow.”

“Don’t be. I really enjoyed it. I don’t think it could have been more perfect and I could never hate you.”

“Please remember that when you’re in pain at school,” he replied with a slight chuckle.

“I’ll do my best,” I said as I tried to stretch and failed miserably. “I feel like passing out, but I’m also hungry. It’s probably only been an hour since we got back and I feel like I haven’t eaten in a week.”

“If you give me a few minutes to steady myself, I’ll make us dinner. Do you have any requests? I’ll make you anything you want.” He paused to look at the time. “It’s been three hours since we got home, by the way. We had sex for half of that time.”

“An hour and a half? Holy shit! I really am going to be hurting tomorrow. I demand you take care of me as punishment for the inevitable ass pain I’ll feel. You can start by making pork belly, seaweed soup, and rice.”

“Whatever you want, Manggae.” He gave me a quick kiss before looking over my body. “It’s not going to be just your ass hurting. You’ve got six or seven would-be mating marks on your neck and deep gashes on your hips. I’ll have to clean them and bandage them before I make food.”

I looked at my skin and snarled at him. “That’s okay. You probably have scars on your back. I have a bunch of blood under my nails.”

“Worth it,” he said with a shrug.

“Yeah.” I nodded and smiled at him.

We watched a couple more episodes of Love Stage!! while we ate, cuddling close together. I felt more connected to him than I had before, if that was even possible. Guku fawned over me for the rest of the night. He insisted that I should rest, even alternating heat and cold on my back and ass to lessen the damage and potential pain. Before we went to sleep, he made me take some pain reducers and applied some numbing cream to my rim. He also seemed more attached to me than I remembered him being. We cuddled up in freshly washed sheets after taking a bath together. It was incredibly domestic and felt right. My omega reminded me that was because Guku was our mate. For the first time since he started making these claims, I couldn’t find a reason to argue with my wolf. I fell asleep that night, wrapped in the embrace of my alpha and a sense of fulfillment I could have never even dreamed of achieving—one that had me wondering how I survived without it for so long.
So, what did you all think? I wanted to highlight some of the less glamorous parts of sex, so I made it a little more realistic than some of the sexual encounters you might be used to. However, I still wanted to give them a "normal" first time. I hope you liked it. As some of you know, I'm uncomfortable writing smut. I know you've all been waiting for this. I hope it lived up to your expectations.

Also, JEONG GU K IS COURTING JI MIN!!!!! AHHHHHH!!!!!

*Ahem* Sorry... I'll be serious now. I want to thank you all for reading and for being patient with me while I was writing this chapter. I know it's a week late, but this was difficult to write. Please let me know what you think!
Conflicting Feelings

Chapter Notes

Thank you for being patient, once again!

TW: mentions of past sexual harassment and discussions of people not helping with the situation/feelings of helplessness

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Holy shit!” Mi Mi exclaimed when she saw me enter the lunchroom on Guku’s back. “Can you seriously not walk? Did he really go that hard?”

I looked around at the eager faces of the pack. Everyone was awaiting my answer, except Jang Mi. Her expression made me want to give a little too much information in my answers. I decided that wasn’t the best idea. I’m sick of letting her get to me. She’s inconsequential and I shouldn’t treat her like she matters.

“I honestly don’t know if I can walk or not. Guku hasn’t let me try.”

As if he was trying to prove my point, my alpha put me in a chair, sat down, and then pulled me into his lap. He brought out my lunch and began feeding me before he even considered eating his own food. His attentiveness and extra care made my omega purr.

“What do you mean he hasn’t let you?” She asked while tilting her head.

“When we woke up this morning, he dressed and fed me. He hasn’t actually let me walk anywhere or do anything by myself. So, I have no clue if I can actually walk.”

I wiggled into Guku’s lap, trying to get as comfortable as possible. I’m not incredibly sore, but it does hurt some. I wanted to lessen the pain as much as I could. I took my jacket off because my life mate is incredibly warm. The whole table gasped when they looked at me. I had forgotten about all the bite marks.

“Did you two mate?” Dae’s eyes were huge as they quickly looked at my neck and Guku’s. The rest of the table seemed to be doing the same thing.

My alpha shook his head and chuckled. “We didn’t mate, but he likes it when I bite him. I also like biting him. I’ve got a few marks too.” I could feel him move his blazer to the side to show the three would-be mating marks on his neck.

“Most of your marks are scratches though. I didn’t bite you as much as you bit me.” He hummed in response and chuckled.

“Kinky bitches,” Seok called out with a laugh.

I watched Jang Mi’s reactions to our conversation with a little too much interest. Despite my previous thoughts about ignoring her, I simply wasn’t able to. I couldn’t tell if she was annoyed or upset. Her feelings didn’t really matter to me. I may be allowing her to hang around us, but I still can’t stand her. I’m not a very forgiving person when it comes to certain things. Some bitch trying to take my alpha
definitely falls into the unforgivable category. It’s sort of a weird feeling. There is a very small part of me and my wolves that want to be nice and try to be friendly with her. I guess it’s because I know that she’s just some lonely girl whose life sucks. I’m sure I don’t know everything, but what I do know is just sad—her dad died, her family’s businesses are failing, her mom married the dad of her crush, the guy she’s in love with is an asshole, and I’ve taken the only alphas she’s ever cared about. It’s honestly terrible. Then again, the biggest part of me doesn’t give a fuck. Her circumstances suck but they don’t mean she has to be a bitch. She chose to be that way, so I have no sympathy for her. At first, I was trying to be a nice guy. Now that I’ve thought it over multiple times, I’ve come to the conclusion that the only reason I’m allowing her to stick around is so I can keep an eye on her. I can’t trust that she isn’t up to something. She seems like a shady bitch on her own, but she’s also involved with asshole guy. I don’t trust either one of them.

“So,” Dae asked with a mischievous smirk, pulling me out of my thoughts. “Did you enjoy it?”

Before I tried to answer, I felt Guku’s mouth next to my ear. “Do you actually want to tell them anything?” His cheek was close to mine as he spoke, so I rubbed against it with my own.

“I don’t know. I don’t really want to go into details, but I feel like they’ll think we hated it if we don’t say anything. I have no idea what the protocol for this is. I’m not a fan of people knowing my personal business, but I feel like something always gets in the way of that. Lately, it’s been Jang Mi.”

He laughed at that, nodding in acknowledgment. “She definitely makes you want to talk about things a lot more than you normally would. I think you made your point though. I doubt you’ll have to share any more details to get her to understand.”

“Then, I’d like to keep it to ourselves. Our private moments are ours to keep. The only thing I want to share is our courtship.”

“Are you two just going to sit there and whisper or are you going to answer my question?” Dae’s smile got wider when I shot him a dirty look. He knew he was being a pain in the ass.

“It’s none of your business,” I said with a snarky smile.

“You’re no fun!” Tae called out when it was obvious that we weren’t going to say anything.

“The only person who has to think I’m fun is Guku, so I don’t care what you think.” I shrugged at Tae’s scandalized look.

Mi Mi nodded and laughed. “I figured as much. Ji Ji is pretty private. If Jang Mi hadn’t brought out his inner omega bitch, we probably wouldn’t have ever known about them having sex. If you won’t tell us about him claiming you, will you at least tell us about the rest of the date? Was it special? Did you like your sweets? I’m probably the only one who’s interested in anything other than your sex life, but I’m the only one who matters anyway. Well, me and Chi.” She looked at Chi and then blushed.

“It was great. Guku brought me the desserts and Japanese camellias before we left to go see Nabi at the cat cafe. We went to an escape room. It was a lot of fun, even when we got into a fight over one of the clues. We had to find numbers underneath rocks and add them together to get the code for a box. We didn’t realize we missed a rock, so we kept arguing over the math. He kept saying it was wrong, but I have the highest scores of our grade in math. I knew it wasn’t wrong. We ended up calling for help and they told us to keep looking around because we overlooked part of the puzzle.”

I could feel the huge smile on my face as I spoke. I was laughing and recounting the tale like it was the most interesting story I’d ever heard. I could tell by everyone else’s faces that it really wasn’t as
amusing as I thought it was.

“He’s better at math than me. There’s no shame in that. I hate math.” My life mate shrugged and chuckled.

“That makes three things—I’m more flexible, I’m better at Tetris, and I’m better at math. I’ll take what I can get.”

Guku brought out his lunch and ate while I finished telling everyone about our date. “After we beat the escape room, in record time, we went to a karaoke room. We performed a bunch of girl group songs.”

“You didn’t show him did you?” Mi Mi asked with wide eyes and an excited voice.

“I did.”

“Oh, my goddess! I would have killed to be able to see how that went. Which ones did you do?”

“Oh!’ and your favorite.”

“Are you kidding me? There’s no way in hell you did my song.”

“I did.” I couldn’t stop myself from laughing at her expression.

“You fucking whore,” she said, shaking her head and laughing incredulously.

“Would someone like to share what’s going on?” Yunie asked. I had forgotten that it wasn’t just Mi Mi and me having this conversation.

I paused for a moment, unsure of how to respond. My omega life mate answered for me. “All you need to know is that Ji Ji is a whore and Gukie is much stronger than any of you give him credit for if he survived.”

“To be fair, I didn’t make it all the way through your song,” Guku shyly admitted.

“I got a little over halfway and he stopped me,” I clarified.

“Let me guess, the stomach flip during the second bridge?”

“Close. The knee part right after it.”

“You’re a stronger man than I am, Gukie. If my omega did that, I’d make it about thirty seconds in before I’d be dragging her ass to the closest bedroom.”

“What do I need to do for you to drag me into a bedroom?” Chi said with a devilish look. Mi Mi blanched and her mouth snapped shut.

“I’ll teach you what to do, Chi. I happen to know Mi Mi’s weaknesses.” I laughed at how panicked my life mate always got when Chi started flirting. It still made me uncomfortable to think of them doing anything sexual, but seeing my best friend’s reactions made it worth the trauma.

“I hate you, Ji Ji.”

I stuck my tongue out at her and gave an evil laugh. She always loved to torture me, so I wanted to repay the favor. The conversation stopped for a moment before Tae excitedly chimed in.
“Did you like the fort Yunie and I built? It was so hard to make sure that our scents weren’t left on anything but we thought you’d appreciate it. I didn’t steal any of your mochi either because Guk is an ass.” He made a sour face at his cousin, who just laughed at him.

I smiled when I thought of the spot where we shared our first time. It was a nice setting for an important moment between me and my alpha. Even though it didn’t go quite how I was expecting, it was wonderful. It was a sweet experience and I was grateful that Guku was the one I shared it with. I’m used to hearing about casual encounters and horror stories during mating cycles. I didn’t think that sex could be such an emotional thing. It made me feel closer to my life mate, bonded with him in a way that was more intense than what we shared before.

“Look at that smile.” Seok’s words brought me back to the table. “They totally fucked in the blanket fort.”

“I knew it!” Tae and Dae cried out at the same time.

“You owe me lunch, Jin,” Yunie said with a grin.

“You guys bet on where we would have sex?” Guku’s voice was equal parts annoyed and amused.

Yunie shrugged. “Tae and I figured you would do it in the fort because it smelled like the two of you. Why do you think we took the time to bring all of Guk’s blankets and pillows to Min’s house? We wanted it to be like a nest for him since it was his first time. We were hoping it would make him feel more comfortable.”

“Aww… Yunie… that’s so sweet.” I stood up to go give him a hug and my alpha’s arms were instantly around me. “Let me try to walk, Guku.”

He hovered over me and followed me while I limped a bit towards my packmate. I winced a little when I bent down, but I felt a lot less pain than I was expecting. It didn’t hurt nearly as much as my last fight. I wrapped my arms around Yunie and gave him a tight squeeze. It was incredibly thoughtful that he and Tae were willing to go through all of that trouble to make me feel more at ease. They really treated me like family and that meant so much to me. He gave me a gummy smile and ruffled my hair. I also embraced Tae. The hug he gave me in response was a lot more enthusiastic than Yunie’s, which hurt some. The second I made a small noise of discomfort, I felt Guku move the other alpha’s hands away. He immediately pulled me back to sit in his lap.

“I’m fine! I’m a little sore but it’s not that bad. If I can survive a fight with four alphas, I can manage this. It’s not like I’m as beat up as the alphas you got ahold of were. Speaking of, how is Ji Tae?” I turned towards Chi, curious how her jerk of a twin was doing after a concussion and a broken shoulder. With any luck, Guku threw him hard enough against the wall to alter his personality.

“He’s home now. Our parents were so mad that they sent him to a private school away from asshole guy. He’s not allowed out of the house unless it’s to go to class. Mom and dad are making him go to therapy for a while and take omega sensitivity training classes. I told them a while ago that he was starting to go down a bad path, but I don’t think they realized how bad it was. When Guk put him in the hospital, it was a wake-up call for them. Most of it is asshole guy’s fault. Ji Tae wasn’t like this until he became friends with Jae Seok.”

“Is Jae really that bad?” Jang Mi asked with a small voice. She seemed surprised, despite the fact that I told her some of the awful things he’s done.

I was grateful that Mi Mi was the one who decided to answer. I could rant for hours about how much of a dick asshole guy is and I didn’t want to get caught up. I also don’t think Jang Mi would believe
a lot of what I had to say.

“He’s horrible. He’s always been a jerk, but he became a nightmare when he matured. He started making gross comments towards omegas and following them when no one wanted him to. Then, he started trying to touch us and it eventually became more. Sometimes, he would just corner us and try to scare us. In the last two years, he’s bothered me 37 times. Ji Ji’s been keeping count. It’s not just the stuff he does that’s such a problem. He also convinces other alphas to act the same way. At first, we tried to tell the teachers. No one in charge would do anything because they said it’s just normal alpha behavior. The old assistant principal actually told Ji Ji that we should feel special that such an attractive alpha showed interest. That was the day asshole guy attacked Dae. After that, Ji Ji took it upon himself to protect us. Fighting is allowed on school grounds and they all knew he had a reason, so he never got in trouble for it. He’s been fighting for the last two years because of your brother. I’m not saying all of the horrible experiences that all of the omegas have gone through are Jae Seok’s fault, but there’s a good chance he probably had something to do with it.”

Jang Mi was quiet for a while, trying to absorb all of the information Mi Mi gave her. She watched an upset Dae be comforted by Tae. After a few minutes, she took a deep breath. “I had no idea. Like you said, he’s always been kind of a jerk. I thought that was just him being a typical alpha. He’s never been like that towards me or any of my friends that came to our house. Even when he had people over, they were nice. I honestly had no clue he did all of this. I kind of thought that Ji Min was exaggerating or being an ass when he mentioned the stuff that Jae did. I figured he was trying to get under my skin by insulting the person I have feelings for. Jae told me a completely different story about you guys than what I’ve seen. He painted Ji Min to be some sort of horrible slut who stole his heart and then ran off with an omega to spite him. I know I told you before, he’s been obsessed for years. When he called me to break up Ji Min and Jeong Guk, I accepted because I wanted him to be happy. I thought it might also be my chance to get over him. I thought maybe if I took your alpha, he and I would fall for each other. Then, Ji Min and Jae could get together and Jae and I would both have a happy ending. It didn’t help that I became attached to Jeong Guk when I saw him.

“I know you have no reason to believe me, but I’m not usually this much of a bitch. I’m definitely mean, I can admit that, but I’m not always this bad. Something about seeing Ji Min cuddled up with another alpha after seeing Jae caught up on him for so long made me snap. I wanted to make him miserable for making my love interest/brother suffer. I’m slowly transitioning into seeing him as my brother, but it’s hard. I’ve been in love with him for 9 years and he’s been my brother for less than a year. Anyway, I want to apologize to you all. I asked some of the other omegas here what Jae was like and they all said the same things you did. I’ve been thinking a lot about it over the last week and I want to say that I’m sorry for everything. I don’t expect you to forgive me, especially Ji Min and Jeong Guk. Even if you don’t, I’m done bothering you all and trying to split Ji Min and Jeong Guk up. It was a horrible thing to do and I feel like shit for doing it. I doubt we could be friends after all of my bullshit, but I didn’t want you all to think I’m some horridly insufferable bitch.”

“That’s definitely what we think,” I said with a serious tone. “I don’t know about anyone else, but I’m skeptical of your sudden change of heart. I don’t feel like I can trust you and I’m not really sure I want to put forth the effort to try. We’ve only known you for two weeks and you’ve done nothing but cause problems. If it were up to me, you would have already been in the hospital with your brother. I’ll leave it up to the others as to whether or not we keep you around. If they say we should, I’ll do my best to be nice. I make no promises.”

I didn’t trust myself to make the most level-headed decision about this. A week ago, I was determined to help her get over asshole guy. The more time I had to think about it, the more I realized I’m not that nice. She tried to take my alpha. As far as I’m concerned, she’ll never be welcome. I knew the pack would take that into consideration, as well as all of the other factors surrounding the situation. Jang Mi could be useful. If Jae Seok thought she was still on his side, she
might be able to convince him to leave us alone. There’s also a chance that this is all an act and she’s just trying to gain our sympathy. This goes deeper than just my feelings, so I left it to the better judgment of the others.

“The omegas need to vote because we did already.” Joon’s voice was stern. “All in favor of keeping Jang Mi around, raise your hand.”

I watched as none of the omegas at the table moved. Mi Mi, Chi, and Dae all looked at me with supportive expressions. I couldn’t tell if they were voting this way because we all didn’t like her or if they saw me as the omega leader of the pack. Either way, it meant a lot to me that they stood by me.

“I know I don’t need to ask but I want to be as clear as possible. Who doesn’t want her around?”

Mi Mi’s and my hands shot up immediately, followed closely by Chi’s. Dae looked at Jang Mi for a moment and raised his hand as well. Yungie was absent and I briefly wondered what his vote would have been—if it would have mattered at all. He’s not technically part of the pack. He and Seok went out on a date, but they’re not super close right now. Would his opinion even count when it comes to pack business?

“The final tally is six to four. Jang Mi will be joining us for now.” He turned to the omega in question and spoke in a very intimidating tone. “Do not make us regret this.”

“I won’t,” she responded with a meek nod. She looked terrified.

All of the alphas voted for Jang Mi to stay, including Guku. I tried not to let that bother me as I finished eating the last of my lunch. I’m sure the decision was because of how useful she can be or to keep an eye on her. My alpha doesn’t want her. He wants me. He’s my alpha. I’m the one he claimed, not her. Something about the verdict didn’t sit well with me, but I need to believe that it will all work out. I trust Guku. I trust him with everything.

“Manggae and I have an announcement,” my alpha said abruptly.

My omega was ecstatic that Guku was going to tell everyone about our courtship. The sudden change of topic seemed a little strange to me. It was almost as if he knew I was questioning his previous motives. At that moment, I decided that whatever he says didn’t matter. He can definitely read my mind.

“He’s not pregnant is he?” Seok said with wide eyes.

“Why is your response always that someone’s pregnant?” Jin asked with a laugh. “Two days ago, you asked if Tae was pregnant because he finally decided he wanted to go to school for pharmaceutical manufacturing instead of becoming a pharmacist. Tae and Min can’t even get pregnant!”

“The first time someone ever told me they had an announcement was when my foster parents told me they were having a baby. It stuck with me. Now, I always associate someone having news with being pregnant,” he shrugged.

“Don’t mind him, Guk. Tell us what you were going to say.” Jin rolled his eyes at Seok before focusing his attention on us.

“As of yesterday, I’m courting Manggae.”

The pack was quiet for a moment, processing the idea that we’ve finally solidified our relationship. I knew this was a big step for both of us, but it was also important for the pack. I am essentially
Guku’s mate now. The only things that would prevent our mating would be us realizing we’re incompatible or if one of us became interested in someone else—two things I doubt will happen. The quiet became mildly overwhelming and I wondered if the pack was discussing everything over their link. They’ve been too worried about Guku finding a mate for them to have nothing to say now. When I was sure that the conversation had died completely, Dae spoke up.

“Was the sex that good?”

Most of the pack burst out into laughter and their faces let me know that a few of them were wondering the same thing. The look he had was half teasing and half serious. My omega’s pride was hurt by the assumption that I would have to have sex with an alpha in order to get one to court me.

“It happened at the beginning of the date, Dae. The sex didn’t impact his decision at all,” Guku said, rubbing his hand lightly over my back.

“I figured you fucked him so hard he decided he had to keep you. As difficult as your relationship has been, I thought that would be the only way he’d make his mind up.” Dae’s words were a little rough, but the explanation calmed my wolf.

I couldn’t resist the urge to comment on the misunderstanding. “I was about to yell at you, Dae. I figured you were saying I’d have to sleep with Guku to get him to want to mate me.”

“Hell no. You’ve got that alpha wrapped around your finger. He’d probably mate you right now if you wanted him to. I was more insinuating that he’s so good in bed that it made you commit.”

“You’re such a whore, Dae.” Chi shook her head and laughed. “I’ll be glad when your maturation is over. You’ll stop thinking with your slick.”

“Hey! There is nothing that makes an omega commit faster than a good dicking.”

“Not true,” Jang Mi said, with a knowing smile. “Hot alpha, pretty flowers, cute dates, and a good dicking. In that order.”

Dae nodded fervently and laughed. “True. You get all of that and you better present yourself on sight. If he’s a nice guy on top of everything, you just bare your neck and get it over with.” Jang Mi high-fived him in agreement with his statement.

“Does this work for lesbians too?” Chi asked while smirking at Mi Mi.

“All omegas are the same,” Dae said, shrugging.

“I’m not!” I took offense to the generalization.

“Bullshit!” Dae challenged. “A hot alpha gave you pretty flowers, took you on a cute date, and then fucked you. Now, you’re courting him. So far, in our group, it’s been true 100% of the time.”

“Bitch…” I grumbled under my breath when I couldn’t think of anything to say.

“If it was that simple, I would have been courting Manggae a month ago. Not all omegas are as easy as you and Jang Mi.”

I turned around to face my alpha at the same time everyone else did. He’s often quiet and doesn’t get caught up in the omega squabbles that we have. If he somehow does, he’s usually friendly and diplomatic. I was shocked he would defend me like that, especially if it meant essentially calling Dae and Jang Mi whores. Typically, he would let me resolve the issue on my own because he knows I’m
trying to learn how to react to omegas properly. He winked at me and gave me a quick peck on the lips. He wrapped one arm around my waist and held his other hand out to me. There was a strawberry mochi and three tea cookies in it.

“Happy first day of courting, Manggae. I want to give you little things every day. You said food was okay, so I brought some of your desserts.”

I pulled his face to mine and kissed him forcefully. It was incredibly sweet that he would bring me a gift while still respecting my wishes. I also wanted to use the interaction to thank him for saying something to the other omegas. I hoped he understood that I couldn’t quite explain myself in these moments. I hoped that the affection spoke for me. He backed away after a minute, whispering that he didn’t want to start making out at the table. I reluctantly agreed after giving him four more quick kisses. I turned back to the table and happily munched on my treats. I was met with several stares.

“He’s already giving you gifts, Ji Ji. That’s so cute! Are you going to get your rings right away or are you going to wait a while? A lot of people think that’s the most important part of courting.” Mi Mi had a happy smile on her face as she spoke.

“It totally is!” Dae and Jang Mi said at the same time.

“It’s not though. Developing your feelings and working on establishing a relationship that can turn into mating is the most important part. Flashy jewelry doesn’t equal a stable, loving, and supportive relationship. Any one of these alphas could buy me a pretty ring right now and it won’t change the fact that I’m not comfortable around alphas and won’t mate one. No amount of presents and shiny stuff makes two people compatible. Anyone who thinks that material things can make a mating work is an idiot.” Chi’s speech shut up the two laughing omegas and focused everyone’s attention on her.

Mi Mi stared at her, mouth agape and eyes full of adoration. “I fucking love you,” she said in a not-quiet-enough whisper. I could tell she didn’t mean to say it out loud.

“It’s about time,” Chi responded with a cocky grin.

“I… I didn’t mean to say that out loud. I like you but—”

“Ran, it’s okay. We’ll get there, yeah? I know you didn’t mean it like that. I was just joking because you’re so cute when you’re flustered.” She smiled at my life mate’s wide eyes and flushed cheeks. “I like you too, by the way.” Chi kissed Mi Mi’s cheek and my life mate’s whole face turned bright red.

“You two are cute and all, but stop trying to steal my moment! You’ll get your turn.” I pretended that I was frustrated by their display of affection, trying to make Mi Mi feel less embarrassed. I knew she didn’t want all of the attention on her right now. She mouthed her gratitude and I nodded at her.

“So, what are you two doing for your ‘not important’ but still very fucking important rings?” Dae asked, the last part of the sentence dissolving into sarcasm as he looked at Mi Mi and Chi.

I turned in Guku’s lap so that I could look at him. We hadn’t really discussed the rings yet, so I was just as curious as everyone else. The alphas were quietly watching our interactions, probably asking my alpha questions over the pack link. They seemed content just observing and gaining insight into omegas’ reactions to the topic. There is a possibility that both Yunie and Tae would need to know some of this information soon for their own relationships if they decided to court their omegas. I’m sure watching Dae’s reactions to everything was helping Tae figure out some things about his newly-acquired boyfriend.

“I was going to talk to you about it later, but I might as well do it now,” Guku said after a moment. “I
already designed our rings and I wanted to get your opinion before I ordered them. I tried to find a
good balance between making them subtle and making sure they looked different from couple’s
rings. Do you want to see a picture? I made a sketch and sent it to the jeweler. She gave me a
computer-generated picture of what they’ll look like.”

“I’d love to see. When did you even have time to do this? We were together the whole day.” I was
surprised he managed to design rings without me noticing.

“You passed out last night, but I had a hard time falling asleep. My alpha was a little restless. I
figured I’d be productive while I couldn’t sleep.”

He handed me his phone after he found the picture. The rings were a brushed black-ish metal with an
off-centered, colored strip that went around the whole band. One of the strips was blue and the other
was gold. The outside of the ring was simple but very different than any rings I had seen before.
What stuck out the most was the interior. The inside of the ring with the gold stripe was the same
shade of blue as the strip of the other ring. The band that had blue on the outside was gold on the
inside. They were inverses of each other, made to be a matching set. They were beautiful, but I
couldn’t help wondering why he designed them this way. The rings were unique and created by my
alpha. I knew there was some significance.

“You’re wondering about the design?” He asked quietly.

I nodded, still fully convinced he can tell what I’m thinking. I decided to pass the phone around the
table because the others looked like they were about to snatch it away from me. I didn’t realize they
were so excited about it.

“At first, I just made them black. I didn’t think they would stick out enough for people to realize
they’re courtship rings, so I added the colored strip. Since my favorite color is yellow and yours is
blue, I thought those would be the best colors to use. I toyed with the idea of having both colors on
each band, but I didn’t like the way it looked. I decided to have one ring with your favorite color and
then one with mine. It still didn’t seem right to me though. For some reason, it didn’t seem personal
enough. It also didn’t feel like they matched if they had different colors on them. I started thinking
about what the rings stand for and where we wear them. Courtship rings are supposed to signify that
two people are dating with the intention of mating. Mating means connecting yourself with someone
—mind, body, and soul—for the rest of your life. We wear relationship rings on our fourth finger
because people used to believe that there was an artery that ran from that finger to your heart. So, I
added something on the inside to make them match and to play on the idea of mating and your finger
being a line to your heart. My ring has a strip of gold on the outside, representing me. On the inside,
the part that is linked to my heart, is you. Your ring is the opposite, you on the outside and me on the
inside. It’s to keep us joined together, a reminder of our bond before we’re marked.”

The words took a while to sink in, my mind reluctant to fully process their meaning. Everything hit
me with intense force when I finally grasped what he said. I straddled him and latched myself onto
him, arms almost crushing his neck. Tingles, pressure, and pangs that I couldn’t name weighed down
on me and made me unable to speak. I was overwhelmed by a variety of feelings that were
unknown. I had names for a few of them—affection, happiness, excitement, and butterflies. There
was one that felt as if all four combined to create a more extreme version of themselves. As soon as
that one took hold, I felt anger, sadness, and fear. Why those three? I was so caught up in trying to
analyze my emotions that I didn’t realize I was crying. Guku tried to pull away to ask what was
wrong, but I clung to him harder. I couldn’t explain what was going on and I didn’t feel like trying
right now. I just wanted him to hold me until the negativity stopped. I wish I could stay in his arms
until I knew exactly what all of these things meant.
I spent the rest of the lunch period in that position. Guku seemed to understand that I just needed him close, so he rubbed his hand up and down my back until I stopped crying. That support meant more to me than I can express in words. Although I thought I was getting good at understanding my emotions, this made me realize that I am so far from where I need to be. I tried not to be discouraged as I walked back to class. I was distracted for the remainder of the day, stuck trying to understand why something so precious and meaningful would make me feel such a wide range of things. My omega was incredibly excited about the courtship and the commitment our alpha made to us. Guku appeared to grasp the gravity of the situation and was prepared to assume the role of my mate when the time came. He was at least ready to see where the road leads us. In the back of my mind, all of the unhappiness from earlier lingered, along with my inner alpha. Could these be his feelings? I know he wasn’t pleased with having an alpha, but he submitted. He shouldn’t be an issue anymore.

I thought about the past month and recalled the moments I pushed my other wolf away. I disliked that he’s been present in my mind, giving input and contributing his own emotions. I was honestly hoping he would sort of go away after he submitted. Maybe that won’t ever be the case. I guess living like a normal person and only having one wolf is too much to ask for. No matter how he feels or what he thinks, my inner alpha’s emotions won’t make too much of a difference at this point. I’m already being courted. I’ve already been claimed. As far as anyone else is concerned, my omega, my inner alpha, and I all belong to Guku. That thought evoked more emotions from both of my wolves, good and bad. The emotional reactivity reminded me of how things were before I submitted. Would it be like that again? Would I end up fighting my inner alpha until I was physically sick, just so I could be with my life mate? I didn’t want to imagine having to go through that anymore. If it’s happening for a second time, does that mean we have to fight again? Will my life turn into an ongoing cycle of hating Guku, struggling with myself, then submitting? What kind of matehood would that be? Why would either one of us subject ourselves to that? Should we even continue courting if being mates is going to be such drama? I was drawn back to reality by my alpha’s hands on my face. I had zoned out during my last class, missed the ending, and was the only one left in the room.

“You’ve been out of it since I talked about the rings. Is everything moving too quickly? You can still change your mind about the courting, Manggae. Nothing has to change between us.”

“No!” My omega called out before I had a chance to say anything. I felt the annoyance of my inner alpha, but it was mild. “Can we talk about it at home? I don’t really know what’s going on, but I think it’s my inner alpha. I don’t know if he wants to agree to this.”

Guku sighed and took my hand, leading me out of the building. We decided to skip study, realizing that this was important and needed to be talked about as soon as possible. He carried me home on his back when he noticed that I was still walking slowly and limping a little. I would have been happy walking by myself, but the labored pace was aggravating. We arrived at my house after a slightly longer than the normal journey. Guku laid me on the couch, grabbed a box of pepero, and pulled my legs into his lap. After a few moments of us staring at one another and eating a snack, my alpha decided to break the silence.

“So, what happened after I talked about the rings.”

“I felt so much stuff at once. It was all good until I came across this really strong one. As soon as it happened, I felt angry, sad, and afraid. The positive feelings were still there, but I couldn’t figure out why I had the bad ones. They were in the back of my mind, where my inner alpha’s been, so I thought maybe it was him. Nothing was a problem until I felt whatever that strong emotion was. I really don’t want it to be another issue with my wolf. If it is, I’m terrified things are going to get bad again. I’m so worried that we’re going to have to fight all the time to keep making my inner alpha submit.”
“We will figure it out whatever it is, little omega. For now, I’m going to see if we can at least determine if it’s your wolf or not. Do you still feel the bad feelings right now?”

“No. They went away already.”

“Last time, everything was triggered or made worse by me being near you. If you’re not feeling anything right now, that’s a good sign. Do you mind if I get closer to you and see if anything happens? I’d also like to try hugging and kissing to see if you have a reaction. It will help us figure out what’s going on.”

“That’s fine.”

Guku opened my legs and knelt between them. He stopped to watch me before continuing to get a little closer. He slowly laid himself on top of me and instructed me to wrap my arms around him. Nothing happened. He kissed my cheek, my lips, and my neck without sparking any negative feelings. I also tried kissing him back, just to test if that would do anything. Even as the pecks escalated into a full-blown make-out session, the emotions didn’t resurface. I had to stop my alpha from going too much further because I was starting to get really turned on. As tempting as it was to excuse the sexual contact as more research, I knew we needed to talk about whatever the hell was going on.

“I’m not really sure what happened, Manggae. I’m assuming that your alpha would be pissed off by everything we just did if he was behind the feelings. Maybe it was a one-time thing. It might be easier if I knew what you were feeling at that moment, but you already said you don’t know what it was. I think we might just have to wait and see if it gets worse over the next few days. It might not be your inner alpha at all. I don’t know what it could be if he’s not responsible.”

He paused for a few moments to continue thinking about what could be the cause of these odd emotions. He spoke again when he thought of something else to add. “It’s also possible your wolf wasn’t threatened by the situation, but by what is coming up soon. Your heat is in a week and a half. You’ve never had a heat while your omega has been present. Maybe he just realized how close your cycle is and he got mad. I honestly don’t know.”

I could tell not having a solid theory was bothering him, but I had nothing to offer either. I gave him a few more kisses to help calm him. “As long as things don’t end up the way they were last month, I’m ok. I’ll monitor everything over the next few days. If it happens again, I’ll let you know.”

He nodded and remained quiet for a while. Something seemed to be weighing on him, causing his brow to furrow in discontent. I could almost see the gears in his mind turning as he tried to work out whatever problem he wanted to solve. At length, Guku decided to voice the root of his new concern.

“You know we can’t mate without your alpha’s consent, right?” The tension in his voice hung over us both until it was almost painful.

“I honestly hadn’t thought about it. I figured he’d just get tired of hating you and eventually be okay with it. He doesn’t seem to be too bothered by you after submitting, though. Maybe those feelings didn’t come from him. Maybe they were mine? I don’t know why I would have negative feelings like that, but I guess it’s possible. I know my alpha isn’t happy about my heat either. He hates when he’s not in control. It might be a combination of the two. You know what? Fuck feelings. I hate this shit. Life was so much easier when I was happy, sad, or mad. I blame you.” My tone was sour, but there was no malice in my voice. I hoped Guku realized I was just venting and not actually upset with him.
“I’ll take the blame for that, as long as you take the blame for making me feel things too.”

“I can do that,” I said with a smile and a quick kiss to the top of his head.

My alpha had readjusted his previous position, curling up to me with his head on my chest. I wrapped my arms around his shoulders. It was nice to have him close like this. I enjoyed these simple moments when I didn’t have to think about what everything meant or what would happen. I didn’t have to worry about what others thought or wanted. There was no one to bother us or get in our way when we were alone like this. At the mention of being bugged, my mind flashed to Jang Mi. Thinking about her made me wonder about the vote earlier. I tried not to focus on it, not wanting to ruin this peaceful moment. The more I attempted to avoid the subject, the more obsessed with it I became. After everything this omega did, why would my alpha want to keep her around?

“What’s wrong, Manggae?”

“Why do you keep lying to me and telling me that you can’t read my mind? You always fucking know when something’s up with me.”

“I told you before that your body reacts to your thoughts. My head is on your heart right now. I can hear your heart rate changing.”

I knew there was no point in delaying the conversation and arguing back and forth. I might as well save a few minutes and tell him now. “Why did you want Jang Mi to stay?”

“I have to talk to her and confirm something.”

“About what?”

“I can’t tell you.”

“Why?”

“It’s more of my HADD alpha stuff. You just have to trust me.”

I sighed and rolled my eyes. “I trust you. You know I trust you. It’s her I don’t trust. What could you possibly have to talk to her about? Do you know something that you haven’t told me? It feels like you do. It feels like you’re hiding something important. Life mates don’t keep secrets Guku. Any alpha who’s trying to court me wouldn’t either. Secrets are just mysterious lies and I can’t be with a liar.”

His arm tightening around my hip was the only reaction I received. He was quiet for a long time, long enough for me to contemplate what I said. I couldn’t tell if I said too much. I didn’t mean for it to turn into an ultimatum, but that’s exactly what it sounded like. I put my hand on his head and played with a few strands of his hair.

“I didn’t mean it like that. I just... I don’t like her and I hate it when she’s around you. I thought you didn’t like her either, yet you’re probably the one who convinced the pack to vote the way they did. I bet they all wanted to say no, but you told them your alpha suspected something. Of course, the pack is going to side with your alpha. He’s never been wrong. Your HADD instinct bullshit happens frequently enough for them to never question it. Is it just your alpha that wants to talk to her or is it you too?” The words hurried from me before I could stop them, my omega’s fears seeping out. I knew my alpha wouldn’t miss the emphasis on the word “talk”.

I heard the growl catch in Guku’s throat after I finished talking. His voice teetered on the edge of frightening when he collected himself enough to speak. “What are you insinuating, little omega?”
“I’m just wondering if you’re also interested in the omega who literally slicked herself on top of you or if it’s just your alpha.”

My chest vibrated with the force of my alpha’s growl. He sat up and glowered at me, practically bearing his fangs and readying himself for a fight. When his eyes met mine, he froze. A dozen scarlet flecks began shining in his gaze and his scent permeated the room. I felt myself growing more relaxed with every breath I took. He got off of the couch and knelt down next to me, eyes never leaving mine. Guku’s hands gently pulled me up and into his arms. He rocked me back and forth while humming. It was such an odd reaction given how angry he was moments ago.

“Alpha, why are you doing this? You were just mad at me and now you’re holding me. I don’t understand.”

“It’s okay, little omega.”

“But I just accused you of wanting Jang Mi. Why are you being nice to me?”

“Because you’re my omega. I should always be nice to you.”

No matter how many times I asked or protested, he didn’t speak again. My alpha eventually started singing to me. I nuzzled into his neck and began purring, the tension from before slowly fading away. I’m not sure how much time passed before my life mate grabbed my face and looked at me again. He seemed pleased with what he saw and continued staring into my eyes as he spoke.

“I don’t want Jang Mi and neither does my alpha. Quite frankly, I can’t stand her. I just need to talk to her a little more to figure something out that my alpha is suspicious of. I can’t explain it any more than that. The only omega I want is you. You’re mine and I don’t need anyone else. You’re the one with my claim, not Jang Mi or Dae or whoever else you might be worried about. I’m yours too. Please, don’t doubt that—or me. You can trust me, Manggae. I’m not going to betray the faith that you’ve put into me.”

“I trust you, Guku. I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to say those things, but my omega started talking before I could stop him.”

“It’s all right,” he said with a sweet kiss to my cheek.

“It’s really not though. I upset you. You were so mad. I’m surprised you didn’t yell at me or punch me or something. You looked like you wanted to.”

He smiled faintly and ran his thumb over my cheek. “I’m not gonna lie, I was pissed. Both my wolf and I were offended you would ever say something like that. I know you worry about keeping me, but you don’t have to. I’m not going anywhere that I can’t take you with me.”

“I trust you, Guku. I’m sorry. I didn’t mean to say those things, but my omega started talking before I could stop him.”

“It’s all right,” he said with a sweet kiss to my cheek.

“It’s really not though. I upset you. You were so mad. I’m surprised you didn’t yell at me or punch me or something. You looked like you wanted to.”

He smiled faintly and ran his thumb over my cheek. “I’m not gonna lie, I was pissed. Both my wolf and I were offended you would ever say something like that. I probably was about to start screaming.”

“Why didn’t you? I saw you freeze when you looked at me. What happened?”

“Your eyes were starting to glow yellow. Your omega was trying to come out. My alpha started to take over to comfort him. As soon as I saw you, I realized it wasn’t you talking. We wouldn’t take our anger out on your omega for his fears. I know you worry about keeping me, but you don’t have to. I’m not going anywhere that I can’t take you with me.”

I was struck by the same immense pressure I felt in the lunchroom, unsure of what to call it. It pulled me towards my alpha and locked my lips with his. For the hundredth time, I prayed he could feel the sincerity of all the emotions that I couldn’t describe. I pushed away the worries about other omegas and the shocking revelation that my eyes were shining. I focused only on the feel of my alpha’s lips and his touch. My wolf was at peace in the arms of his alpha. He urged me to believe in Guku’s
words, to acknowledge and understand that right here is exactly where we belong.

Chapter End Notes

So, what do you think of the chapter? What do you think Jeong Guk needs to figure out with Jang Mi? What do you think the cause of Ji Min's emotions is? What do you think of Chi's shameless flirting? Also, I totally designed the courtship rings! If you click on the link in the chapter, you can see the picture. It's posted on my twitter too @HimeSakuraLani
Awkward Curiosity

Chapter Notes

Thank you to Sarah and Virre for being so patient, listening to me rant about writing this, and reading it before I posted it. Also, thank you to everyone reading for being patient.

TW: Discussions of rankism, discussions about what each rank should be like

See the end of the chapter for more notes

My weird feelings didn’t come back the next day and I was grateful. It made the unhappy emotions I had surrounding Jang Mi easier to deal with. I trust Guku when he tells me he’s not interested. It also helped when he put another claim on my body not long after our fight, assuring me that he is my alpha and no one else’s. He made it painfully obvious in the way he treated me and her that he had no desire to be around her any more than he needed to be. It put my mind at ease. Still, I couldn’t help impatiently waiting for their conversation. I wanted her gone. My life mate assured me he would have the conversation with her as soon as he was sure of something. Too bad he didn’t tell me what that something is. That caused me to be in a state of uneasiness when I’m around her. It was strange to alternate between moments of feeling incredibly confident in myself and completely unsure of what will happen next. I still didn’t know if that was an issue with my wolves or me.

“I can’t help but notice that you look like you’re in more pain than you were yesterday,” Seok said with a sly smirk. Everyone’s eyes darted to me as I was finishing my lunch.

“And I can’t help but notice that it’s still none of your business.”

I heard my alpha laugh behind me and the rest of the pack did too. They were always amused when I was aggressive and snarky with them. I wondered if that was because they found it funny that an omega would be that way or if I was just a funny person.

“I know this is random, but I have to tell you guys something,” Jang Mi said suddenly. “No, Seok I’m not pregnant.” She smiled when he shut his mouth immediately.

“We all gave the omega our attention, wondering what was so important that she needed to explain it to us. “Jae came home from the hospital last night. His jaw is wired shut and the fractures in his skull are still healing, but they said he was well enough to come home. They had to make sure there wasn’t any permanent brain damage. I convinced our parents to take him for a psych evaluation. The doctors suggested it but his dad thought it wasn’t necessary. I talked to Jae when he came home and he typed his responses on his phone. He terrified me. I’ve never seen him like that. He was going on and on about how he was going to make you guys pay, find a way to kick Jeong Guk’s ass, and take Ji Min. It was ridiculous. It was a new side of him that I never expected. Even after everyone told me about it, I didn’t think it was that bad. He’s not mentally all there and I don’t know what’s wrong with him. I just wanted to keep you all informed about it because I know he’s a problem. They’re taking him to a therapist as soon as his jaw is healed enough for him to talk. Until then, they’re not letting him out of their sight. My parents also said they’re looking into other schools for him or even having him homeschooled.”

The feeling of relief hit me like waves battering a pier during high tide. I looked at the other omegas
and they obviously felt the same. Of course, there were other alphas to worry about and other events that occurred outside of asshole guy’s control. However, no one could deny the sheer giddiness we all felt at the thought of never having to deal with him again. It’s possible Jang Mi was lying. She could be trying to trick us into a false sense of security. That didn’t dampen the buzz of excitement at the table. Guku wrapped his arms around me and kissed the side of my head.

“I know you think she’s lying. Do you want me to find out?”

“Would it involve you being alone with her?”

“Yes.”

“Then, no, I don’t want you to. But, the logical part of me says you should so that we know. Your alpha isn’t telling you anything right now?”

“She doesn’t smell like she’s lying, but she could be. I’m not really close enough to her to pick up on the subtle changes in her scent. The only way to be sure would be smelling her without anyone else’s scent in the way and listening to her heart. Before you say anything or even start to think about it, I wouldn’t put my head on her chest. I’d listen from her back. I have no desire to ever touch her chest again. I’m still pissed off you told her to do that.” His gruff tone let me know that he really was disturbed by the idea.

“To be fair, I didn’t tell her to put your hands on her boobs. I told her to seduce you. Apparently, that’s how girls seduce people. I don’t understand the appeal, but Mi Mi says boobs are wonderful.”

“I’ll take her word for it. Anyway, do you want me to see or not? Lunch is going to end in 15 minutes and we won’t see her for the rest of the day. I need to do it now if you want me to do it. You can trust me, Manggae.”

I straddled him and wrapped my arms around his neck. “Please don’t do anything,” I whispered into his ear.

“I won’t do anything, little omega. I’m your alpha. I’m courting you. I’ve claimed you. I’m barely acquaintances with her. Do you think I’d jeopardize the chance at an actual mate for some random girl I can’t stand? After spending my whole life looking for someone who could handle me, do you really think I’d betray the person I found who can?”

“No. I just don’t trust her,” I responded in a small voice. His questions put a lot into perspective for me.

“Do you think I couldn’t stop her if she tried to come on to me?”

“I know you could break her neck before she got close enough to do anything.”

“Then you can trust that it will be okay. Also, I ordered our rings this morning. They’ll be here in two to three weeks, depending on how long production takes. Why would I order a ring for you if I plan on messing around with someone else?”

I sighed loudly and nodded. “Hurry up and get this over with so I can stop being uncomfortable with the idea.” I grabbed his face and looked him directly in the eyes. “I will find a way to beat your ass if you cheat on me, Jeon Jeong Guk.”

“I’d let you,” he said as he pulled me into a kiss. He bit my lip gently and patted my back to signal that he wanted me to get up. “The sooner I leave, the sooner I can come back. I don’t want to do this any more than you want me to, but I want you to be calmer about everything. If you know you don’t
have to deal with asshole guy, that’s going to take a lot of weight off of you. I’ll be back in five minutes or less.”

“I'm holding you to that,” I said, getting off of him and giving him one last kiss.

“Jang Mi, come with me.” Guku’s tone was so forceful that she was unable to argue.

I watched her follow him outside with a confused look on her face. I wanted to tell her that she should behave—that she’d be lucky if she only ended up in the hospital if she touched him—but I had to trust my alpha. I had to try to learn to let it go. Mi Mi moved to ask me what was happening, but I saw Joon whispering to her. He probably knew I didn’t want to talk about it, so he told her what was going on. I waited as patiently as a could for them to return, still standing in the same spot. Four minutes and 38 seconds later, they returned—not that I was timing it or anything. Guku immediately walked up to me, wrapped his arms around me, and scented me. I couldn’t smell her on him, except for on his right ear. I couldn’t resist the urge to confirm where exactly he had listened to Jang Mi’s heart. I stopped her before she sat down and pulled her to me. I couldn’t smell him on her front. There was only a small bit of his scent on the back, where her ribcage is.

“You got lucky,” I said curtly, letting her go.

“I know you don’t believe me, but I’m done messing with you. Ask Jeong Guk. He literally just interrogated me about all of that.”

“It’s true, Manggae,” he whispered into my ear. “I told you that nothing will happen. She’s not lying about asshole guy, about not bothering us, or about being sorry for what she did. Before you ask, no I wasn’t able to confirm the thing I need to confirm. Yes, that means she has to stay around for a bit longer.”

“Seriously, get the fuck out of my brain. It’s getting creepy.”

“You like it.” He smirked and pulled me into a hug, not giving me the opportunity to argue.

The rest of the day was boring and not much happened. I felt a lot better after the conversation my alpha had with Jang Mi. She might still be near us, but I had a little bit more faith that things would turn out well. It didn’t mean that I wouldn’t still be on-guard though. My omega doesn’t like her at all. We agreed to skip study again tonight so that we could cook dinner for my mom. She was supposed to be getting home at 8 pm. I helped Guku in the kitchen and we got carried away making out while cooking. It made me think of Jin and Joon, which brought a smile to my face. I could kind of see myself doing this all the time with my alpha. I could almost imagine living with him and doing this every day. It’s been nice having him with me so much while my mom was away. It was sort of like looking into the future, if everything goes well.

“Do you want to be here for the talk? Mom is going to make me relive every detail of everything. I don’t know how I feel about that.” I made a sour face while folding and twisting dumplings.

“If you don’t want me to be, I can leave. I’d actually like to hear it though. I’d love to see everything from your perspective. I only know my own for the most part.”

“For the most part?”

“I can smell your scent changes and hear your heart rate, so I kind of know when you really like or dislike something.”

“Isn’t that weird for you? How can you smell and hear everything and not go crazy? I’ve got heightened senses too and I can’t stand being in a room with too many people because the scents are
He stared at the vegetables he was chopping and thought for a moment before he spoke. “It was hard when I was younger. I learned how to tune out a lot of things over the years. If I’m really connected to the person, it’s harder to ignore them. That’s why I always hear what my family is doing or why I can smell you and Ranie from a farther distance. The pack bond makes it almost impossible to ignore my family. Even though it can be frustrating, it’s ultimately a good thing. It makes it so we always know when one of us isn’t all right.”

“That must be pretty cool. Do you feel them all the time?”

“Yeah. It’s not as strong as what everyone says a mate bond is, but I can pick out each individual person’s overall well-being. Right now, Yunie is stressed but the rest of them are okay. Yunie is studying for a huge test, so he’s freaked out. I wish there was a better way to explain it, but that doesn’t matter right now. You never told me if you want me to stay or not. It’s almost 8, so you need to figure it out soon.”

We washed our hands and cleaned up while I thought about explaining having sex with Guku in front of him. It was embarrassing enough to tell my mom stuff like that, but having my alpha hear it was another level of uncomfortable. However, when I thought about telling him to go home, I didn’t like the idea at all. I’ve gotten too used to him being around. I didn’t like the thought of him leaving. I sat on the counter while we waited to assemble the dishes. There wasn’t any sense in adding the dumplings to the soup or portioning out the rice and side dishes before mom got back. I pulled my alpha in between my legs and wrapped them around him. I wasn’t really sure what my goal was, but I just wanted him as close to me as possible. I grabbed his shirt and yanked him down for a kiss. He seemed surprised but didn’t waste any time in reciprocating. Guku put his hands on my waist, holding me even closer to his body. I nipped at his bottom lip and pulled it a little, eliciting a soft growl.

“You better behave, little omega. I’m not above taking you into the other room when your mom is on her way home. It would probably make her day if she walked in on us,” he bit right above my scent gland.

I latched my claws into his back and my teeth onto his shoulder. Something about the deep vibrations of his growl and the tang of blood in my mouth made me lean backward and drag his body over mine. When I felt him slide my hips to his, I didn’t care about what my mom might end up hearing or seeing when she walked in.

“Are we doing this here or in my room?” I asked, my voice a little rough.

“Out of respect for your mom and our dinner, I’m taking you to bed.”

Just as Guku carried me from the kitchen into the living room, the front door opened. My eyes—which were previously rolled into my head because of how far Guku’s teeth were buried in my throat—snapped open to meet my mom’s. The disgustingly pleased smirk on her face told me that she knew exactly what was about to happen. It was easy to read the situation, my alpha’s hands were gripping my ass, he was attached to my neck, my hands were tugging his hair, and we both smelled like we were about to have sex.

“Should I leave? I don’t want to keep you two from enjoying your time together.” I love and respect my mother, but that smug tone in her voice made me want to growl at her.

My life mate pulled his mouth from me and licked the blood that was trickling down my skin before spoke. “Of course not, Ms. Park. Manggae and I were just finding creative ways to occupy our time
while we waited for you to get back. We’ll finish cooking while you put your stuff upstairs. We can talk about everything during dinner.”

“You guys cooked for me? That’s so sweet! What did you make?”

“Dumpling soup, spicy radish salad, stir-fried lotus root, rice, and kimchi. Guku did most of it. I’m just his sous chef,” I said with a smile.

“You did way more than you give yourself credit for. I’d love to have a sous chef as helpful as you at home. Usually, everyone’s so busy that we’re on our own when we have to cook for the pack,” he chuckled.

“I don’t mind being your sous chef when I’m there. I like cooking with you.” I wondered if my face displayed the emotions of sheer self-contentment that my omega was feeling. He was very happy that we were taking care of our mate, that we were doing things to help and our alpha was proud of us.

Mom went upstairs to put her luggage away. Guku added the dumplings to the broth while I plated the side dishes and put them on the table. We decided to clean up what we could in the kitchen so we would have less to worry about later. As I was putting dishes in the sink, Guku came up behind me and licked the bite on my neck. He sucked on it and pushed his hips into mine. It made my whole body tingle. I didn’t want him to stop, but I could hear my mom coming down the steps. I turned around and wrapped my arms around his neck. I licked the little bit of blood off of his lips, giggling when he grumbled as I drew back. I kissed along his jaw and up to his ear.

“We’ll continue this later,” I whispered.

He grunted in response and led me to the table. Mom gave me a cocky smile and I already knew what she must be thinking. I didn’t want to hear it, but I knew I didn’t have a choice. There was no way in hell she was letting me leave this room without answering all of her questions. I knew she was going to try milking every detail from me before the night was over. I only hoped it wouldn’t be too mortifying.

“So, Minnie,” she began with a huge smile. “I see you and Jeong Guk are a lot closer than you were before I left. Judging by your neck, I’d say it’s a miracle that you’re not mated yet.”

I took a deep breath and reminded myself that I could do this. There’s nothing wrong with talking about all of the things Guku and I have done. I’m not bothered that they happened and I’m not embarrassed that he’s my alpha. There shouldn’t be anything wrong with telling others, especially not my mom. She’s not going to judge me or use it against me. She’s just excited.

“Well, we had sex. Now, you don’t have to ground me,” I said with a flat tone. It wasn’t easy to open up about it, despite my attempted pep talk.

“I see,” she replied with a laugh. “By the looks of it, you were about to do it again before I walked in.”

I groaned and put my head in my hands. This really wasn’t comfortable for me to talk about. My alpha put his hand on my thigh and squeezed tightly. He was trying to give me as much support as possible, knowing what I was feeling.

“You don’t have to be upset, Minnie. I’m happy that you’re acting like a normal omega. I was always so worried that you wouldn’t ever experience what that feels like.”

Is this what a normal omega is? I didn’t have much time to contemplate the thought because she began asking questions in rapid succession. Because I was used to it, I was able to keep up.
“What did you do while I was gone? Did you have fun? Did you eat well? Did you actually go to school?” She was smiling as she talked.

I could tell she was being sarcastic with her interrogation, trying to lull me into a false sense of security. She started off with the simple, normal mom questions to make me think that she was going to skip over the “juicy details,” as she likes to call them. I’ve experienced it enough times to not fall for the trick.

“Went to school, had an OPC meeting, did homework, and went on a date. We had a lot of fun. Guku fed me well. Of course, I went to school.”

“How are Mi Ran and the pack? What happened with Jang Mi while I was gone? How was school?”

“Mi Mi is still a flustered mess because of Chi, but they finally admitted they like each other. Chi has turned Mi Mi into this little shy, quiet girl and it’s adorable. We’ll have to invite them over so you can see it. Jang Mi is still being a pain but not as much as she was. Well, it’s really because I can’t stand her. She’s not bothering us anymore and she feels like a jerk for what she did. I guess that’s good. I still don’t like her. We’re keeping her around for now because my alpha and his stupid alpha instincts need her for something.” I tried to curb the snarkiness in my voice when I mentioned Guku, but I wasn’t able to get rid of it completely. I heard a small scoff and could feel him roll his eyes next to me.

“Anyway, she’s staying for a bit and I don’t like it. I am trying to trust it though. School was school. There hasn’t really been anything interesting lately except tests and projects. Grades are fine, as always,” I shrugged to indicate that there wasn’t anything else I could say on the subject.

She nodded as she listened and ate. I could tell she was trying to balance her incessant need to know every tiny detail about a situation and the obvious lack of things to say about some stuff. I also recognized the look she gave me that told me we’d talk more about the Jang Mi situation when my alpha wasn’t around. I knew she noticed this was a tender subject for us. She was always sensitive to tension.

“How was your date? How’s Nabi? What did you guys do on Sunday?”

“It was… really good,” I couldn’t hide the pleased smile that crossed my face when I thought about the special day we shared. I was so satisfied with everything that happened during our date that I couldn’t find it in myself to be bothered by my mom’s gleeful grin.

“Nabi is fine. We did an escape room and broke a record for the quickest time for two people. We got into an argument about math. We did more karaoke and I told Guku about our idol night. I also performed a couple of songs that I learned.” The look on her face told me I wasn’t going to be able to avoid telling her which ones. “‘Oh!’ and ‘Dr. Feelgood.’”

Her eyes widened as if she couldn’t believe I had shown my hidden talent, especially those two songs. Mom knows how uncomfortable I am with showing off and having people see the different sides of myself.

“I’m proud of you, Minnie. You’ve learned how to act like a real omega,” she chuckled. “Only a real omega would use ‘Dr. Feelgood’ to seduce their alpha.”

“It worked,” Guku said quietly. “I literally tackled him to the ground.” His shy admission made my mom laugh even louder.
“Even if you’re the perfect alpha—as Minnie has called you several times—you’re still human. I don’t think anyone would be able to resist my son actually trying to get their attention.”

I didn’t know what part of that interaction to focus on, so I decided to continue the story. I could only hope that she wouldn’t ask too many questions. So far, the conversation hasn’t been too traumatic. Whatever questions my mom asked or comments she made could change how affected I am.

“After that song, we went home and decided to watch anime until we did other stuff. Tae and Yunie came over while we were out and made a blanket fort. We camped out in it and decided to stay in it until we went to sleep. The guys designed it to be a nest for me so I would feel more comfortable for my first time. We had sex and then we went to bed. Yep.” I nodded, trying to signal that there was nothing else to discuss.

“You’re so cute, Minnie. I’d really hope that after 18 years you know that you’re not getting off that easy. Well, maybe Jeong Guk will get you off easily but not me,” she winked at my life mate. “Did you like it? Was he big? Did you come untouched? How many times did you have sex? More importantly, how many orgasms did you have? Let’s be real, that’s the only reason to have sex if you’re unmated. Did he like it? How could he not? I’ve seen your ass and you were a virgin when he got ahold of you. He even had to stretch you with plugs first. I’m sure he loved it’

A stunned silence fell over me and my alpha. We weren’t expecting her questions to be that in-depth. Her side comments made it even worse. She was always kind of nosy and said things that weren’t appropriate, but this was almost like a new person. She cackled at the expressions on our faces.

“You’re old enough for me to be real with you. Our society doesn’t shy away from sex, Minnie. There’s nothing gross, weird, or shameful about intercourse. Even public sex is fairly common, though that’s been relegated to certain places now. We’re wolves. You have nothing to be shy about. Now that you’re having sex, you should feel comfortable talking about it. If you liked being fucked by your alpha, tell me about it.”

“Mom! I don’t think I can. That’s… I don’t know, but it’s a lot.” My life mate put his arm around my shoulders to console me.

“So, Jeong Guk, did you like it?”

He nodded but didn’t offer any more information. Mom was disappointed, so she tried to get him to open up a little more. “How long did you have sex for?”

“An hour and a half on Sunday and an hour yesterday.”

“Oh? You’ve already done it more than once. Nice. Was he good?”

“I enjoyed myself, if that’s what you’re asking.”

“Was he tight? Were the plugs enough to stretch him? Exactly how big are you? How many times did you both come?”

My alpha stopped for a moment to collect his thoughts. I was sort of relieved she was talking to him and not me, but I wondered what exactly he was going to say. “No offense, Ms. Park, but I don’t think we should continue this conversation. I’m not particularly comfortable discussing my penis with you. Even more importantly, Manggae isn’t okay with this. We’ve decided our private life is ours and I’d appreciate it if you’d respect that. We talked about enough of the details for you to get an idea of what happened. I hope that doesn’t upset you. I want you to like me, but I care more about your son’s well-being and him feeling relaxed than I do your opinion of me.”
A giant smile consumed my mom’s face, to the point I worried it would break. She looked so happy and I couldn’t figure out why. “That’s exactly what I was hoping for. I know Minnie would answer all of my questions because I’m his mother and he doesn’t want to disappoint me. I was curious to see how you would respond, Jeong Guk. I’d actually love to know everything I asked, but I was hoping that you would stop me and stick up for him. You’re a good alpha, kid. My son is lucky to have someone who cares for him the way you do.”

“I’m glad you’re not mad. I know you like me, so I would have hated for you to change your mind. Also, I have something I wanted to tell you myself. I’m courting Manggae as of Sunday. It was his decision. I brought him flowers and candy and he said it reminded him of a conversation we had about courting. I asked if he’d like that and he said yes. I designed our rings and ordered them. We didn’t tell you before now because we didn’t want you to freak out at your conference. I also wanted to tell you in person. There really isn’t much else to tell. I hope that satisfies your curiosity.”

I saw the glazed over look in my mom’s eyes, one that only happened when she was about to cry. I walked over and wrapped my arms around her, just as the tears were breaking loose. She was shaking slightly in my hold. I fully understood the emotional overload she must be experiencing right now. She was never okay with me not finding a mate or not living like any other omega. I know she blames herself for my RHDS because it’s a genetic condition. She’s always told me that parents want the best for their children and want them to be happy. She sees Guku as my chance to experience those things. Mom squeezed me tightly and moved my arms, wiggling out of my grasp. When she clung to Guku, he seemed very surprised. They hugged for a few minutes.

Mom eventually pulled away and thanked my alpha for giving me a chance to be a real omega. She demanded to see the rings, crying again when she heard the logic behind the design. The rest of our meal was spent with my mom trying not to burst into tears at every little thing we told her. I wasn’t expecting her to be quite so sensitive about it, but I wasn’t surprised. All she ever wanted for me was to be happy and healthy. In her mind, having a mate would make me happy. So far, I can’t say I disagree with her. After we ate, Guku and I cleaned up the kitchen and put the leftovers away. Mom went to bed, leaving my alpha and me to figure out what we wanted to do.

“Part of me wants to continue where we left off earlier and part of me just wants to watch something and cuddle until we fall asleep,” my alpha said with a chuckle.

“Me too. I’m leaning more towards the second option. I didn’t think all of that would be quite as draining as it was. I knew she’d be a handful, but I wasn’t expecting her to go that far. Thank you for defending me, by the way. She was right when she said I’d just answer all of the questions to make her happy. I owe that to her.”

“I’ll always help you however I can. You’re my omega. It’s my job to take care of you, even if it means saving you from your mom’s incredibly awkward curiosity. I don’t know how she said all of that with a straight face.”

We both laughed a little at the recollection of my mom probing for intimate details without being bothered by it at all. “I don’t know if it’s because she’s just comfortable talking about it or she was hoping to make us feel so weird that we had to say something. Either way, it worked.”

We cuddled up to one another and quickly fell asleep. It was peaceful and made me wonder how I had ever been satisfied with missing something like this. The rest of the week melted into small occurrences and random changes. There were more sweet moments between my alpha and me, as well as more claims. I wanted to dismiss the sexual contact as just preparing for my heat, but that wasn’t the only reason. I really enjoyed having sex with my life mate. On Wednesday, Dae came to school limping. Apparently, Tae was a little hard on him their first time. No one was spared from the
intimate details, to the point where it wasn’t even fun to pick on them about having sex. Mi Mi and Chi started holding hands everywhere they went and my best friend’s face was permanently painted with a blush. Yungie and Hobi decided they were better as friends than trying to be a couple, but the omega still hung out with us at lunch. It was nice to have so many people surrounding me. It was just Mi Mi and me for so long that I assumed that’s how it would always be. I didn’t even realize I wanted to have friends until a group of alphas barreled into my life.

I thought a lot about what my mom said about being a normal omega and a real omega. It made me wonder what a “real” omega is. Does that definition exist? Who gets to decide what traits omegas should have? It led me to research what makes a real alpha or omega. The things I found were so conflicting and disturbing. I discovered several websites, ran by alphas, that dictated the qualities of omegas. Some of the things I saw made me feel sick to my stomach, but it gave me an idea. In the OPC, we have only gone over how to keep omegas safe. We haven’t discussed the reasons why omegas aren’t safe to begin with. These attitudes and stereotypes have a lot to do with why alphas prey on omegas. I decided to lead a group discussion in Friday’s meeting about what being an alpha or omega really means.

I had Guku come to the meeting early to help me set up the room. We split the chairs into two rows, one for alphas and one for omegas. On the projector, I had him put two quotes—“a good omega keeps their mouth shut and their legs open” and “a real alpha takes whatever he wants, without gratitude or regard for others.” I knew this meeting might go to hell very quickly, but the pack was ready to keep the peace if needed. I felt like this was important for both ranks to talk about. Omegas weren’t the only ones who have negative expectations and opinions placed on them.

If I could foster open and honest dialogue about what omegas think alphas should be and what they think omegas should be, and vice versa, it could help them start to understand each other better. Maybe it could prevent some issues in the future. When the OPC members filed into the room and took their respective seats, I could see some of the uncomfortable and confused looks on their faces. I quieted the whispers that broke out, not wanting anyone to start talking about their thoughts and ideas with each other yet. I wanted their raw reactions to everything. I could tell some people were uneasy, which I was excited about. This isn’t a topic that’s simple or fun to address. It’s supposed to make people feel squeamish.

“Hello again, everyone! Thank you for joining us once again! As you can see, there are quotes about the ranks on the projector. Today, we’re going to discuss ranks’ ideas of their own rank and the opposite. I want to hear what omegas have to say about themselves and alphas. I also want to hear what the alphas have to say too. I found these quotes online when I looked up what it meant to be a real omega or a real alpha. It was curious to see what that looked like. These phrases stuck out to me because they encompassed most of what I found about what alphas think about omegas and what omegas think about alphas. I want to see what you all think. Are these accurate?”

I opened the floor for discussion and got a few hands. I picked an alpha who had been quiet in all of the other meetings. “Yes and no. This is what people tend to think about the opposite rank, but I don’t think it’s actually true. I’m always polite to people, to the point where my friends and family get mad at me because others take advantage of me. I don’t just take whatever I want. I also wouldn’t want an omega like that. I don’t think that makes a good omega at all.”

“So, what does your perfect omega look like?” I asked, curious to see what he would say.

“Someone who is kind but not afraid to tell me if I’m out of line. Sometimes, my alpha gets the better of me and I’m a jerk. It happens to us all. I’d want an omega who calls me out on it. I don’t want my mate to just shut up and take it because they’re an omega. That’s ridiculous. They’re a person too.”
A couple of the other alphas nodded and agreed. One added a little to his friend’s comment. “I think it’s great when omegas stick up for themselves. Not just to me, but others too. Like how you don’t let alphas get away with being assholes. That’s awesome. I think real omegas are respectful of their alphas but also of themselves.”

From there, the conversation sort of spiraled into a roundtable discussion of the different personalities and features that each rank should have. Guku took notes on what everyone said so that we could discuss it after the talk was over.

“I don’t mind being the ‘docile omega’ most of the time as long as my alpha is nice and appreciative. That’s kind of how I am. I like cooking and cleaning, I want to be a mom, I like being taken care of. But, I’m not going to do that for just anyone. I’m not going to roll over and just accept some asshole because he’s an alpha. I’m only going to do those things for an alpha who shows me that he’s worth it. If he doesn’t show me that he’s interested, loyal, and supportive, I’m not wasting my time.”

“I think the best kind of omega is self-sufficient and smart—one who basically screams ‘I don’t need anyone but, if you’re lucky, maybe I’ll pick you.’”

“I think a lot of omegas play into our stereotypes because it’s expected of us. We’re supposed to breed, look good, and be quiet. The problem with going against it is that alphas don’t look at us if we don’t fit into that mold. I hate acting flirty all the time and playing mind games to get what I want. I used to do it so much because I didn’t think I’d ever get an alpha if I didn’t. Don’t get me wrong, I’m definitely a flirt. I’m just not as bad as I pretended to be.” Dae’s confession seemed to surprise everyone except Tae. Perhaps he was more than what our group gave him credit for.

“Even more than that,” Chi added, “we have such a double standard. We’re supposed to be cute and want to have sex with alphas, but we’re seen as whores if we do. Alphas need to make up their minds or fuck each other.” The statement caused some of the omegas to laugh, as well as Joon.

I went ahead and stopped the omega discussion so we could focus on alphas too. I was already pleased with the amount of participation from both ranks and I was eager to hear what everyone had to say about alphas.

“I’m sick of some alphas giving all of us a bad reputation. My wolf and I have never wanted to sleep around and see how much slick we could get. From the moment I met my boyfriend, I wanted him to be my mate. I personally don’t see the appeal in breaking hearts and I know a lot of other alphas like that.”

“I had a few friends who were absolute dicks. They would cheat on their omega and claim that it was natural to want to fuck more than one person. Then, if their omega was even around another alpha, they would flip out. You can’t be insanely jealous and possessive but also be an asshole when your omega gets mad that you cheated. Even if you wanted to sleep with multiple people, there are ways to do that without hurting anyone. You could avoid getting into a relationship or have any type of poly relationship, really anything that involves open communication and actually talking about the fact that this person isn’t going to be the only one you’re with.”

“I hate it when alphas don’t stick up for their omegas. I was with a friend of mine and her alpha’s friends were talking about how ridiculous it was that an omega wanted to compete with alphas in track. She runs track and she thought it was great because it showed a little more equality. Her alpha didn’t agree with his friends, but he didn’t tell them that wasn’t okay either. It broke her heart.”

“I think a real alpha is someone who pays attention to the little things, on top of the big ones. By nature, they’re protective and want to provide. That’s really important to omegas, don’t get me wrong. But, it’s also nice when my alpha actually cares about the things I think and feel. I melt into a
little puddle of goo and love when he asks me how something went that I told him about a month ago or listens to me rant about my day and is actually interested. If he actually cares enough to insert himself into my life, it shows me that he sees me as an equal.”

“As an alpha, we all sort of get a collective ‘alpha boner’ when we see a guy who’s the perfect alpha. That’s part of the problem. Our wolves appreciate seeing another alpha who is dominant, takes what he wants, and has his omega in line. Even if it’s not socially acceptable, that’s what our wolves appreciate. What alphas don’t realize is that behavior isn’t okay. Omegas are people and they deserve to be treated as such. Our instincts are just instincts. We don’t have to act on them, but so many alphas have been taught that their instincts are infallible. I promise they’re not, unless you’re some kind of super alpha. Omegas aren’t beneath us. They are our equals and we need to understand that wanting to care for them and protect them doesn’t mean that they can’t do it for themselves. Just because they have instincts to take care of others and be submissive doesn’t mean they’re weak. I know it’s hard to look past the primal urges, but it’s possible. I’ve seen it firsthand.” Everyone looked at Joon with wide eyes and he smiled at us. It meant a lot to everyone to hear what he had to say. Our pack leader always had wise words for us.

I asked my alpha to put the list he made on the screen and we looked over the different qualities that our group felt each rank should have. Most of the participants seemed surprised that the lists said the same things. Both ranks wanted to be acknowledged, respected, appreciated, and taken care of in a way that took into consideration their rank and feelings. We then proceeded to have a conversation about how similar the ranks are, even though they’re polar opposites of each other. There were inherent differences between alphas and omegas, ones that could not and should not be avoided, but they also had some striking parallels. Overall, I think it was good to show what people tell us we should be and how it compares to what we think we should be. At the end of the meeting, I challenged all of the members to start conversations with their friends and family about what a real alpha and a real omega look like. I wanted to open the gateway for forming better personal opinions and challenging the ones that are baseless.

The buzz from a successful forum and how well the topic was received stuck with me for the rest of the night. It was the first time Guku had been away from me in a while and I was feeling lonely. It caused me to begin overthinking what it was that I think an omega and alpha should be. I’ve always been very vocal about the ways that I believe they shouldn’t act, but I haven’t given as much consideration to what I think they should do. I had my own thoughts and so did my wolves. We got into an argument about rank roles before I decided to focus on something else. I ended up calling my alpha to get my mind off of everything. Fifteen minutes later, he walked into my room and cuddled up to me. Somehow, he seemed to know that I wasn’t fairing well without him. It was a strange concept to depend so much on someone, but I’m not complaining. Isn’t this how it’s supposed to be with your mate? I fell asleep while pondering how sweet he is and how nice it will be to have this forever.

Chapter End Notes

So, what did you think? Ji Min's mom is crazy. She's a ton of fun though. Did you enjoy the discussion the OPC had? Thank you for reading!
As my heat got closer, I got more and more anxious. I don’t know what heat is like and I’m not sure what to expect. We technically didn’t know if I was going to have a natural heat or not, but I feel like it’s safe to assume I would after my last cycle. Rut was hard enough and I didn’t really experience much pain. I’m actually scared of what my heat is going to be like. Guku got me through it last time, which I’m incredibly grateful for. I can only hope it will work out as nicely this time. I’m confident my alpha will take care of me. Over the last few days, I’ve noticed my wolf getting stronger. It started off as me being more clingy and sensitive. I began demanding more kisses, more snuggles, and more sex. Apparently, that’s normal for omegas. It’s called pre-heat, but I think it should be called hell. I’m not used to being an emotional wreck. I’ve also been a lot more sexually aggressive, which has been interesting. My omega doesn’t care if we’re in public or if I want to keep our intimate life private. That became apparent when our date on Sunday was cut short by my omega making me grind on our alpha on the bus. As soon as I whined “alpha” into his ear, he couldn’t hold himself back anymore. We immediately went home and fixed the problem.

I think the hardest thing to get used to is how shameless and adventurous my omega is. My wolf isn’t afraid to shove our tongue down our alpha’s throat at lunch or to pout until he wraps his whole body around ours. The clinginess was decidedly worse than the increased arousal. I could deal with being horny because my hormones are supposed to change during my cycle. The need to have Guku around all the time was something different altogether. It unnerved me. I realized exactly how bad it had gotten when I started to tear up as my life mate tried to go home Monday night after study.

“What’s wrong, little omega?” He asked with worry laced in his voice. He had been incredibly patient with me while I was experiencing this pre-heat craziness.

“I don’t want you to go. I’ll miss you too much and mom left for Busan already. I don’t want to be by myself. Please stay.”

“Of course, I’ll stay. I just didn’t want you to get sick of me. We’ve still got a whole day before your heat starts,” he chuckled and wiped the tears from my eyes.

“I’m never gonna get sick of you, alpha. You’re stuck with me forever unless you get sick of me.” I paused for a moment. The thought of my alpha leaving me made me panic and made me cry even more.

He pulled me into his arms and picked me up. After laying me on the sofa, he curled up to me. “I’m not going to get sick of you, Manggae. You’re my omega. If everything goes well, you’ll be my mate. I already told you I’m not going anywhere that you can’t come with me.”

He altered his scent and I was surrounded by the soft, floral notes that I adored. It is amazing how his fragrance changed with his emotions. I know it happens to us all, but it was more pronounced with him than anyone else. I wiggled closer to him, trying to get rid of all of my anxiousness. Even though his scent change was helping a lot, I didn’t feel completely better. I needed something else from him.
but I couldn’t tell what. Guku’s strong grip around me wasn’t making everything go away like it usually does. I could feel my inner alpha stirring while my omega was still anxious. I looked up at my life mate, silently pleading for him to make it better. I didn’t know what he could do but I felt like he could fix it. My alpha can do anything. He grabbed my face and rubbed his cheeks against mine. I began purring loudly as he scented me. The sweetness of my own fragrance slowly dulled into the tangy, flowery aroma of my alpha. The action made all of my previous worry disappear. Both of my wolves grew complacent when the scenting was done and my alpha began singing “The Little Prince”. It was my favorite thing that he sung. The song sounded like it was made for his voice.

“Thank you, Guku. I’m good now,” I said after he finished the song.

“Of course, Manggae. I could tell you were upset. Was it just your omega not wanting to be lonely?”

“No. My inner alpha was upset too. I guess I’m also stressed about Wednesday. I’m really nervous because I don’t know what to expect for my heat. So, it’s a combination of those things. The scenting and singing helped. Thank you so much, Guku.”

“Is there anything else I can do for you, little omega? I know you’re going through a lot right now and I want you to be as calm as possible.”

Now that I was relaxed, my omega focused on the feeling of our alpha’s body on ours. The way he gripped at our hip tightly had my wolf begging me to spread our legs, or at least drop to our knees. That was one of the adventurous and shameless things my omega had a desire to do. About a week ago, I had my life mate’s dick in my hands and my wolf urged me to lick it, to see what our alpha tastes like. I tried to tell him that’s nothing we’ve ever done before and that Guku’s probably too big for us to actually fit him in our mouth. He reminded me that we’re an omega and that we’re literally designed to take an alpha’s cock however they decide to give it to us. So, unbeknownst to my life mate, my wolf forced me to start practicing. After sterilizing the hell out of my dildo, reading some articles online, and watching a couple of videos, I started to figure out how to give a blow job. It was a strange concept to me, but my omega kept chanting in the back of my mind about making alpha happy and making him feel good. Guku is constantly going out of his way to make sure my wolves and I are content and taken care of. I decided to commit to figuring it out because my omega was convinced this would please his mate. My wolf said that now would be a good time to show our alpha how much progress we’ve made. My pre-heat hormones didn’t allow me much room for argument.

“I’m not very sleepy, alpha. You think you could help me with that?” I pressed my ass against Guku’s crotch and elicited a soft moan from him. Calling each other by our ranks has become the way we express that we’re horny without having to say it.

“What do you want me to do, omega?” He pulled my head back by my hair and ground his hips into me. I couldn’t stop the needy whine from escaping when he nibbled at my earlobe.

“Take me to bed and I’ll show you, alpha.”

I squeaked a little when my body was immediately hoisted off of the sofa and transported into my bedroom. He threw me on the bed. It always made me a little flustered when he just tossed me around like I wasn’t the strongest omega in the world. When he moved to take off his clothes, I stopped him and told him that I wanted to do it myself. He seemed surprised by my request but allowed me to undress him. There was something inherently primal about the reaction my omega had to seeing our alpha shirtless. I’m not sure if it was the beautiful tone of his skin, the promise of what was to come, or the taut muscles that were uncovered. Whatever it was always had my wolf practically drooling. It wasn’t until I felt Guku’s hand under my chin, forcing me to look up at him, that I realized I was staring.
“You okay?”

I nodded and replied with something that I would normally choose to keep to myself. “You’re really attractive and I like seeing you shirtless. Naked in general really, but especially shirtless.”

His eyes widened at my admission and he got a shy smile on his face. We didn’t often give each other compliments, so I’m sure he wasn’t expecting me to say that. His almost embarrassed reaction was endearing. I smiled at him and put my hands on his chest. He wasn’t much taller than me and he wasn’t that much bigger than me, but I always felt small next to him. I traced the soft skin of his chest down to the ridges of his stomach. I enjoyed his build. He was muscular in a way that wasn’t excessive. He didn’t look like one of those alphas who worked out for 12 hours a day and ate nothing but protein shakes and raw eggs, but he was very well-toned. I could see every divot in his abdomen, as well as the deep cut of muscle right below his hips.

Trailing my fingers and eyes along that line led me to the band of my alpha’s sweatpants, reminding me what I was about to do. My omega licked his lips in anticipation. I can’t say I’m particularly eager to get on my knees for Guku, but I am very excited to see his reaction and to please him. He’s always so good to me and I want to return the favor. I knelt down and grabbed his pants and boxers, pulling them down. I watched his semi-hard dick spring free and a brief bout of nervousness coursed through me. I fought it by grabbing him, running my hand along his shaft, and closing my eyes as I aligned my mouth with his tip. I heard a small gasp when I licked along the head. As I moved to wrap my lips around him, I felt a hand in my hair. I read that response is normal, so I kept going. I wasn’t expecting to be stopped by my alpha.

“You don’t have to do that, little omega. I don’t want you to hurt yourself.” His voice was soft and concerned, making me open my eyes. His gaze was just as tender as his tone.

“I want to try. Plus, I’ve been practicing.”

His eyes flashed red and his grip on my hair tightened. Guku’s scent spiked and I was genuinely afraid that I had done something wrong for a moment. I could tell he was struggling with himself as I tried to figure out why he was mad. I only said that I had been practicing to give blow jobs. Oh, goddess. He probably thought I meant that I practiced on someone. I could see why he was angry.

“No, alpha!” I cried out, making him look at me. “I used a toy, not a person. I’d never cheat on you.” I couldn’t silence the whine that came from my omega at his assumption. Our alpha thinks we’re unfaithful.

My life mate immediately went to his knees and took my face in his hands. He gave my cheeks soft pecks as he forced me to look into his eyes. “I know you wouldn’t do that, Manggae. It was a moment of panic because I’m honestly very jealous and possessive, at least my wolf is. He heard that you practiced and figured that must have been with someone. I’m sorry. I don’t actually think you’d be with another person while you’re with me.” He gave me a few more kisses before he let my face go.

“I’m sorry too. I wasn’t very clear.” I lifted myself up and wrapped my arms around his neck.

“Why did you want to learn how to do that anyway?”

“My omega said you’d like it and it would make you happy.”

“You make me happy, little omega. You don’t have to do something just because you think I’ll like
it. I don’t want you to do anything you might be uncomfortable with.”

“I wanted to do it. Well, my omega wanted to do it and convinced me it was a good idea. I kind of wanted to see if I could since I practiced.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes.”

“Then, show me what you practiced, omega.”

“Sit on the bed, alpha.” I heard him stifle a growl and I immediately corrected myself. “Please sit on the bed, alpha.”

I knew Guku wasn’t like that, but I also had to respect the fact that his alpha was. We both made sincere efforts to compromise. He tried to hold in his dominance and I tried to be more submissive. For the most part, it worked rather well. He was always respectful of me when I forgot to ask instead of telling him to do something. He didn’t growl at me or get angry. A lot of the time he didn’t even care. It was only when we were about to have sex that it became enough of an issue for him to voice it.

“Please get comfortable, alpha.”

He propped himself against the wall and placed his hands at his sides. I waited for him to indicate that he was situated before I crawled in between his legs. I leaned over him and gave him a quick kiss before I bent down and grabbed his dick. I positioned my mouth at his tip and closed my eyes again. I didn’t want to know if he was watching me. As much as I wanted to see if he enjoyed himself, the curiosity wasn’t enough for me to deal with the embarrassment of being looked at when I did something like this. I ran my tongue over his tip and listened for the soft noises that indicated he liked it. Guku wasn’t incredibly vocal during sex, but he often made little sounds and growls that let me know how he felt. The first tiny groan came when I wrapped my lips around his head. I slid down slowly, not wanting to overwhelm myself. He was bigger than the dildo and I didn’t want to choke. I took as much of him as I could fit and began bobbing my head up and down, using my hand to stimulate the rest of him.

It was messy and slow, but my alpha kept releasing those pretty little gasps and moans that made this worth it. I felt his hand on the back of my head again and he pushed me a bit farther down. My omega encouraged me to go limp and let Guku do what he wanted. I decided to stick with the plan and kept moving my head slowly. I was trying to apply all of the tips and tricks that I read about, but he was too big for me to do anything other than slide along his shaft. I could feel, in the slight jerking motions of his arm, that he was holding back. My wolf told me to just let alpha take over, to be a good omega for him, but I was determined to do this on my own terms. I increased my speed a little, focusing on my breathing and the way he tugged at my hair. I don’t know how long it took for his grip to grow tighter and his sighs to turn to growls, but eventually I could tell he was growing close. I was afraid of what might happen when he came, yet I didn’t let that deter me.

“M-manggae, stop. I’m—”

His voice melted into a growl as I cut him off by gagging myself on his cock. I didn’t want to let him prevent me from seeing this through. Some part of me needed to know that I could please him without letting him do all the work. However, I distracted myself so that I didn’t allow the desire to be a good omega fully take hold in my brain. I kept the pace steady, knowing that any difference could ruin his chance of finishing right now. I felt the jerking of his dick when the first spurts of cum fell on my tongue. It was bitter, salty, and absolutely disgusting. Before I could yell at myself to not
pull back, I felt Guku yanking my head up. The rest of his cum landed on my lips and a blanket.

“I couldn’t let you do that. It’s gross and I don’t want you to throw up,” he said with a chuckle. “Plus, I know you haven’t practiced that part and I don’t want you to choke.”

He stared down at me for a moment, holding my head still. I could tell his wolf was pleased to see us covered in his seed. I knew this because my wolf was happy about it too. He seemed entranced by the slow trickle of liquid sliding from my lips to my chin. After a few moments, he collected himself and let me go.

“Let’s get you cleaned up, little omega. I don’t want you to be sticky.”

My life mate grabbed the blanket and wiped me off, still a little too wobbly to get up from the bed. He pulled me towards him and cuddled up to me. I was content that we managed to make our alpha come all on our own, I was tired because it was late, and I was also horny. I could tell Guku knew this when he reached into the drawer and grabbed the lube.

“You’re going to have to make do with just my fingers, little omega. It’s a bit soon for me to go again and it’s a little too late for us to wait. I don’t think it’s a good idea to stay up much longer. We need to rest as much as we can for Wednesday.”

I nodded, although I was a little disappointed. Guku could easily have me screaming and convulsing with just a couple of fingers, but nothing could compare to how good his cock felt inside of me. He always made me feel so full. My alpha slid my pants down, still holding me to his chest. I wanted to feel all of him against me, so I held the hem of my shirt and silently asked for permission. When he nodded, I quickly took it off. I love having his skin against mine. The warmth and softness made me feel at peace. I curled against my life mate’s chest and placed my face in his neck. Smelling his scent is one of my favorite things, but the way he smells during sex is beyond amazing. I loved how slightly bitter tones took over the citrusy, sweeter ones that were normally present. The combination of his arousal and sweat never failed to make me want to bury my nose in his scent gland and never leave. When he traced a slippery finger along my rim, I bit his earlobe gently. Guku likes it when I bite him and I enjoy it too. I moaned into his ear when I felt pressure and cried out when he pushed into me with two fingers.

“A-alpha!”

Even though I was still fairly stretched from yesterday, it surprised me. He usually starts with one. He immediately found my prostate, causing me to jump. He tightened his grip on me when I squirmed too much. I sunk my teeth in his throat and he pressed harder and faster into me. My whines and whimpers weren’t silenced by his skin, much to my dismay. I tried to pull away from him and he stopped me from moving.

“You can take it, omega.”

The closer I got to my release, the more I balled myself up on top of him. By the time my legs started shaking, I was almost a circle laying on his chest.

“Alpha!” I called out as one last press to my prostate made my orgasm crash into me.

I barely had the energy to move, the long day catching up to me after my body was spent. I rolled off of him after a few minutes. He took the opportunity to go get a wet cloth and a new blanket. He wrapped his body around mine after he cleaned me up. It didn’t take long for me to fall asleep.

The next day was strange. My inner alpha spent the whole day trying to overthrow my omega. He
wasn’t successful and that gave me an odd sense of foreboding. My dominant wolf was always stronger, always able to win against the other. Despite his failures, he kept trying. His behavior was made worse by the actions of my alpha. Guku was incredibly touchy with me the whole day. It wasn’t necessarily sexual, but he had to make physical contact with me at all times. If anyone other than Mi Mi came near me, he would get in front of me and block me with his body. It was odd, but I credited it to his HADD alpha instincts. He fed me at lunch and even answered for me when someone asked me a question. When that happened, I straddled my life mate and demanded an explanation. I didn’t mind his overprotectiveness, but my inner alpha and I are not okay with him treating us like we can’t speak for ourselves.

“You smell so sweet right now. I know the pack can smell it too, but it’s not overwhelming yet. It won’t be unbearable until your heat starts. I know the others wouldn’t do anything to you, but my alpha views them as a threat. The way he sees it, you smell too good and they’re trying to breed you. I can’t even describe your scent right now. It’s like the way your favorite dessert smells after you’ve been craving something sweet for weeks mixed with the most potent aphrodisiac you can think of—served up on a platter of very sexy, unmated, fertile omega. I know you’re not technically fertile, but you smell like you are. I know that doesn’t make any sense. I’m giving you the best words I can find. You are our omega, so we have to keep you safe from everyone. It’s been all I can do to stay in class and not follow you around like a lost, possessive puppy. I’m trying to control it. I really am. I’m sorry.”

The regret and conflict in his eyes made my omega surface and work to comfort our alpha. I rubbed my cheek against his and kissed him repeatedly. My wolf melted at the thought of our alpha caring so much. “It’s okay, alpha. I’m frustrated, but I understand. I don’t know what I smell like, so I have to take your word for it. I trust your instincts, Guku. You know that. I just don’t want to feel like you don’t think we can take care of ourselves.”

“I don’t think that at all. I know you can and that’s the only reason I haven’t been attached to your side the whole day. If you were any other omega, I would have kept you at home away from everyone. It’s because you’re so strong that I can let go a little. That doesn’t mean my alpha is happy about it. He’s telling me to scent you, take you home, mate you, and kill anyone who looks at you—all at the same time. It’s really difficult to keep him at bay. I’m sorry that I’m acting like this, but I can’t help it. I’m keeping it to myself as much as I can.”

“We’ll figure it out, Guku. As long as it’s not because you’re just being an asshole, I can try to deal with it. The hormones are messing with both of us. My omega has tried to convince me to leave class and curl up in your lap for the rest of the day at least 20 times. Also tried to convince me to do other stuff, but it’s generally centered on being around you as much as possible.”

“I’m glad it’s not just me,” he said with a smile.

Seeing that sweet look on his face reminded me that we’re in this together. Neither one of us knows how to process this or the best course of action. This wonderful person is my alpha, my life mate, and potentially my actual mate. He’s going to help me through figuring everything out. I grinned in return and gave him several kisses, wanting to show how much his presence meant to me. Somewhere after the fourth kiss, my omega switched from grateful to needy. I pushed him back into his chair and ran my nails down his back. My display of aggression had him growling into my ear and digging his claws into my hips.

"I thought we talked about this, omega. If you're rough with me, then my alpha is going to want to be rough with you. I don't want to hurt you."

"Maybe, I wouldn't mind that, alpha."
The whispered words garnered a strong reaction from him. I couldn’t help whining when his teeth met my shoulder. I vaguely heard the protests of others at the table, too consumed by my alpha to care what they said.

"I'll keep that in mind for another time, omega," he said as his tongue ran along my new wound.

"Promise?" The word escaped me before I had a chance to understand what I was saying.

The red sparkle in Guku's eyes let me know his alpha was more than pleased by the question. "I promise."

I melted into his arms and placed my head on his shoulder. I spent the rest of lunch being as close to my life mate as possible. The separation was more difficult than I imagined it would be when it came time for us to return to class. I was in a horrible state of loneliness and on the verge of hysteria by the time my classes were over. I can safely say I've never been as happy to tackle my alpha as I was when I saw him walking towards me. Even though he seemed surprised and he stumbled a little when I lunged at him, it didn't prevent him from catching me and wrapping his arms around me. He could sense my uneasiness and he held me tighter to quell it.

"I'm here, Manggae. It's okay. We're gonna get through this. Why don’t we go home and cuddle for a while?"

I situated myself on Guku’s back and firmly planted my face in the crook of his neck. It made me much calmer than I had been during the second half of the school day. My alpha deposited me into the nest I built in the living room. We figured it might be comforting to me when my hormones are out of control. As my life mate went to grab some snacks and put a show on the TV, I rearranged the items in my nest. My omega told me that alpha has to think it's is pretty or else he’s not going to want to be in it with us. I fluffed some parts and flattened others, hoping it would be good enough. The urge was too strong for me to think about how ridiculous it was. My wolf was convinced this was necessary.

"Do you need anything else for your nest, little omega? You don’t look very happy with it. I think I’ve got a few shirts and a jacket lying around."

"Is it not good enough? I knew it! I knew you wouldn’t like it." I started tearing the nest apart when my alpha stopped me.

"Hey, why do think it’s not good enough? It’s a beautiful nest. You were moving stuff around and that made me think you didn’t like it. Why does it matter what I think about it?"

"If you don’t like it, you won’t get in it." Just saying that sentence made me start to cry. I couldn’t bear the thought of Guku not wanting to get in my nest.

He crouched down in front of me and wiped my eyes. “I’d sit in your nest with you even if it was just a dirty sock. It wouldn’t be a very big nest, but we’d find a way to both fit in there.” He chuckled and kissed my cheeks.

“It’s ruined now.” I could feel myself pouting, but I didn’t care. My wolf was practically howling because this was so important.

“We can build another one if you’d like. I bet it would smell even more like me if I helped.” Purrs subconsciously rumbled through me. Not only did our alpha think our old nest was pretty, he also wanted to help us make a better one that smelled more like him. We spent the next 30 minutes rearranging a bunch of blankets, shirts, and hoodies into the perfect nest. I had to physically restrain
myself from rolling around in it. I may be much more susceptible to my omega’s wishes right now, but I refused to let him completely control me. After we were finished, Guku and I snuggled while watching random movies. My inner alpha kept trying to surface, with varying degrees of success. My life mate being so close to me when my heat was tomorrow made him angry. He didn’t want to give up control and let us be an omega. Every small omega trait that was expressed made him more and more agitated. I decided to ignore it and climb on top of Guku. My weaker wolf was telling me that having sex would be a lot more interesting than listening to the other voice in my head.

“What’s up, little omega? You seem upset.”

“Not upset, alpha.”

He held me at a distance and eyed me suspiciously. I knew he could tell I was lying. That didn’t deter me. Iiggled out of his grasp and pushed him onto the ground. My omega wasn’t okay with talking right now. We wanted something different from our alpha and we were going to try to take it if he wasn’t going to give it to us. My life mate growled at me, warning me that I was testing his patience. I tilted my head to the side and raised an eyebrow. My omega seemed to only be submissive when Guku actually tried to dominate us or while we were having sex—or maybe it was only when convenient. All the other times, he thought it was fun to play around. I grabbed my alpha’s hands and pinned them above his head. I knew I was pushing his limits when his eyes started to glow. I decided to press it further and position myself over him, a sign of dominance. By the time I registered that he had shifted, I was laying on my back and unable to move. He spread my legs with his own and used his knees to immobilize them. My arms were pinned in the same way that his had been only moments ago. I felt the anger of my inner alpha bubble over as Guku towered over me. A surge of heat went through me and I tried to stifle a growl that formed in my throat. My alpha growled back, tightening his hold on my wrists.

“Don’t challenge me, little omega. You know you can’t win. I’ve already beaten you once.” His voice was low enough for me to assume that my wolf was trying to come out.

My inner alpha growled again, not wanting to admit defeat. Guku readjusted his hands to hold both of my wrists with one of his hands. He used the free one to grab my throat loosely. His eyes were dark and demanding. I couldn’t see anything in them except pure power. He didn’t scare me, but I was definitely unnerved by the sight. My logical mind knew that my life mate would never hurt me. He has gone out of his way to take care of me and keep me from harm. Yet, at this moment, all I can feel is the overwhelming knowledge that he could easily kill me if he wanted. He is the first alpha that I cannot challenge. He is the first alpha that I have known to be stronger than me, beyond any wonder or doubt. I contemplated my current situation, wondering if there was a way I could escape. I was pinned to the bed with my alpha’s hand around my throat. I knew I couldn’t manage to get out of his hold or fight back. He has me in a position where I have to give in to what he demands. While looking into his eyes, my inner alpha felt something he had never experienced before. He felt true fear and defeat.

“Submit to me, Ji Min.” The red speckles in his eyes began to shine brightly. His alpha wanted to break free. At that thought, my inner alpha whimpered and backed down.

“Yes, alpha.” I bared my neck under his hold and looked deeply into his eyes.

The crimson in his eyes faded after a moment and his body relaxed a little. “Thank you, Manggae. You’re such a good little omega.”

He’s never said that to me before, but it made me feel good for some reason. He removed his hand from my neck and placed it on my hip. He ran his tongue down my neck, stopping just before my scent gland. I squirmed in his grasp, hoping to get him to go further. We hadn’t explored that side of
our relationship, but it was something my omega was all too eager to experience. After leaving a few marks, Guku released me. He rolled to my side and pulled me against his chest. He stared deeply into my eyes and smiled. Something about the look in his eyes was comforting and alarming at the same time.

“We need to talk a little bit about tomorrow. I don’t want to go in-depth with everything, but I needed to say something. You're going to feel a lot of things that will be very different. You're going to be needy, emotionally and sexually. It's going to be worse than it has been during your pre-heat. You're going to say, feel, and possibly do things that are very uncharacteristic of you. I want you to know that it's all right. I'm going to take care of you. I'll be here for you the whole time. I'm going to be here for you afterwards too. I need you to know that I'm always here for you. I also want to apologize if I say or do anything that is uncharacteristic of me too. Rut already make me aggressive, but you'll be in heat. We both know what that can do to an alpha. I wanted to address it now before everything kicks in tomorrow and I'm not able to say anything.”

I was frightened by the way he was talking, but he always had a way to calm me down. My heart swelled at his words. I knew he would take care of me. He’s always going to be here to take care of me. That thought made the fondness I’ve been experiencing for him explode into that feeling from before. I waited for the negative emotions to overtake it, but they never came. I finally responded to my alpha when I could tell he was waiting for me to speak.

“I trust you, Guku. You'll always take care of me. You're such a good alpha. I'm so lucky that you found me.” I curled up to him and let him hold me close. I am really grateful for him. “Thank you for being my alpha.”

“Thank you for being the perfect omega.”

His compliment made my heart skip a beat and speed up, all at the same time. I was consumed by the strong emotion that I couldn’t name. Instead of trying to overthink it, I considered all of the things that lead up to the moment I felt it. My alpha will care for me forever. He’s worried about my heat to the point he wants to apologize for anything he might do while he can barely control himself. He thinks we’re perfect. I couldn’t help disagreeing with the last one. We’re far from that. It’s Guku that’s the flawless one. He’s the most caring, genuine, selfless, sweet, wonderful person I’ve ever met. He’s the best alpha in the world. The words replayed in my head. They sparked an even deeper adoration and affection for my life mate.

I feel like my inner alpha has tried to deny him for so long that I can’t possibly acknowledge what my feelings are telling me right now. I’ve fallen for my alpha. I’m hopelessly attached. It’s no longer a curiosity or a like, no longer just a life mate relationship. He’s my alpha. He’s my future mate. He’s my everything. I can hear my dominant wolf growling the second I begin to think about the one word I’ve never dared to associate with another alpha. I can feel him about to attack the more I think about love. There it is. That word. Before the two beings that inhabit my body had a chance to clash, I already felt the truth. I love him. No need to fight about it. No purpose in trying to deny it. I’m in love with Jeon Jeongguk, my amazing alpha.

I didn’t know how to respond to or process this new information. I’m in love. The realization had me reeling. All of the butterflies and fluffy, fuzzy, warm feelings that I couldn’t place for so long turned out to be love. Love. Love. Love. I love Guku. I tested the word out, trying to get used to the weight of it. It was quite the burden to bear. I suppose it isn’t far from the importance of courting or mating though. I don’t see why love should be treated much differently. I internally panicked a little when I considered how I should convey my newfound emotion. Do I just blurt it out in the middle of a conversation? Is there a specific protocol I have to follow? I tried to quiet the spiraling thoughts in my mind, only for my omega to make them worse. How does Guku feel about me? What if he’s not
in love with me? What if he’s only with me because I’m the only one he can mate and he doesn’t actually care about me? Sheer terror struck me at that thought. My alpha’s lips on mine pulled me out of my reverie and quieted my fears just a little.

“What’s going on, Manggae? You just had a couple of weird scent changes and then you got really scared. Are you okay?”

The tenderness in his eyes did a lot to dispel some of my worries. No matter how sweet and kind he may be, he wouldn’t be able to fake the way he looks at me. At least, that’s what I’m going to tell myself. I took a couple of deep breaths and steadied my mind as much as possible. The lingering worries in my brain prevented me from voicing my true concerns, so I answered Guku’s questions with the other part of my issues.

“Just thinking about my heat. It’s kinda scary. I don’t know what’s going to happen.” I looked up at him and hoped that he believed me.

He thought about it for a second and ran his thumb over my cheek. I couldn’t quite understand what emotions he was feeling, but the secret in his gaze sparkled along with the scarlet flecks I had grown to search for. “I’m here for you, Manggae. It will be okay. No matter what happens, we’ve got each other. I will take care of you. I care about you too much to let anything bad happen to you, at least anything that I can’t make better.”

The sweet smile he gave me alleviated my previous fears. I nodded and grinned back at him. Cute kisses all over my face made me giggle, causing me to commit to staying in this moment. I didn’t want to make myself even more stressed by contemplating my emotions and my upcoming cycle. I’ll tell Guku how I feel when my hormones are normal again. I don’t want to mess this up. I don’t want anything impacting me when I confirm that I definitely am in love. It felt right and my omega agreed, but I refuse to say anything until I am beyond all doubt that this is what I’m feeling. I don’t know how long I lost myself in my alpha’s embrace, but the night slowly faded.

“Do you want to go get some dinner? We’re probably not going to eat much for the next few days. We should probably make sure we have as many nutrients as possible beforehand,” he asked after a while.

I nodded, quite willing to accept the distraction. Before we got up, Guku looked really uncomfortable. I could tell something was on his mind, but he didn’t want to say it. I grabbed his face and met his hesitant eyes with my own. He smelled slightly nervous. Whatever is on his mind must be important.

“Talk to me, Guku. You’re not the only one who can pick up on obvious emotional changes. I’m here for you just as much as you’re here for me. I want to help you and do whatever I can for you, but you have to tell me what’s on your mind.”

He closed his eyes and sighed. “I’m not going to be able to handle being in public with you smelling like that. Like I said, it’s not unbearable to most people, but they can tell you’re about to go into heat. My alpha knows that and he’s not okay with other people’s reactions to your scent. I don’t want anyone getting any ideas.”

“I don’t know how to change it really. My medicine isn’t working for some reason. When you scented me earlier, it didn’t help much either. Do you have any suggestions?”

“The only thing I can think of is actually scenting you. I don’t think my suppressed scent will be strong enough to cover your natural smell, but it should mask your smell enough to make most alphas leave you alone. I know we haven’t done that before. I don’t even know if you’d be okay
with me doing that, but I think it’s the only way to make my alpha calm.”

“Do it,” I replied immediately. My omega was rolling around in excitement at the chance of our alpha scenting us. That was a very important claim for wolves. It meant that he liked us enough to want us smelling like him.

“Are you positive you want that? I don’t want you to feel uncomfortable with it.” He seemed unsure.

I frantically agreed, making him chuckle at my enthusiasm. “I’m excited to see what scenting is like and I can feel my omega scratching his way to the surface to bare our neck for you. It would make him so happy to smell like you. Also, I want you to be okay. If you scenting me would put your mind at ease, I’m more than happy to let you do it.”

He waited a few moments, searching for any trepidation. When he found none, he told me to straddle him and tilt my head. I had to fight my omega on how much I should expose my throat. My wolf wanted me to fully bare myself, enough to entice our alpha to mate us. I firmly denied the request. I gave Guku access to my scent gland. He gently ran his nose down my neck and paused went he got to the most vulnerable part. He quieted the growl that his wolf released. If my scent was bothering him before, smelling it directly from the source was undoubtedly causing problems. The first touch of his skin to mine sent shivers throughout my whole body. It was a gentle caress, but it was one of the most intense things I had ever felt. As he became more comfortable with the contact, the pressure increased. I didn’t even try to stop the gasps and sighs that poured from my open mouth.

When his lips brushed against my gland, I went limp in his hold. My head fell on his shoulder and my skin sizzled with electricity. I could smell him stronger than I ever had before. The second I felt his tongue I began purring, but it didn’t last long. Those noises dissolved into a seemingly endless string of moans as he sucked on and nipped at my scent gland. Everything dimmed around me. I could only focus on the sensations of scenting and the way his smell enveloped me. It was somehow one of the most emotionally and sexually pleasing things we had done. The only term I could think of to describe it was intimate, in every iteration of the word. I lost all sense of what was happening as my vision blurred a little and my mind became hazy. My alpha pulled away and lifted my head. He chuckled when he wiped the drool from my mouth.

“I smell like Guku now!” I said with a smile. The world felt spinny and looked a lot shinier than it had before.

“Yes, you do. Can you walk by yourself or do you need my help?”

“Help!” I flopped on top of him and he laughed. In the back of my mind, I wondered why I was acting this way.

“You’re going to be a handful, aren’t you, little omega?”

“My hands aren’t full, Guku.”

“We’ll have to fix that,” he said, taking my hands.

I laughed uncontrollably when I realized he had laced his fingers in mine to make a joke. He tried to help me up, but I stumbled and fell on him from my giggles. He held me steady and knelt in front of me. My alpha told me to hold on to his back tightly and I did, happy to do anything he asked of me. The whole world seemed fuzzy and serene as we walked. He carried me to a restaurant that was about 15 minutes from my house. I felt dizzy and disconnected as he sat us down and looked at the menu. By now, he knows what I like to eat. I trust him to pick our food. Honestly, I trust him with everything. My body, my mind, and my heart are all his. I know that he will take care of me during
my heat and for the rest of my life. For the first time, that thought doesn’t scare me. I was staring up at the sparkling lights in the restaurant when Guku’s voice pulled me out of my trance.

“Eat for me, Manggae,” he said, pushing a plate of food in front of me.

I wasn’t sure when the food got here, but I gladly obeyed. We shared the food and talked about whatever came to mind, desperately trying to lighten the mood. Because I was scent drunk, I wasn’t afraid of my heat. Still, he was careful not to bring it up. Eating and laughing with Guku was more fun than I remember having in quite some time.

“It’s a tiny hat!” I said, picking something up from my plate and putting it on my head.

“That’s kimbap. You’re not supposed to wear it, silly omega.”

“But, it’s pretty!”

“It is pretty. I promise it tastes better than it looks on your head though.”

He laughed at my expression of surprise and how quickly I took it off my head and shoved it in my mouth. He convinced me to finish the rest of my food and we decided to walk around for a few minutes before going home, mostly because I started whining when he said it was time to go back. I smelled something sweet and squealed at the food truck serving hotteok. I don’t recall ever squealing in my life, but my alpha seemed to find it amusing.

“Guku, can we get some hotteok? You said we need nutrients. Sugar counts, right?”

He laughed and nodded. “You’re so cute when you pout,” he whispered and grabbed my hand.

He’s never called me cute before, but I liked it. We were standing in line when I heard a bark to the side of us. I looked to see a dog that was fluffier than I thought possible. He looked like walking cotton candy.

“Can I go play with the puppy, Guku?”

“Yes. Just make sure you stay nearby. I need to keep an eye on you. I’m going to be upset if I can’t find you, okay?”

I agreed with a smile and a big nod. I happily ran over to the dog and asked the owner if I could pet him.

“This is Sagwa,” the alpha said, giving me permission to play with his dog.

“He has beautiful fur!” I said.

Sagwa jumped into my lap and licked my face. “And you have a beautiful smile,” the alpha replied. “What’s your name, omega?”

“Manggae.” I giggled as Sagwa playfully nipped at my fingers.

“That’s a cute name.”

I continued to play with Sagwa until the guy tapped on my shoulder. “Are you here alone? You shouldn’t be wandering around by yourself at night. It’s dangerous for an omega, especially since you’re about to go into heat.”

The puppy licked my face again and I hugged him tightly. The unknown alpha grabbed my hands.
and pulled me a little to get my attention. “Did you hear me? You shouldn’t be out here by yourself. Do you need someone to take you home or something? Is there someone I could call?”

“Who’s your friend, Manggae?”

My alpha appeared next to me, handing me a hotteok. He smelled weird and he sounded upset, but I couldn’t process what was happening. I took my hands out of the other alpha’s and grabbed the dessert.

“Sagwa is my friend! And this is Sagwa’s dad. I don’t know his name, but he said I have a beautiful smile,” I said in between bites.

My life mate’s eyes flashed red for a moment, but he quickly collected himself. “Well, he’s right. You do have a beautiful smile.” He sat next to me and nuzzled my cheek.

“Thank you, Guku.” I smiled and giggled. My face felt hot after he complimented me. I curled up to his side and put my head on his shoulder.

“Is this your boyfriend, omega?” The other alpha asked politely.

I shook my head. “I don’t have a boyfriend. He is my life mate and—”

“What’s a life mate?” The random guy asked with a head tilt.

“It’s like a mate, but not.” I nodded and my alpha’s scent changed a little more.

“We should get home, Manggae. We’ve got to prepare for tomorrow,” Guku said in a low voice.

Something felt off, but I couldn’t think clearly enough to figure out what it was. I was happy to do whatever my life mate asked me to do, even if it meant I had to leave Sagwa behind. I quickly decided that making him happy was much better than puppy kisses.

“Okay! Bye, Sagwa and Sagwa’s dad! Guku and I are going home.”

While walking home, I realized that he was quiet and it upset me. I was too worried that he’d hate me to try talking to him. When we got back to the house, I went to the restroom. I found my alpha in my room, laying on the bed, when I finished. He seemed angry and I couldn’t figure out why. I sat next to him and put my hand on his chest.

“Are you not my omega anymore, Manggae?”

I panicked when he asked that. Why wouldn’t we be potential mates anymore? I’m finally okay with him being my alpha and he doesn’t want to be with me anymore.

“Do you not want to be my mate anymore, Ji Min?” His voice was deeper than before and the red specks in his eyes started to glow.

“Of course I do.” I got closer to him and curled myself up to him.

“Then why didn’t you tell him I’m courting you? Why did you let him touch you? Why did you let him think we weren’t together? Do you not know who your alpha is? Do I need to show you?”

His words caught me off guard for a moment. Did I really not call him my alpha? I just realized I’m in love with him and I really want him to know. How could I have missed out on the chance to claim him in front of someone else? I didn’t even think before I began to move, hoping to be able to correct my mistake. I straddled his hips and whispered into his ear.
“Teach me who I belong to, alpha.” The words left my mouth before I registered what I was saying. That didn’t sound like something I would say, but my omega begged to differ. I knew I had to still be scent drunk and my omega was capitalizing on it.

I felt his grip on me tighten and his hand clutched my jaw. I looked in his eyes and saw the red glow. “You don’t really want that, omega. I don’t want to hurt you. Plus, you’re not in your right mind.”

“You promised, alpha.”

He held me still for a moment longer, fighting with himself. He eventually gave in when I whispered “please.”

A loud growl and the feeling of falling made me a little more aware than before. As my face hit the mattress, I wondered when Guku managed to stand us both up and bend me over the bed. I felt cold air hit my lower body, immediately followed by a warm hand against my cock. He pumped me until I was hard and then brought his hand away. I whined and he growled.

“You’ll get what I give you, omega. Do you understand?”

“Yes,” I whispered into the mattress.

He pulled my head up by my hair. “What did you say?”

He was being so aggressive and different than he normally is, but I loved it. I couldn’t deny how much this turned me on.

“I said yes.”

“Yes, what?”

I hadn’t realized I forgot to address him by his rank until he yanked my head back forcefully and entered two fingers into me at the same time.

“Y-yes, a-alpha!” I cried out loud at the sensation.

I didn’t remember him getting the lube, but I was happy he was ready. He deftly moved inside of me, faster than I was used to. He was always forceful, yet this was different. I enjoyed it more than I wanted to admit. After a few minutes of fucking into me with three fingers, I felt my stomach tense and my legs tremble.

“Alpha, I… mmm…’m gonna come.”

He sped up, curling his fingers to hit my prostate with each thrust. “Come for me.”

Something in his voice made me release everything. My body knew better than to disobey him. My omega whimpered when he told me how good I was for coming on command. I was panting loudly when he quickly pushed himself inside of me. I half-moaned, half-screamed at the sensation so quickly after my orgasm. He found a moderate pace and pressed my head into the mattress to quiet my moans.

“You’re not going to avoid telling someone you’re taken again, are you?” He pulled my hips back with such force that I lost my footing for a moment.

“No…aahh…..no, alpha.”

He began thrusting harder and faster, making me more sensitive and weak. My legs began to shake
again. I couldn’t keep in the loud moans that ended abruptly with each snap of his hips. I grabbed on to the blanket to keep myself grounded. This was the roughest Guku’s ever been with me and it was mind-numbing. All I could feel was the intense pleasure crashing down around me. My legs gave out and I went limp on the bed. He held my hips up and kept thrusting, pushing me closer and closer to another orgasm.

“No one else gets to touch you. You are mine, do you understand?”

“Y-yes, a-alpha. ‘M y-ours. Ahh… always yours.” I screamed out as I came again. Exhaustion from the second orgasm and the scenting hit me and I quickly fell asleep. The last things I remember are Guku coming inside of me and telling me what a good omega I am.

If someone had told me five months ago that being woken up by my alpha roughly fucking me—in a spooning position with my arms pinned behind my back—would be one of my new favorite things, I would have punched them. Now that it’s happening, I’ve quickly realized I would love to do this forever. My alpha had me pressed against his chest, using my hip and arms as leverage. I moaned loudly as he hit my prostate over and over. This feels so different than any other time we’ve ever had sex, even after the new experience of last night. I feel hot all over. I wanted and needed him in every way possible.

“Harder, alpha.”

“Where are your manners?”

He let go of my arms and pulled my head backward. He kept thrusting but slowed down his pace. A small whine formed in the back of my throat. I wiggled around, trying to create more movement. He stopped moving and pinned me in place so I couldn’t squirm anymore.

“Please, alpha.”

“Tell me what you want.”

“Please fuck me, alpha.” When he quit thrusting, I could feel the searing pain of lava boiling in my veins. I wanted to tear my skin off to let the heat out. I felt the same stabbing that happened during my rut, only much stronger than before. I need it to stop. I would do anything to make it go away.

If my life mate demanded that I tell him what I wanted, I’d say everything that came to mind. “I want you to fuck me so hard that I can’t feel my legs for days and I can’t sit anymore. I need it, please. I need to feel you, alpha. It hurts. Please, make it stop.”

I was desperate. I’ve never begged or felt like I’ve required something so intensely before. Nothing else mattered at that moment. I longed for him to wreck me because I knew that he was the only thing that could help me now. He yanked my hair again and bit just above my scent gland. Then, he rolled my hips backward, slid out, and rammed his hard cock back inside. He was quiet, content to allow my cries to fill the air. He focused instead on filling me up more than he ever has before, on fucking me deeper and deeper.

“A-al...ph-a...” I tried to speak, but the quick snap of his hips wouldn’t let me form words.

He eventually switched our position and laid me down on my back. When he pulled my ass up and slammed into me, he bit my throat harshly.

“F-feels s-so good, alpha… ah...mmm… fuck.”

“Glad you like it, little omega. You take me so well,” he grunted into my ear.
He began roughly scenting me while thrusting faster. I got hotter and dizzier as time went on. Everything got dimmer as I neared my orgasm. I couldn’t think straight and I could barely keep my eyes open. Something wasn’t right, but I couldn’t figure out what it was. I wanted to tell Guku that I wasn’t okay. Yet, all I could do was scream from how good he was fucking me. All I could do was focus on how deliciously full I felt and how happy I was when he praised me for being a good omega. I heard a deep growl and felt warm wetness trickling down my thighs right before I blacked out.

Chapter End Notes

So, what did you think? Ji Min had a lot of his firsts in this chapter. I hope you enjoyed them! Does anyone else think scent drunk Ji Min is adorable?

I wanted to address something with you all. I'm aware that Ji Min's personality has changed since the beginning of the story. Some of you have concerns that he's too much like a normal omega now. He is still the same person he was before. I promise it will start to make more sense soon. I adore the Alphabet character much too much to just turn him into an omega and be done with it. This story isn't over yet. Please keep that in mind. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to voice them in the comment section or DM me on Twitter @HimeSakuraLani. Thank you all for reading!

P.S. Keep what I said in mind during the next chapter too!
Consciousness hit me with immeasurable force, leaving me gasping for air and unable to move. My entire body ached and I couldn’t make sense of anything for a few minutes. My vision was blurred as I looked around. It took me several tries to make out any of the shapes in my room. The brightness that surrounded me felt like it was jamming a sharp dagger through my skull. After the ringing in my ears subsided, I heard the door open and soft footsteps come towards me.

“Welcome back, Manggae,” Guku said softly.

He put down a tray of food and sat in front of me. He ran his finger across my cheek and gave me a sweet kiss. I wasn’t having pains and we were both fully clothed, making me wonder how long I had been unconscious.

“What happened? What day is it?” My voice was only a cracked whisper.

“It’s Saturday. Your omega took over on Wednesday morning. He was in control for the whole three days. You were so tired that you slept for another day after your heat finished.”

I tried to roll over and found my body was too weak and hurt too much to move more than a little. There was no strength left in me. Even the attempt at wiggling my arm made me feel like the limb was being ripped from me. I couldn’t even groan or growl in pain because of my throat.

“Fuck, this hurts. What the hell did you do to me?”

“Pretty much everything you asked me to.”

I didn’t miss the slight chuckle that he tried to mask. Despite that bit of amusement, I could tell he was concerned about my condition. If I wasn’t so focused on the throbbing in my head and muscles, I might have been touched. I could barely manage a scoff at his words, which made me even more frustrated with my current state. I wasn’t even able to properly sarcastically respond in order to cope with the pain.

“There’s no way I asked you to beat me with a sledgehammer and break all of my bones. That’s what I feel like happened. I bet I’m covered in bruises and bites too.” I tried to laugh, but my voice didn’t cooperate. “Why does my throat hurt so much? Nothing felt like this after any of the times we’ve had sex before.”

He nodded, deep in thought. I couldn’t tell if he was trying to figure out what to say or how to say it. He seemed to make a quick decision and responded to my comments by avoiding them altogether. “Let’s see if we can sit you up and get some tea in you. It will probably help your throat.”

He carefully lifted me into a sitting position and propped me up against the wall. It hurt, but I knew it was necessary. I realized how sick I felt after he let me go. As I wiggled my hips in an attempt to get as comfortable as possible, I felt a painful sting and pressure inside. I couldn’t stop a whimper from escaping. The noise felt like razors sliding down the lining of my throat.

“Why is there a plug inside of me?”

“I had to put it in so your omega wouldn’t have a panic attack. During heat, omegas have to feel full
and they have to keep semen inside of them, or else they freak out. I had to use it a few times during your heat so I could feed you and rest a little. We should be able to take it out now with no issues.”

I wasn’t a stranger to the feeling of the plugs, but it seemed odd to use them in the given situation. I wondered if being full of cum was part of the reason I was feeling so nauseous. It could also be the horrible headache that seemed to grow worse the longer I was awake. I watched him grab a cup off the tray. He brought it to my lips and let me cautiously sip the tea after blowing on it for a while.

“You should stay home from school on Monday. I don’t think you’ll be able to walk comfortably by then. I’ll have to go, since your heat is over, but I’ll be here until then. I’ll come back as soon as I’m done with class to see how you’re doing. Your mom is coming home in a few hours and she’s not going back to work until Tuesday. She can take care of you while I’m gone.”

I noticed his voice was rough and strained as well. I wondered why, but it hurt too much to talk. I let the warmth of the tea coat the rawness and sear away the aching of my vocal cords. It stung going down, yet it made me feel better. After downing the whole cup, I felt like I could sort of talk again. I wanted to know if he was feeling anything close to the way I am.

“How are you holding up? I can hear your voice is messed up like mine. Are you okay?”

He smiled and nodded. He got closer and tried to pull me in for a hug. As he started to move me, I dry heaved violently. All of a sudden, my stomach felt bloated and my head swam. Jeong Guk rushed to grab a bin and handed it to me. After gagging a few more times, my nausea calmed down. Guku laid me down and covered me back up.

“Get some rest, Manggae. You’re in bad shape. I’ll be here. We can talk when you wake up.”

I happily agreed. Right now, I just wanted to sleep until it all stopped. I wasn’t worried about the logistics of school, why I felt this way, or even existing. My alpha turned me on my side and cushioned around me, trying to make me as comfortable as I could be. He curled up behind me and held me loosely in his arms. I fell asleep to the feeling of his steady heart beating in time with mine.

While I was asleep, a hazy scene played in front of me. I wasn’t sure if it was a memory or a dream. I heard a loud growl and felt wetness between my legs. I whined when he immediately stopped thrusting and pulled out of me. He had just barely gotten started. I knew he couldn’t have come yet. Why wasn’t he fucking me? I looked up at him and saw his eyes were almost completely scarlet. The fire in my skin began creeping up as he stared at me and panted heavily. I couldn’t tell why he stopped or what was with the strained look in his eyes, but I needed him to keep going. I needed something to stop the gut-wrenching lava that was coursing through my veins.

"Hello, omega. It's nice to meet you." Guku's tone was adoring and soft. It made me happy enough to postpone the heat for a moment.

"Hello, alpha. It's nice to meet you too."

I don't know why I suddenly felt shy. I guess it was because my omega was formally meeting my future mate’s human for the first time. He was beautiful and I couldn’t look away. He seemed to have the same issue. The burning consumed me once more and reminded me that I only had one goal right now.

“Alpha, please fuck me. It hurts. Please...” I whined and started to grind my ass against his cock, hoping that he would put it back in.
He took three of his fingers and rammed them quickly inside of me, making my head fly back and a surprised scream come out. It wasn’t what I really wanted from him, but it was enough to make the scalding blades recede from my flesh. When I closed my eyes and spread my legs wider, he grunted in dissatisfaction.

"Don’t close your eyes. They’re too beautiful for me to not see them. All of you is too gorgeous for me to not want to look at every bit."

The tender words and tone were a stark contrast to how quickly and harshly he was pressing against my prostate. It was too much all at once and I couldn’t tell whether I should focus on how happy what he was saying made me or how close I was to coming. When his hand wrapped around my dick, I forgot about the compliments. I started to shut my eyes and he let out a small noise that was almost a growl.

"Don’t close your eyes, omega. I want to see them for a bit. I’ve never seen them glow like this before. My wolf is happy to see his omega after all this time."

"I’m sorry, alpha. It feels so good, but I’ll try for you."

I started him in the eyes as he kept at his motions. My legs began shaking, signaling I was close to my release. The faintly glowing crimson of his gaze was what eventually sent me over the edge. When I came, I felt something gush from between my legs. Guku pulled his fingers from me and they were glistening from a thick, runny liquid that covered his whole hand. It was dripping down to his forearm. It looked like a weird kind of lube, but it smelled like honey vanilla ice cream. He wiggled his fingers, entranced by the way it cascaded downward. When he brought them to his lips and stuck them in his mouth, the small bit of brown in his eyes disappeared. The fully vermillion stare pinned me in place as I watched him lick every drop of the substance off of his skin. The low, sensual growls and moans he released were enough to have me squirming with desire. I could feel the burning cramps tearing at my stomach, but my alpha’s unexpected appearance made my omega so intrigued that he was able to ignore it for the time being.

"Hello, alpha. It’s nice to meet you," I said after he was finally finished.

"Hello, omega," he said as he grabbed my face and ran his thumb over my bottom lip. "It’s good to meet you, my lovely little omega."

"Alpha…” I whined, not really knowing why or what I wanted. I felt shy again and overwhelmed by being able to meet my alpha. Most people’s wolves don’t meet each other until they mate.

"Does it hurt, omega? I’m sorry. I got carried away with your slick."

"I can’t make slick, alpha. The doctor said—"

I was cut off by him inserting his fingers inside of me again. "You’re definitely wet here, little omega. It doesn’t matter what the doctor said, you’re making slick."

His eyes were slowly regaining some of their normal color as he spoke. Somehow, even in the middle of his rut, my life mate managed to control his wolf. I was impressed by his strength but quickly lost myself again in the pleasure he was giving me. I could feel the slick spill from my hole in spurts as he moved inside of me. He stopped abruptly and pulled his fingers out. It was nothing short of erotic to witness my alpha panting, moaning, growling, and lost in satisfaction—all because of me. The longer he spent cleaning his digits, the closer his wolf got to coming out again. The thought of Guku enjoying my slick so much that it drew out his alpha caused another stream of liquid to release. His eyes popped open and fixated on me, even though he was still avidly suckling his
"You like watching me enjoy your slick, omega?"

I nodded and cried out in pain from another wave of heat. This one was harder to ignore than the last. "Please, alpha. I need you."

My life mate grabbed my hips and flipped me over. He manhandled me onto my hands and knees, spreading my legs wide. "I'm not ready to stop tasting you yet, but you need some relief. I think I can do both at the same time."

He offered no other explanation, opting to spread my cheeks instead. I didn’t have much time to wonder what he was going to do. I felt a quick flick of something that definitely wasn’t his fingers or cock. When he moaned from behind me, I realized it was his tongue. Another dribble of slick came from me at the thought of my alpha being so eager to taste me. He wasted no time in circling my rim with his tongue and latching his lips to me. It was foreign but felt so, so good. With each small movement he made, a little more liquid fell out. He lapped it all up and quickened his licks. He realized that each time he did something I liked, he was rewarded with more slick. This led him to wrap his hand around my dick and pumping me while he hungrily drank everything. I came suddenly, the feeling of his tongue prodding my muscle and his hand on me were too much to resist. My body was ready again in seconds and my alpha was more than happy to give me all I could take. He slipped his tongue inside of me and I cried out.

“Fuck, alpha!”

My body began shaking and I lost the ability to hold myself up. Guku added a finger alongside his tongue and continued to fuck into me. The squelching and slurping noises that echoed in the room were almost disgusting but served to arouse me even more. Although my body was weak from my orgasm, I found myself arching my back and pushing into him. He seemed to love it. All of those growls and groans I adore so much were much louder and more frequent than they had been before. Hearing them just turned me on. It meant more to me than I thought it would that my life mate was enjoying himself. I didn’t realize I was missing the validation of his feedback until he was giving it to me. The tingling waves caused by the movements of his tongue and finger had me shaking again in no time. A particularly hard press to my prostate had me coming hard and drenching my alpha in slick. I was so absorbed by the strong aftershocks of pleasure that I hardly noticed he was still licking at my hole.

“Do I taste good, alpha?”

“Very,” he said, releasing his grip on my ass. “Did you know that you slick when you come? I’ve read not all omegas do that.”

“Is that bad?” I asked, suddenly afraid that he wouldn’t like that.

“Not at all. I love it. Your slick is wonderful. If my jaw wasn’t hurting, I’d probably still be taking as much of it as I can. For now, I’m gonna pull you on top of me and bounce you on my dick.”

It was the dirtiest thing that Guku had ever said to me, but I liked hearing him speak like that. I liked knowing all of the perverted thoughts he had. Another trickle of slick accompanied a stabbing cramp in my stomach. It didn’t take much effort for him to flip me over and pull me into his lap. I enthusiastically sank down on his cock, head lolling back when my ass met his thighs. It had been too long since I felt him inside of me. He grabbed my legs and rolled his hips into me. I started to lift myself up, but he held me in place.
“Didn’t I say I was going to bounce you?”

“I’m strong, alpha. I can do it. I can make you come.”

He chuckled and leaned up to stroke my cheek. “Of course, you can, Manggae. You’re very strong. But, what if I just wanted to fuck you like this?” He thrust upwards a few quick times, to illustrate his point.

“I’ll let you do anything you want with me, alpha.”

He held my hips still as he thrust into me from below. My body fell limp on top of his chest. I bit at his shoulder to muffle the sound of my screams. He didn’t stop ramming into me, even when I whined and lazily tried to get away after my orgasm. My alpha sped up and maintained his brutal pace as he fucked me into oversensitivity.

The dream flashed again to a time that seemed later than the previous scene:

I woke up and immediately craved my alpha inside of me. It was painful to feel so empty. I climbed on top of his leg and started to ride his thigh. Some stimulation was better than nothing. The slick pouring out of me made the friction feel amazing. I knew he wasn’t hard because he was asleep. I also knew how to fix that. I bent down and took his cock in my mouth. The feeling of my dick against his thigh was great, but it wasn’t satisfying enough. I needed him inside of me. I swirled my tongue around his tip and pumped him with my hand. He began to grow harder the more I sucked and licked. My hips moved on their own as I craved release. The heavy and full feeling in my throat turned me on even more, making me slick all over myself and Guku’s thigh. I still couldn’t fit most of him, but I was desperate to make him hard. I heard his groggy groans. His hands found their way to my head and forced me to take him further into my throat. I began to choke and moan uncontrollably because the sensation brought about my orgasm. Now that he was hard, I needed him inside of me. The pain without him was too much. I tried to pull away from him, but he held me in place.

“You don’t want to finish what you started, omega?” His eyes had a strong red glow as he pulled my head away. “Answer me,” he growled and pulled my head up.

“Don’t wanna finish. Need you inside me, alpha.” My words were becoming less and less coherent as I squirmed in his grasp. The need for him to fuck me senseless was getting stronger. He let go of me, pulled my legs onto the floor, and forced me onto my knees.

“Please, alpha. Please…”

“You’re ready for me? You don’t need anything else?”

“Nothing else, alpha, just you.”

I began to bend over when I felt him behind me. He stopped me when my ass had barely left the ground. “I’m not going to take you yet. You’re still going to finish what you started. I’m just lessening your pain.”

A sharp scream erupted from me as Jeong Guk shoved my dildo into me. He positioned me onto my knees again so that I was kneeling in front of him and the dildo’s base was against the ground. I wriggled around, trying to get used to the object. It wasn’t my alpha, but it felt good. I felt full
enough for now. My shifting quickly transitioned to bouncing as I found that I could fuck myself in this position. When I opened my mouth to cry out in pleasure, my alpha forced his cock into my mouth. He gripped my head tightly as he continuously shoved it as far down my throat as it could go. I reached my hand up and pumped his dick as I slammed myself harder onto the toy.

“I like watching you choke on my cock while you’re getting off on a toy. You feel so good, omega. I’m gonna fuck your throat until I come.”

I loved the idea of that. I wanted to be his only source of pleasure. I wanted him to use me like I was using the toy inside of me—like it was the only thing my body was good for. I moaned around him and went limp in his hold. He growled when he felt all of the muscles in my throat relax, allowing him to hammer into me more. I stopped moving completely, the force of his thrusts causing the dildo to jostle inside of me. Each small movement pushed me closer and closer to my release. I was enamored with the feeling of being fucked from both sides. I wanted more even though I could barely handle what he was giving me. The tugging of my hair and his noises were the only things that kept me grounded as I experienced pleasure I didn’t know I would enjoy. His loud growl rumbled through me as he pulled his cock from my lips and came all over my face. I licked at it, wondering why I didn’t like the taste of our alpha’s seed before.

“Hands and knees, omega. I’m going to fuck you with the dildo. After you come, I’m drinking more of your slick.”

“Yes, alpha.” I was happy to obey, wanting him to do anything with me that he desired.

A third sequence rushed into my mind as if I was watching a montage:

Jeong Guk came deep inside of me again, a sensation that was infinitely pleasing to my omega. My stomach was swollen with his semen and I couldn’t get enough. He kept his dick inside of me as he took a moment to recover.

“Love it when you fuck me full, alpha. Love your cum inside me.”

“Me too, little omega.” He began to thrust after a few minutes, pushing his seed deeper and deeper. I could feel it threatening to spill out at any moment.

“Mmmm… knot me, alpha. I wanna keep everything inside.”

“I’ll knot you at the end of your heat. I don’t want to hurt you.” He pulled on my shoulders to thrust harder into me.

“I want you to fuck me open with your knot, alpha. Please… please… ahhh… impale me on your knot. ‘M a good omega. I can take it.”

He pressed my chest into the bed so that only my ass was in the air. Tears filled my eyes as he fucked me at an insane pace. I felt his knot tear me open and I screamed. I felt more slick rush out of me to compensate for how big it was. I couldn’t speak as garbled screams and moans came out of my open mouth. My everything was numb. I couldn’t move. I couldn’t breathe. All I could do was take his knot and drool as my eyes rolled back into my head. I lost track of if I came or how many times. My mind went blank. I just wanted more of his cum inside me. I’m pretty sure I blacked out for a while, but I don’t really know. In that moment, I felt happy. In that moment, I felt complete. His knot was keeping most of the semen inside, but I could feel some flowing down my legs. We sat in silence
for a while, both catching our breath. He remained inside of me, connected by his knot.

“Knot feels so good, alpha. Feel so full. Love your cum.”

My stomach felt more inflated than it had before. It made me wonder how big it could get. It also made me think about having pups. “Wish you could breed me, alpha. I’d take and carry your pups so well.”

The idea fulfilled some basic need inside of me. I knew I couldn’t carry pups, but my omega felt the need to. He also felt obligated to express that desire to the would-be father of his children. Jeong Guk was quiet and my omega panicked. What if he was angry that I couldn’t carry pups? What if he was thinking about finding a female omega who could carry on his bloodline? What if he wouldn’t want me to carry his pups even if I could? I flooded the room with anxiety hormones and curled onto myself. I couldn’t take the rejection from my alpha. Who can be happy with a barren omega? No alpha wants a self-sufficient, alpha-like omega who can’t even give him pups. I wouldn’t want me either. I didn’t feel it when Guku slipped out of me or grabbed my face, but I was met with his warm crimson-brown eyes and calming pheromones. He kissed me softly before speaking.

“Present yourself, omega.” My eyes went wide and I couldn’t believe what I heard. I remained frozen for a while, until I heard his voice again. “Don’t make me repeat myself.”

Presentation was almost sacred among wolves. It was the first step in the mating process. Each partner will individually present themselves to their potential mate for inspection. The inspector will touch, feel, taste, and test every part of the person on display. If they pass, the potential mate will progress to the next step in the mating process. It’s basically an acceptance of the individual’s entire being, flaws and all. It’s something you only do with someone you’re pretty sure you’ll end up with. I pulled myself up onto my knees, placing my hands on the ground and my ass in the air. He grabbed a plug and put it in me to keep all of his seed inside. I was nervous and excited to be judged by my alpha. I needed to be worthy of him if I was going to be his mate.

He took his time to run his hands all over my body. Feathery caresses were mixed with rough pinches and gropes. I couldn’t stop the slick from rushing as he praised my body over and over. His nails raked down my back and I arched. He prodded at my entrance, feeling the slick dribbling because of his touch. He pulled out the plug and jammed three of his fingers inside. I felt the sloshing of slick and cum as he quickly found my prostate and massaged it roughly. He held me still when I began to shake.

“Come for me, little omega. Be good for me.” His voice was low and my wolf wanted nothing more than to obey.

“Yes, alpha!” I screamed out as strings of cum fell onto the floor.

His mouth explored me next. He began with sweet kisses on my face and lips, that quickly dissolved into his tongue licking over every bit of my mouth. He pulled away, breathing heavily, and I could see the shining ruby flecks in his beautiful eyes. He gave me a sweet smile before nipping at my bottom lip and making me moan loudly. After marking and biting almost every part of me, Guku dipped his tongue into me again. He relentlessly tongued two orgasms out of me before I tried to escape, the pleasure in rapid succession was too much for me to handle.

“You can take it, omega. One more and you’ll get a break.”

I collapsed after the third climax. My alpha placed the plug back inside and positioned himself in front of me. I took a moment to catch my breath and then opened my mouth, knowing that he was
going to fuck my throat again. When I got into position, he wasted no time in thrusting into my
waiting lips. I gagged as he went as deep as he could, chasing his release. Once more, he pulled out
and finished on me. I licked at his cum again and earned a deep growl in response. After he cleaned
my face, he fingered me and lapped at my slick until he was ready to fuck me for real. He impaled
me on his cock, snapping his hips and pinning me to the bed. I was reduced to a drooling,
blubbering mess as he relentlessly drew all of the slick and cum out of me. I lost track of all of the
orgasms we shared and the number of times he knotted me.

Mewls, moans, sighs, and whimpers came from me as every piece of him came in contact with every
bit of me. He was steady and passionate as he tested how well I could please him. He was trying to
make me feel something this time because he already claimed me as his omega, he already knew
that I’m the only one who could take him. I’ve never felt so deeply connected to someone before. The
intimacy was almost too much to bear. It was an important step in our relationship and I wanted to
be everything he wanted.

After what felt like an eternity of him pushing me to my limits, he knelt in front of me. One of his eyes
was red and the other was brown, signifying both him and his wolf were speaking. “I accept you,
Park Ji Min, as my mate. I accept you as you are.”

My body trembled as he pulled me into his arms. My alpha didn’t care that I couldn’t have pups. He
ran his nose along my scent gland and kissed it gently. We sat like that for a while, our rut and heat
almost forgotten in the weight of the moment. Before we could discuss what it all meant, I began to
have pains again. His hand fell to my stomach, still swollen with his semen.

“You may not be able to carry my pups, but I could try to fill you so much that you feel like you
are.” The whisper was barely audible, but I felt it echo through me. That compromise resonated
with my omega on a deep level.

“Fuck me full and breed me, alpha.” My reply came out as a breathless moan. He growled deeply,
ripping the plug from me and filling my hole with his cock in one swift motion.

Other random flashes came to me, but not in the form of solid scenes.

I remember being pinned against the dining room table and bent over the bathroom sink. I also
remember pressing my ass against my alpha’s face, using his hands to finger myself, and bouncing
on his cock when he didn’t have the energy to keep going. I also remember eventually passing out
after one final knot from my alpha.

When I woke up, I was disoriented. What was all of that? I’ve never had sexual dreams before. It felt
too real to be a dream, but none of it makes any sense. I wouldn’t do any of that. My inner alpha
wouldn’t let me. Guku’s words about my omega taking over came back to me. If my omega had
control of me, then it could have happened. I tried to get up and I was immediately met with
immense pain throughout my body. I heard a body shift and realized Guku was beside me.

“Need to sit up, Manggae?”

“Yeah.”
He moved me into a sitting position and tried to give me more tea. “How’s your head feeling? You were dizzy and out of it last time you were awake. You said your head was killing you and then you passed back out. You probably don’t even remember waking up.” His tone was soft and caring.

“It’s okay. I had some weird dreams, though. Maybe, they were memories of my heat. I don’t know. I made slick, I begged you to knot me, and I presented myself to you. I think your alpha kept going in and out of control over you too.”

“Those are pretty much the highlights from the last three days. Not much else happened, save the few times I fed you. I also gave you a bath after your heat was over and you almost cried when I tried to take the plug out. That’s really about it.”

So, it did happen.

Reality struck me with a violent blow to the stomach. I wretched and bile flew up from my stomach with horrible force. The alpha managed to grab the bin before I puked all over the bed. Disgust settled itself deep inside of my gut. How could I act like that? How could I be so repulsive? In a matter of a few days, I’ve gone from Alphabet to a lowly whore. The thing that bothers me the most about it is that I was so happy to be Jeong Guk’s whore. I wanted him to use my body to fulfill his needs. I wanted to be treated like a worthless slut. I threw up again and again, until there was no bile left inside of me. The alpha began to rub circles into my back to comfort me. I moved away as best as I could, using a weak excuse of it making me feel nauseous. That was half true.

I didn’t know how to tell him that his touch revolted me. It reminded me of how far I’ve fallen. It was his fault, after all. Before Jeong Guk, I was an alpha. He’s the one who seduced my omega. He’s the one who unlocked my sexual urges when he beat me in that fight. He’s the one who made both my alpha and my omega submit to him. He’s the one who made me admit that he owns me. Jeong Guk is just another alpha. He’s no different than the rest. The second he had the opportunity to take advantage of me, he did. I can’t believe I thought I loved him. The rage I feel directed towards the alpha permeates through the air. Before I knew it, Jeong Guk was stroking my cheek and asking what’s wrong.

“Alpha problems,” I said in a cold tone. He didn’t need to know that he’s the alpha I’m having problems with. If he noticed me trying to pull away from him, he didn't mention it.

"Your omega did take over for three days. I’m sure your alpha isn’t happy. Let me know if I can help, Manggae. I’ll get you anything you need.”

He kissed my cheek and left the room before I could say anything. Why is he still pretending to care? He got what he wanted. He made me his submissive omega bitch. What’s the point in sticking around? My mind can only come up with one solution to the question. He must want to do it again. Of course, he does. I’m his promised mate. I’m the only omega who can take him. He’s just been weakening me for the last few months so that he could mold me into what he wanted. What a fucking dick. A few days ago, I was ready to lay my whole world at his feet. I wanted to tell him how much I loved him. Now, I’m glad I didn’t get the chance. How can I love someone like him? My inner alpha seethed as I thought. He tells me this is what I get for giving myself to another alpha. The only mate I should have picked was an omega. We would have been happy with an omega. A weaker wolf wouldn’t have used us.

However, my omega is just empty and cold. He keeps telling me that I’m rejecting my mate. I can translate his whines and cries as if they were the clearest words spoken. I can feel him in the back of my mind urging me to believe that Jeong Guk isn’t like that, begging me to believe in the alpha who protected, helped, and cared for me. My inner alpha and my inner omega can’t seem to figure anything out. Regardless, they both have strong feelings towards my supposed mate. Jeong Guk has
made them both submit. Even Ji Min submitted himself to that alpha. If it wasn’t for him, I would have never done any of those horrible things. That knowledge was enough for me to realize I couldn’t keep doing this with him.

After a while, Jeong Guk returned with food for me. He obviously noticed the change in my demeanor, but didn’t press the topic when I made it clear that I wasn’t going to talk about it. I’m too weak to really get into much of an argument right now. My body hurts, my wolves are both frantic, and I hate myself the longer I think about all of the appalling things I did during our mating cycles. More than anything I find myself hating Jeong Guk. He used me and my dependence on him to get what he wanted. He even manipulated me into presenting myself, which is the first step of accepting him as my mate. He never asked me if that was okay. He never indicated we were to that point in our relationship. He just told my omega to present himself, knowing that I wouldn’t be able to resist him when my wolf had taken over. Such a disgusting alpha. I guess I am nothing more than just an omega. I quietly looked at all of the bites and bruises all over my body. I can’t believe I gave my everything to someone like him. I can’t believe I let an alpha claim and court me. I felt him shift closer to me and he tried to grab my face again. I did my best to pull away.

“Manggae, talk to me. What’s wrong? Why are you crying?”

“Don’t call me that. My name is Ji Min.” The hoarseness of my voice made the words come out much rougher than I wanted. It made me glad.

A small flash of pain came across his face, almost as if he was offended I wouldn’t want him to call me such a stupid name. “Ok, Ji Min, tell me what’s wrong. I’m worried about you. You’ve been off ever since you woke up. I know you’re in pain, but I feel like it’s something else. I want to help you and make it better. Please talk to me, little omega.”

“My name is Ji Min. Stop with these dumb names. I’m not going to talk to you. I don’t even want to be in the same room as you right now. Just fucking leave. I don’t want you here, Jeong Guk. Just leave me alone.”

“I…” he began, searching my eyes for something that would show that I didn’t mean it, that I was just having a bad day. He wouldn’t find it. I don’t think I’ve ever been so sure about something before. When he was certain of my intentions, his eyes hardened. He nodded and approached me once more.

“What the fuck are you doing? I just told you to leave,” I spat at him.

“I’m going to leave as soon as I make sure you’re comfortable. Whether you want me here or not, it’s my job to take care of you. If you feel able to feed yourself, there’s food on your desk. If not, try to sleep until your mom gets home. Here’s a pillow to hold because it will make your back feel better. I won’t bother you until you tell me you want to talk again. I can smell how angry you are. I’m sorry for whatever I did.”

He turned me on my side and tucked me in as he spoke. He tried to make me as cozy as he could and gave me a pillow. His touch made my anger boil, but I was hurting and too tired to do anything about it. Because of this, I changed my scent as much as possible. I wanted him to know how much I despised his presence. When he was finished, he lingered over me for just a moment. After staring at me for a bit, Jeong Guk grabbed my hand and kissed it gently. Then, he let go and walked to the door. He turned to address me one last time before leaving.

“I’ll miss you, Ji Min. Take care of yourself for me.”

“Just leave me alone…” I whispered back, suddenly too tired to say much else.
He finally left and I allowed myself to break down. I shoved my face in the pillow and screamed until my voice no longer came out. I cried until all of the tears ran dry. All I could focus on was how used and disgusted I felt. I gave him all of me and he abused that. My mind was filled with thoughts of how much I hate Jeon Jeong Guk as I finally passed out from exhaustion, covered in angry tears and empty inside.

Chapter End Notes

I guess I get to see how many of you trust me. Welcome to the turning point of Alphabet. Feel free to yell, cry, scream, and vent your frustrations in the comments, in my DMs @HimeSakuraLani on Twitter, or on my Curious Cat. I promise it will make sense later.
Thank you all for being patient during my break. For those of you who didn't know, I took a small break from writing because I had a lot going on. Writing two stories at once while dealing with life can be a lot. I'm back now and I hope you enjoy the chapter!

When I woke up, my head and my throat hurt more than before. I was able to move a little freer than when I first came to, but it still hurt. I sat up and couldn’t stop the loud groan from coming out. I heard shifting and my vision focused on the source of the sound. I saw my mom sitting next to my bed in a chair she brought from the dining room. She moved towards me to help me prop myself up against the wall. I could tell by the look in her eyes that she was concerned. I wondered if that alpha had told her anything. I hope not. I’m sure he’d just lie anyway.

“You okay, Minnie?” She asked in a quiet tone. It was almost like she knew my head hurt.

I didn’t really know how to answer her. Physically, I’m fine. I’m sore, but that’s to be expected when you have marathon sex for three days with the world’s strongest alpha. I may be in pain, but I can handle it. Mentally, I’m a wreck. I feel disgusted, used, weak, and scared. To keep myself from dwelling on those thoughts any longer, I nodded. I didn’t want to think about all of the things that happened during my heat.

“What happened with Jeong Guk?”

“You’ve never been one to mince words,” I said with a painful chuckle.

“He texted me and told me you weren’t doing well. He said he upset you but he wasn’t totally sure what he did. Why did you kick him out, Minnie? What did he do? It isn’t like you to do that to your alpha.”

I winced at the term “your alpha” and my mom noticed. The worry on her face when my expression changed let me know that she feared the worst.

“He… I…”

The words died on my tongue before I could form them. How do I explain what happened? Is there a way to fully express everything that I’m feeling in a way that would make sense to her? She can’t relate and I know that. She’s been an omega her whole life. Heat is normal to her. Those feelings are normal.

“How about we eat and you sleep? We can talk tomorrow. I’m willing to respect the fact that something must have happened, but I can’t help you unless you talk to me about it.”

“I don’t think you could help me even if I did. You won’t understand, mom. You’re an omega.”

She looked at me for a moment. I knew she was trying to process what I said. Instead of arguing like I thought she would, she nodded and went to grab some food. We ate together in my bed. Rather, she ate and I tried to. I was too angry and sick to keep much down. I was grateful that I didn’t throw
up anymore, despite how badly my head was pounding and how nauseous I felt. Mom seemed like she wanted me to eat more than four spoonfuls of soup and a bite of rice, but she didn’t press it. She knew that I wasn’t in the mood to talk or to do anything, so she told me about her trip to Busan. I listened to her talk about it until I fell asleep again. I slept fitfully for over 14 hours, my body trying to recuperate and my mind trying to recall.

I kept having vivid flashes of my heat—of how Jeong Guk’s hands felt on me, how he felt inside me, and how desperate I felt. More than anything, I remembered exactly how much I liked it. I didn’t feel like I actually got any sleep. I woke up, exhausted, with an erection, and covered in slick. I decided to drag myself into the bathroom and clean up. I didn’t want to live with a physical reminder of the shame I’m experiencing. I didn’t need to think about how much I loved everything that happened. I ran a bath, deciding that my muscles needed to be soaked and that I probably couldn’t stand for long enough to take a proper shower. I sunk down into the hot water and felt much more relaxed than I have in the last few days. I drifted off to sleep, enveloped by the steaming water. While I rested, I dreamt of Jeong Guk bathing me after my heat.

“I hope I didn’t hurt you too much, little omega. I’m sure you’re going to be sore for a few days, but I tried my best to be as gentle as possible. You didn’t make it easy.” He chuckled as he gingerly washed my body.

He was so tender and sweet. The horrible pain was gone. In its place was pure, unbridled adoration. As I watched him carefully avoid getting any soap in my eyes, it struck me that I am hopelessly in love with him. He is so good to me, so kind and caring, that there was no way I could feel anything else. I opened my mouth to tell him how I felt, but I was cut off by a stream of water over my face.

“Thank you for letting me take care of you after all of this, Manggae. I couldn’t imagine not being there for you right now. My alpha would drive me crazy. I’d probably drive him crazy too. We both care for you so much. Are you in a lot of pain? Was I too rough with you?”

His eyes shone beautifully, so full of concern that I didn’t know how to speak for a moment. He smiled at me and it took my breath away. “No, Guku. I’m fine. I liked it all and you definitely didn’t hurt me. Thank you for still being careful with me, even though you were in your rut. You’re always so good to me. I’m really grateful for that.”

A big part of me was so consumed by my feelings for my alpha that I wanted to scream out how much I love him. Another part was trying to keep it a secret. It’s too soon to know if that’s how I feel or not. It became more and more difficult to hold it in as he continued to fuss over me and give me such affectionate glances and words. Right as I was about to confess, Guku emptied the bath and lifted me up.

“Let’s get you dried off and in bed. You need some food and rest. You did so good during your heat, little omega. I’m so proud of you.”

I was awakened by my mom just as that alpha was tucking me in and giving me a kiss. I jumped and accidentally splashed her when I came to. “What the fuck, mom?”

“I heard you get into the bath almost an hour ago. I wanted to make sure you were ok. It’s not safe to fall asleep in the tub, Minnie.”
I nodded, but I didn’t apologize for yelling at her. My brain vaguely registered that it wasn’t like me to curse and raise my voice at my mom. That didn’t matter when I remembered how flushed and happy I felt in the arms of that alpha. I grew nauseous just thinking about the love I thought I felt for him. This is all his fault. He did this. I don’t love him. I can’t love someone who made me like this. I looked up to see my mom still staring at me. She was holding my clothes from earlier.

“Your pants are wet, but it’s not water. It smells like slick. Did you make slick, Minnie? The doctors said you couldn’t do that.”

“Mom, get out. I don’t want to talk about my slick with you! I’m taking a bath. I’m completely naked right now. I’d prefer you to not be here.” My tone was harsh, but it didn’t bother me. She had no business being in the bathroom with me and smelling my damn pants.

When she didn’t leave, I had to stifle a growl in my throat. No matter how angry I was at her, growling at my own mother was seen as a threat to her authority. Her eyes grew wide and I could tell that she heard it anyway. I smelled the sadness and frustration in her scent as she walked away. For the rest of the night, I screamed at her whenever she tried to start a conversation about my heat. I wasn’t going to talk about it. Even if I wanted to, it’s none of her damn business. Why the fuck does she need to know every little detail of my life? She has no right to demand to hear everything. She stopped trying to talk to me after I slammed my bedroom door in her face and locked it. It kind of surprised me that she was willing to respect that boundary considering she hadn’t actually cared about any of the other ones I tried to set. I laid in my bed and stared at the ceiling until I fell asleep again. Given how exhausted I was, it didn’t take long.

I tossed and turned the whole night, unable to get comfortable. All of the bruises, bites, and sore spots were hard to avoid. I looked like a fucking leopard chew toy. The only thing that I can be really thankful for is that he didn’t mate me. In our society, we have a mating process that we go through to ensure both people want to be mated and that the bond will be as strong as possible. It’s not necessary though. If he bit through my scent gland and I bit through his, then we’re mated. I’m almost surprised he didn’t convince my omega to mate. I guess it’s because he knew I’d be pissed when I woke up. He wouldn’t want to have to feel my unhappiness through the bond. I shouldn’t be so surprised. Someone as selfish as Jeong Guk would only spare me if it meant he benefitted. After I finally found a good position to sleep in, the heat memories started again. I eventually decided to stop trying. It wasn’t worth putting myself through this torture.

I watched random videos on my phone until I passed out from exhaustion. When I woke up, I found some soup and rice on my desk. I tried to eat a little bit but I wasn’t able to take in much without feeling really nauseous. I did everything in my power to keep my mind off of what happened. I didn’t want to remember or think or feel. I didn’t want to listen to the growing internal discord of my wolves. I just wanted to close my eyes and sleep until it was all over. The day melted away into videos, movies, homework, and anything else I could think of that would keep my brain busy for even a few minutes. I was going to work out, but my body wasn’t strong enough to do that. Even something simple like running would let me zone out and avoid what was happening. Mom knocked on my door around 9 pm, bringing me more rice and some meat. She looked at me for a moment as she hovered in the doorway.

“You’re going to have to talk eventually, Minnie. It’s already been two days. You can’t pretend like nothing happened forever. Even if it’s working right now, it won’t help for long. I’ll be here whenever you decide to open up.” She left before I could respond.

My anger flared at her words. I didn’t want to hear her motherly advice. Nothing good was going to come of her trying to talk to me. I choked down as much of the meat and rice as my stomach would allow, which was more than I was expecting. I guess not eating much for almost a week made me
kind of hungry. When I woke up again, I decided to watch as many episodes of *Please Take Care of My Refrigerator* as I could find. I was getting tired of trying to find new things to keep myself occupied. The next thing I know, I was being jumped on by someone that was a little too small to me my mom.

“Talk to me, Ji Ji,” the voice on top of me demanded.

“Get off! I’m sore enough without you on me.”

Mi Mi sat on the other side of my bed and looked expectantly at me. I tried not to be too annoyed when I spoke. “I guess mom asked you to come over here?”

“No. I was worried when you didn’t come to school. It got worse when I saw Gukie looking like a fucking zombie. Tae said he hasn’t slept or eaten in two days, so I’m guessing something must have happened during your heat. Tell me.”

“There’s nothing to talk about,” I said, trying to be as nonchalant as possible.

“That may work on someone else, but it’s me you’re talking to. You know damn well I’m not leaving this room until you tell me what’s up with the two of you.”

“I don’t want to talk about it.”

“Try again.”

“I’m not going to talk about it.”

“Yes, you are. I’m going to figure it out somehow. I tried to ask Gukie but he looked like he was going to puke when I mentioned you. What happened?”

She stared at me and I could tell that she wasn’t going to budge. My alpha reminded me that I could physically remove her from the room if I needed to, but my omega was quick to refuse. We would never want to hurt our life mate and we’re probably too weak to successfully fight her. If she were to connect with some of the very sore spots, she might do some real damage and that isn’t worth it. Plus, she knows how I fight. The conflict made my head hurt. I didn’t really have enough energy to keep arguing with myself like this. Maybe if I talk to her and it fixes nothing, it will get my mom off my ass. Maybe she’ll shut the fuck up for once.

“I’ll ask one more time before I start getting mad. What happened? What did he do to upset you?”

“He hurt me.” I felt much more vulnerable saying that than I thought I would. The words came out as a sad whisper.

“He did what? How did he hurt you? Did he force you to do something you didn’t want to?”

“No.”

“Did he do something you didn’t like?”

“No.”

“Did he keep going when you told him to stop?”

“No.”

“Was he too rough?”
“No.”

“Did he not take care of you when you were in heat like he was supposed to?”

“No. He did everything you’d expect him to do and everything I asked and wanted him to do,” I said with a sigh.

“Then how the fuck did he hurt you? You’re not making any sense.”

“He just did.”

She sighed and moved as close to me as she could without touching me. I could tell she was losing her patience and I wasn’t sure why. “Ji Ji, I love you. You know that. You’re my wonderful, amazing, awesome life mate. Usually, I’m fine just letting you be all angsty until you decide to tell me what you want to, but right now, I need you to talk to me. Our life mate is a wreck because of whatever happened and you don’t seem to be doing much better. Whatever it is, I’m sure we can figure it out. However, that means you have to actually tell me the thing.”

I thought for a while about the best way to explain everything to her. I knew she understood how I felt more than anyone else. Maybe, it would make sense to her. “My omega took over when my heat started.”

“That’s pretty crazy but I’m sure he had a lot of fun. I know that probably freaked you out a bit though. Do you remember anything?”

“Some, but not much. It scared the hell out of me because I was completely out of control of my body for three days. As far as I can remember, I liked everything we did during my heat. He took care of me and he did everything perfectly. He even calmed me down when I started freaking out about not being able to have pups. Like I said, he did everything right.”

“Then, what’s the problem?” She asked, not being able to follow my logic.

“The problem is that I loved it!” I ignored the way my voice cracked.

“That doesn’t make any sense! Of course, you liked it. You’re an omega. We’re designed to want our alphas to fuck us into a coma during our heats and breed us full of pups. That is completely normal. We’re supposed to like that. Gukie didn’t force you, he wasn’t mean to you, he didn’t mate you without your consent, and you even admitted he did everything right. What is the problem? I don’t see an issue with you responding to your heat the way any other omega would.”

I rubbed my hands forcefully over my face, sighing loudly and trying to determine how to make her understand what I feel. My alpha began stirring inside of me due to my frustration. I wasn’t strong enough to keep either of my wolves at bay while also trying to discuss this with Mi Mi. I felt myself getting angry the more I thought.

“I never asked for this,” I said after a long pause.

“For what?”

“To be like this. To enjoy all of this.”

“You’re an omega, Ji Ji. You shouldn’t be worried about liking it. If you didn’t, that would be a problem.”

“I didn’t ask to be an omega either,” I said a little too bitterly.
“You’ve always been an omega. You have a lot of alpha in you, but you’ve got honey flecks, you’re small, and you can apparently make slick if your smelly ass dirty laundry is to be trusted. That makes you an omega. Alphas don’t have that.”

“I’ve always been an alpha, Mi Mi. It’s that alpha’s fault I’m not anymore.”

She grabbed my hand and squeezed it gently. The look in her eyes told me that she was starting to understand why I was struggling. “The only thing that’s Gukie’s fault is introducing you to the other half of yourself. You were never an alpha, Ji Ji. You were always an omega who had an alpha in him. You’re Alphabet. You finally get to be an omega after all this time. Don’t you at least want to see what it’s like to be what you were born to be? It’s not like you have to change everything. You can still beat the shit out of alphas and protect us all while being an omega. You’ve been doing it for years. You should be excited to experience what it’s like to actually be an omega for a while. You’re the only person in the world who gets both. You should want to explore that as much as you can.”

“I don’t want that. I want everything to be the way it used to be. I just want to be an alpha.”

“Why?” She said with a head tilt.

“I don’t want to be an omega. I’ve never wanted to be an omega.”

“What’s wrong with being an omega?” She bristled after I finished the sentence.

“I don’t want to be weak.”

She stiffened and clutched my hand harder. I could tell by the way her eyes darkened and hardened that she was pissed. Cinnamon overwhelmed me as she spoke again. “You think omegas are weak?”

“Well, yeah. No. Wait. I don’t want to be an omega because it would make me weak. I don’t think all omegas are weak. I—”

“I don’t want to hear your bullshit excuse. I can’t fucking believe you. All these years supporting the omegas, defending us, the OPC… it was just because you fucking pitied us? Because you thought we were too weak to do it ourselves? What you thought that the mightiest of all the omegas, the savior Park Ji Min, could just swoop in and save the day because he’s not like the other omegas? Oh, no. He’s a fucking alpha who just calls himself an omega because he’s got yellow eyes and he’s tiny. I can’t believe you. I really thought you were better than that. I thought you were actually on our side. You don’t even understand what it’s like to be an omega. You’ve never had to deal with the same issues that we have. It’s never been a problem for you to stop someone when they even looked at you wrong. You don’t know what it’s like to be called weak, to be objectified, to be assaulted and harassed because of your rank. Anytime that’s ever happened to you, you just kick their ass. It must be nice. I really misjudged you. You don’t even deserve to call yourself an omega. How dare you pretend for so long to actually care? You just think we’re weak. You think we can’t help ourselves. We don’t need you or your pity. I don’t need your pity. I can take care of my damn self. You’re fucking pathetic. You feel like an actual omega for three days and you panic. You could never handle what it’s like to live like this forever. Your alpha didn’t even do anything bad to you! I’m actually really glad you’re such an alpha. You’ll NEVER be strong enough to be an omega.”

She got up to leave and I tried to stop her. “Mi Mi, don’t! I didn’t mean it like that.”

“Yes, you did. You might not realize it, but you’ve always been like that. You see us as beneath you. I’ve seen it off and on for years, but I’ve tried to ignore it. I always told myself it’s just your alpha conflicting with your actual nature. I didn’t realize that’s just who you are. You can go fuck yourself, Park Ji Min. I’ve got no reason to listen to or be friends with some stupid, dickbag alpha who thinks...
I’m just a weak omega.”

I watched her walk out of the room. Her words felt like a blow to my stomach and I couldn’t get myself to go after her. She slammed the door and stomped down the stairs. I could hear my mom call after her. I could tell by the way the front door crashed that she didn’t stop. I heard loud footsteps as my mom stormed into my room.

“What did you do to Mi Ran?” She was livid.

“Nothing. I said some shit she didn’t want to hear.”

“Don’t use that tone with me, Ji Min. I’m your mother.”

My alpha was sick of the arguing and all of the aggression that surrounded us. A growl escaped the back of my throat and my mom’s eyes widened. She looked like she was going to walk towards me but thought better of it.

“I don’t know what the fuck is going on with you, Minnie, but you need to fix it before I have to. I’m not going to allow you to ruin the peace of this household. I didn’t work my ass off for the last 18 years for you to treat me like this. I’m your mother and I’ll continue to be your mother whenever whatever is going on with you gets resolved, goes away, or settles. I’m going back to work tomorrow. You have until I get home on Thursday night to try to figure this out on your own. If not, I’m not giving you a choice.”

My mom left before I could respond, even though I didn’t really want to. I was glad she was gone. Between her and Mi Mi, I was likely to say or do something that probably wasn’t a good idea. My alpha was frantically pacing inside of me, unable to sit still. I had so much pent up rage that I couldn’t keep myself from pulling on some clothes and going out for a run. I grabbed my wallet so that I could grab some ramen. I’m sure I’ll get hungry sometime in the near future and mom probably won’t want to cook for me since she’s mad. I jogged past a couple of stores and decided to push myself a little. With any luck, it would get rid of some of this aggression and tire me enough for me to be able to sleep for a while. Once I started to get tired, I stopped by a store. I bought ramen and a few other snacks. Because my stomach has been so upset lately, I grabbed anything that looked appealing to me. I started running home and got really dizzy. I was feeling overheated but the cool evening air kept me from sweating too much. I took a seat under a tree and opened a bag of chips. After a few minutes of resting and eating, I felt well enough to get home. I had to stop jogging halfway through the trip back to my house, but I eventually made it. I curled up in my bed and immediately fell asleep. My body was too tired to stay up any longer.

Memories of Mi Mi’s angry words played in my dreams, her disappointed and hurt face played over and over again. It paired nicely with the last conversation I had with my mom. I woke up the next day feeling unsettled and tired. My omega told me this is what I deserve for letting my alpha side get the better of me. My alpha says my other wolf and I are both idiots. We don’t need mom or Mi Mi. We don’t need anyone. I growled, hoping to shut them up. It didn’t work. They clashed in my mind, making me remember all of the pain I felt before my rut. How did I make this stop last time? My omega reminds me that we didn’t, our alpha did. That thought made both of my wolves more aggressive. Their screaming caused a bigger headache and made me hurt even more than before. After a short time, I was curled in a ball on my bed, crying from all the pain. My vision was blurred and I couldn’t move. I could feel each one of my wolves’ scratches and bites to each other radiating throughout my body. It hurt so much that I stopped feeling after a while. I was numb and I couldn’t tell if I was slipping in and out of consciousness or if everything around me just stopped.

In between bouts of excruciating pain, I caught faint whispers and frantic pleas. The dizziness from before was made worse by the feeling of floating. I couldn’t make out anything that was being said
in between the howling and snarls that echoed in my mind. I wasn’t even sure if someone was actually talking or if it was just my imagination. I completely passed out shortly after feeling like I couldn’t breathe for a bit. When I woke up, the sun had set and I was in a car. My mom was sitting next to me and I could faintly smell Jeong Guk’s scent. If I wasn’t so groggy, I probably would have been pissed.

“I know I said I’d give you until Thursday, but you couldn’t even make it through all of Tuesday. I gave you some medicine to make you sleep, so you’ll probably be in and out of consciousness for a while. You’ve probably also realized you smell like Jeong Guk. I had him go with us to the train station so he could carry you. You’re pretty heavy. He looked terrible, Minnie. I’m sure you don’t care right now, but you should. Anyway, that’s not the point. We’re in Busan now and I’m taking you to see your aunt. I told you I’d fix this if you couldn’t. Something is really wrong with you and we need to figure out what it is. I don’t care how much of an asshole you’ve been over the last few days. You’re still my son and I’m not going to ignore your health.”

I tried to respond to her, but my voice came out as a strange grunt. “Don’t try to talk, Minnie. I used the medicine the doctor gave me to subdue you in case you started to get aggressive. I’ll be surprised if you even remember this conversation when it’s out of your system.”

She kept talking after that but I couldn’t focus on what she was saying anymore. The overwhelming urge to sleep took me over. I was in a hospital room and connected to a bunch of wires and tubes when I woke up again. My mom was sitting next to my bed. As soon as she saw me open my eyes, she called for someone and rushed to my side.

“Hey, Minnie. How are you feeling?”

“Like shit. Why am I hooked up to all of this?”

“They’re trying to figure out what’s going on with you. They have you hooked up to a heart monitor and an air intake monitor because your heart rate was really high and your breathing was weak when we brought you in. Neither of those should have been caused by the medication I gave you. They took blood to run some tests to make sure you and your wolves are ok. They gave you pain meds. You’re also getting fluids because you were dehydrated from your heat and not eating or drinking much. Your aunt should be here in just a few minutes to tell you more. You know how she is. She just told me the basics and disappeared into the lab. You’re the only patient she ever bothers to actually see. It’s probably for the best. She has horrible bedside manners.” My mom chuckled, trying to make a bit of a joke to lighten the mood.

“Any idea how long I’m gonna be here?”

“We don’t know yet. It depends on how quickly they figure out what’s going on. You know Hee Yeun isn’t letting you out of here until she knows what’s wrong, has fixed it, and has thoroughly documented the whole thing. We could be here for two more hours or two weeks.”

I rolled my eyes and scoffed. “I’m breaking out if she tries to keep me here for two weeks. I can’t feel my wolves. Is that a side effect of the medicine?”

“No. They gave you something to make them sleep. The wolf scans she did when you woke up the first time showed that they were really anxious and aggressive. The nurse gave you something that made you sleep and it works longer on wolves than it does humans. You’ll probably be really calm and groggy for a while. It’s for the best that they rest right now because you need it too.”

My aunt entered the room, looking excited and frazzled. I wasn’t looking forward to being at her mercy again. She always has the best intentions, but her curiosity gets the better of her. The last time
I was in Busan for more than just a check-up. I was here for two months. I didn’t really want to remember what it was like starting puberty while being caged up like an animal—constantly watched and tested. I tried to ignore how she was staring at her notes with glee in her eyes.

“It’s good to see you again, Minnie! I’ve missed you. I know you’re busy with school, so you’re never here anymore. You don’t really get sick either. Well, you’re sick now, so I get to see you! That’s wonderful!”

I vaguely wondered if she meant it was wonderful that she got to see me or that I got sick before she kept talking. Knowing her, she probably meant the latter.

“So far, the tests are inconclusive. Your basic workup is normal, with the exception of your stress hormones. I was really surprised to see that your omega’s levels are just as high as your alpha’s. Last time we ran tests on you, we could barely detect him. Your mom tells me you have an alpha now and he managed to wake up your omega. I think that’s just great! Now, we can test both of your wolves. I sent off some blood samples to test for some rarer illnesses that fit your symptoms, but they will take a few days to get back. You mom said this all started after your heat, so we’re focusing on cycle disorders for now. We ruled out Heat Dysphoric Syndrome and Post-Heat Depressive Disorder because your hormone levels are normal and you don’t fit the diagnostic criteria. Can you tell me about your symptoms and what’s going on? The more I know, the easier it will be to diagnose you.”

I thought for a few minutes before I began my answer. I wanted to see if I could explain it all in the best way. My mind wasn’t very clear, but I tried to form the right words anyway. I was grateful that the medication kept me mostly numb, both physically and mentally. “I spent my heat with Jeong Guk. It was a natural heat even though I took my meds. My last rut was the same way. We did all of the normal things you do during heat. I’m not sure if it matters, but our cycles are synched so he was in rut when I was in heat. My omega took over the whole three days. When I woke up, I felt disgusted by everything that happened. I yelled at Jeong Guk and made him leave. After that, I felt angry, nauseous, tired, and dirty. My wolves have been fighting since then. I’ve had a horrible headache, my vision has been blurry, and I’ve been dizzy. I kind of blacked out after my wolves attacked each other. Then, I woke up here. I can’t really think of anything else to say.”

My aunt wrote the main points of my story down and thought for a moment. “It could be a psychological issue, but we’re going to try to rule out anything physical first. I’m very intrigued by the concept of your wolves fighting. As you know, there’s a connection between your wolves and you, so you feel what they feel. No one else has to feel that type of fight, so it could also be impacting your health. We’ll have to run some more tests to be sure. Over the next couple of days, I’m going to keep you and your wolves sedated. This is going to make sure you get plenty of rest and have time to regain your strength. Your mom told me you didn’t eat much during your heat and haven’t since. It’s been a week since you’ve eaten more than a couple of bites of food at a time. That’s not healthy. After that, we’ll run some tests, scans, and I’ll do some muscle and strength assessments to make sure everything is good on that front.

“All I can really say right now is rest. The tests should be back in three days. We can’t really do any of the strenuous exams until we rule out some of these issues, so I’ll keep you sedated until then. I’ve already sent word to your school that you’re going to be out until at least next Monday. That will give us plenty of time to get a plan together. We’ll readjust it as needed. I’m going to keep you on a liquid diet until tomorrow. After that, I’ll see if you can handle soft foods. Let me know if you get nauseous. I’m going to check on this blood culture and some results from an experiment I started earlier in the week. If you need anything, have your mom text me. I’ll only be here to give you the big news and answer your questions. You know my real place is in the lab. But, as your official doctor, I wanted to at least touch base with you. The nurses will check on you and be here to give you whatever you need. If you ask for meds, they’ll give you those too. I’ll be back when your
results are in so we can figure out where to go from there. Feel better, Minnie. I can’t have my favorite patient feeling bad.”

I avoided reminding her that I’m her only patient as she left. It was always weird to me that she became a medical doctor, specialized in genetic disorders, and then decided to only do research. It makes her happy though, so I can’t really say much about it. Since she’s an employee of Busan Medical Center and Yonsei University, the hospital lets her use their facilities when she needs to take care of me. It’s a strange agreement and I don’t really understand how it works. All I know is that my aunt isn’t really a doctor, but she’s my doctor. The nurse came in and put something in my IV. That’s the last thing I fully remember for the next few days. The only other thing I recall is that I managed to eat some soup at one point and I fell asleep while doing it.

After I was completely lucid on the third day, my aunt told me that the blood tests were all negative. The next day was dedicated to a whole battery of scans and X-rays, trying to eliminate the possibility of any tumors, clots, or other abnormalities. It was also to be able to see any potential issues in my wolves. Even though they were sedated, the machines still did a good job of seeing how healthy they were. The results indicated that I should be fine. The ridiculous amount of physical tests also showed I’m the most physically fit omega that I can be. By Monday, my aunt concluded something psychological was causing the problems.

On Tuesday, I was transferred to the mental health facility at the medical center. My aunt directed me to stop taking my Primemmeryn so that my hormone levels would regulate. She thought that maybe the dosage of the medication wasn’t working anymore. I wondered why she wanted my wolves free of control when they’re causing issues, but she’s the doctor. I have to try to trust she knows what she’s doing. As I was taken to my room at the facility, I couldn’t help thinking about how stupid all of this is. Other than letting some asshole alpha take advantage of me, there’s nothing wrong. He should be the one here, not me. He’s still fucked up even though he’s been in therapy and on medication for years. Why would my aunt think that it’s going to help me? I was allowed to spend the rest of the night getting used to my new surroundings before I was introduced to the therapist.

“Hello, Ji Min! My name is Dr. Hwa Jae Sun. I’m going to be working with you for a little while,” a male omega around my height said.

He was dressed a lot more casually than therapists in movies. I briefly contemplated knocking him out and running before I thought better of it. I’m sure some of the orderlies here would catch me and I didn’t really feel like going to jail. I decided that a straightforward approach might be my best option. Maybe, if I just explain the situation to him, he won’t keep me here for long.

“Look, Dr. Hwa, I don’t really need to be here. My wolves aren’t really getting along right now, but that doesn’t mean that I should be in therapy. They disagree about some stuff, that’s all. It’s nothing I can’t handle.”

“I’m just here to check on your mental health. Your aunt told me there’s a lot of changes going on in your life lately. That can be a lot to handle. Think of you being here as the last part of your wellness check. If we find that everything is fine with you, then you’re free to go. I don’t want to keep you here any longer than you need to be. You said your wolves aren’t getting along. Why not?”

"They're fighting about Jeong Guk,” I said passively, not wanting to give more away than was necessary.

"Is that a friend of yours?"

"I guess you could say he was. I'm not sure how friendly he'd want to be with me after everything that happened. I definitely don't want to be. Didn't my mom or my aunt already tell you about all of
Can't you just use what they said to clear me or diagnose me or whatever?"

Dr. Hwa gave me a soft smile and shook his head. "That's not how this works, unfortunately. First, you're an adult. I'm only allowed to talk to your doctor about medically necessary stuff and your mom about what you give me consent to. This whole process is fueled by you. Second, even if they told me every detail, I'd still have to talk to you to confirm everything and get your side of the story. That's the only way I could clear or diagnose you."

"If this is all up to me, can't I just leave?"

"Normally, yes. Since your condition is a health threat, your aunt obtained an order to keep you here until the problem is solved."

"So, I'm stuck here, for goddess knows how long, until I spill my guts to you?" I asked, my voice getting agitated. My wolves were still a little out of it from the medication, but my alpha regained clarity at the thought of being trapped against his will.

"Essentially, but that doesn't have to be a bad thing. You can take this as an opportunity to help your wolves get along better."

I growled at him, baring my teeth. I wasn't going to be held hostage in here without a fight. There's nothing wrong with me. There's no reason to be here. I'm not crazy and I didn't do anything wrong. Dr. Hwa looked at me, unfazed. He must be used to patients getting upset with him. I thickened my scent to intimidate him and he had no response. That annoyed my wolf even more. Why can't we scare an omega? They're so much smaller and weaker than us. I could practically feel my omega rolling his eyes at the thought but he remained silent. I couldn't help wondering if it was because he knew he couldn't win or if he was just waiting for the best opportunity to come out. The possibility of a coup staged by my other wolf only served to piss me off more. I glared at the omega and tried to express how close I was to snapping on him.

"I understand that all of this must be upsetting for you and I'm sorry about that. What are you feeling right now? I want to help you, but I can only do that if you talk to me."

I scoffed. "I'm obviously angry, doc. It doesn't take a degree to figure that one out. Since you're the one with the training, how about you tell me why? That would save us both some time."

"I'd much rather hear what you have to say. You're the expert on your own thoughts and feelings. I can't tell you how you're feeling or the reasons for that. You said that you're angry. Why do you feel that way?"

"I'm stuck here against my will, I've been poked and prodded at for the last week by my aunt, my wolves won't shut the fuck up, and that's just the beginning of it. I think I have a right to be angry. Don't you?"

"You're allowed to feel however you feel, Ji Min. Your feelings are completely valid. If you'd let me, I'd like to help you work on some of those issues you mentioned."

"Unless you're going to release me, I don't want your help."

"I can only do that once you talk to me."

"Then we're done here," I said with a gruff tone.

Dr. Hwa got the hint once I laid my head down on the table and completely ignored him. I could only hope that I was getting on his nerves as much as he was getting on mine. He got up to leave the
"I really want you to be able to go home because that's what you want. However, that all depends on you. How quickly you get out of here is based on whether or not you talk to me. I'll see you tomorrow, Ji Min. I hope we can talk then."

The next few days were mostly quiet. My aunt ordered a mild sedative for my wolves after my "threatening behavior." It wasn't enough to make them sleep but it was enough to keep them relatively calm. Dr. Hwa kept trying to talk to me and I continued to shut him out. He insisted on me telling him something about myself so that he could get to know me better. He would refuse to let me out of the therapy room until I told him at least one thing. The only facts I ended up telling him were my age, my grade, my height, and that I hate therapy. By Friday, I hoped he had determined that I was a lost cause. I realized that was just wishful thinking when he came in looking way too happy for someone who hadn't made any progress with one of his patients. It instantly annoyed me.

"What are you so happy about?"

He smiled brightly at me and sat down in front of me. "My best friend is coming to town this weekend. I haven't seen her in months, so I'm happy. Do you have a best friend, Ji Min?"

I smiled before the reality of the situation caught up to me. My mood immediately soured at the thought of what happened with Mi Mi. Mom had tried to reach out to her and received a message that essentially said she doesn't care what happens to me. It hurt to know that my life mate is gone. My omega quickly reminded me that they both are. That just made me feel worse. As the doctor stared expectantly at me, I couldn't find it in myself to fully breach that topic. Despite my reluctance, I knew he wouldn't leave until I gave him something.

"I did until right before I went into the hospital. I made her mad and she left me." The heavy silence after the sentence let the therapist know that I wasn't going to continue. He moved to exit the room after a few minutes.

He turned back to me as he was leaving. "I'd love to hear about her sometime. That smile when you thought of her was the first bit of positivity I've seen from you. I'm not working this weekend, but I'll be back to see you on Monday. Maybe we can talk about her then. If you need anything there will be another doctor here. I'm also on call if you need me."

I stared at him blankly, not committing to anything. I couldn't shake the memories of Mi Mi's anger and the pain in her face. That night, I dreamt of everything she said to me, of the tears she tried to hide from me as she spoke, and of the way her voice cracked when she said goodbye. I hadn't noticed those things in the moment, too concerned with what was happening. Once again, I had been the one to hurt my precious life mate. Once again, I caused her pain that I couldn't take away. Now, I'm all alone in a psych ward. It hurt that I couldn't even talk to her about what happened. I had no way to defend myself. I had no one to talk to in this place. There were only four patients and two of them weren't allowed outside of their rooms yet.

Saturday crawled along, a mixture of self-loathing and sadness making time seem like it had stopped. My mind decided to replay every sweet moment that I've shared with her over the last 8 years. I couldn't stop the tears from flowing when I remembered the first time we met. She was so small that she couldn't properly move on the swings at school. No one was paying any attention to her, so she started crying. I decided to push her and we've been inseparable ever since. Everything she and I have been through seemed to highlight how utterly alone I was here.

There were orderlies and nurses who came to check on me, but they weren't my friends. They didn't want to talk. The random therapist that was on staff didn't have the same nice demeanor that Dr.
Hwa had. I didn't feel like she actually wanted to help. I spent the entire weekend wallowing in self-pity. I came to the conclusion that I needed to make things right. If I've already shunned Jeong Guk, then I needed to keep Mi Mi. I just didn't know how. As I was taken to the therapy room on Monday, it dawned on me that Dr. Hwa might have some ideas. I steeled myself to be able to talk about everything. I didn't really know what I did to her but I was hopeful this omega could assist me. He's the only person I have to talk to so I hope he can do something.

He sat and watched me carefully. I could tell he knew that I spent the whole weekend crying and hating myself. "The nurses tell me that you've had a rough weekend. How are you feeling now?"

I didn't have time for his feelings bullshit. I wanted answers and a plan. That was the only thing that would get my life mate back. I took a deep breath and resigned myself to giving in. My alpha didn't like the idea of defeat, but I had no other choice.

"My best friend's name is Kim Mi Ran and she hates me. I need your help to fix it."

Chapter End Notes

I'm sure some of you are upset right now about Mi Mi's reaction. It will make sense later. Don't forget this story is told completely from Ji Min's perspective. You can't know anything that Ji Min doesn't. I promise you will know Jeong Guk and Mi Ran are doing and what they're feeling, but not right now. Also, Ji Min is in Busan now. Do you think that will be a good or a bad thing? Any ideas on what will happen next? I'm very excited to see what you all have to say about this chapter. Feel free to yell, cry, scream, and vent your frustrations in the comments, in my DMs @HimeSakuraLani on Twitter, or on my Curious Cat.
This chapter is a lot, both in terms of length and content. Set aside some time for it and maybe have something to cuddle with you. Also, this chapter contains some more psychological terms and techniques that are tame versions of their actual counterparts. The therapy is also not quite exactly like real therapy, but I did my best with blending an actual therapy session with the style that Ji Min needs and the type of conversation that Ji Min needed to hear. I hope I did an okay job.

TW: mentions of attempted sexual assault, some violence, panic attacks

“I take it Mi Ran is an omega?” I nodded in response and he continued. “I get the feeling that you don’t understand why she’s upset.”

“I don’t. Mi Mi has always been my best friend, my support, my cheerleader. She’s my life mate. We promised to be together forever and she just dropped me because I told her that I didn’t like feeling the way I felt during my heat.”

“How did you feel during your heat?”

“I don’t really want to talk about it. I’m not here to relive all of that. I’m here to get my life mate back. I need you to help me figure out what to do.”

Dr. Hwa was quiet for a moment, contemplating the words he wanted to say. “I think trying to see why she was upset might be a good place to start. What exactly did she say?”

“She said that she didn’t want anything to do with an alpha who pretends to care about omegas but actually doesn’t.”
“Why does she call you an alpha?”

“I’ve always been an alpha. My RHDS means I have two wolves. Up until seven months ago, my omega hadn’t ever surfaced. I’ve always had an alpha and that’s it. So, I’ve always seen myself as an alpha. When I met Jeong Guk, my omega woke up. I guess I still consider myself an alpha more than an omega. I don’t really see why that matters though. I’ve been that way ever since she met me. I just remembered she also said that I think that omegas are beneath me and that I’ve apparently always thought that. I don’t think I’m better than she is.”

“How do you feel about omegas in general?”

“What does that have to do with getting Mi Mi back?”

“She seems to be upset by your opinions about omegas. If you want to make things right with her, you need to understand why she had the reaction she did to what you said. In order to do that, you’re going to need to understand how you felt and how that relates to what you said. You also have to take into consideration her perspective and feelings about what happened. So, let’s start with the first two steps. We need to see if we can figure out why she was upset and how you feel. Which would you like to start with?”

I didn’t answer for a while. I wanted to consider all of my options on this topic before I committed to anything. If he and I keep talking, then I’m consenting to therapy. That means he won. Then again, I don’t have any other options. I’m stuck here until they clear me. I’m technically still sick. I still feel angry, sad, and empty. My wolves are medicated so it’s a little hard to tell how they are doing. If my aunt took me off the pills right now, I’m sure they’d still be fighting. Dr. Hwa said I should take this as an opportunity to have my wolves get along better. I just want to make Mi Mi stop hating me. Maybe, it could be both. I really don’t have a choice. I need to figure this out in order to make things okay with my life mate and I have to talk to Dr. Hwa to get out of here. I took a deep breath, swallowed my and my alpha’s pride, and resigned myself to talk as much as I needed to fix the mess my life had become ever since I decided to let an alpha have his way with me.

“I guess we’ll start with understanding Mi Mi,” I said after a few minutes.

“Tell me about her. How did you meet? What’s your relationship like? How is she as a person? Anything you think is important.”

“Everything about Mi Mi is important. Just in general, she’s the most important person in my life.” I stopped for a moment, not wanting to think about why those words sounded wrong. “We met at school when I was 10 and she was 9. I pushed her on the swings because she couldn’t do it herself and she didn’t have any friends. I saw how quiet and shy she was. People took advantage of the fact that she was small, nice, and submissive. The crazy thing is that she’s never that way with me. She’s actually so feisty and sassy. She’s not afraid to put me in my place. I’ve spent the last 8 years of my life trying to show her that it’s okay if she shows the rest of the world that side of her too. She grew up in a traditional household. Her dad is an alpha’s alpha and her mom is the perfect omega. She was raised to follow those standards. The first time I saw her get bullied by an alpha, I lost my shit and kicked his ass. After that, I dedicated my life to making sure that she was safe. I also taught her how to take care of herself. I taught her that omegas don’t have to be silent or submissive or lower than alphas.

“She’s too amazing of a person to have to worry about some asshole telling her that she should know her place. Her place is wherever the fuck she wants to be. I’ve been her protector ever since she hit puberty. She’s pretty and she smells good. Alphas love to mess with her. It doesn’t help that some of them hate me so they bother her just to get a reaction from me. We became life mates when I was 13, right after I got home from being stuck in this hospital for two months.
"My aunt locked me up to monitor my hormonal and body changes as I developed. Honestly, she was just hoping that my omega would surface and she kept me here as long as she could to see if it would happen. She convinced my mom it was medically necessary, but I knew better. Anyway, Mi Mi’s been my life mate for five years. Everyone assumed we were dating until Jeong Guk came around. That’s a whole other story. I guess those are the basics. Did I answer your questions?"

“Yes. I do have another one though. What is a life mate?"

“It’s like a mate but not quite. Mi Mi is a lesbian, so she’s never going to find a ‘proper’ mate. Up until certain things happened, I wasn’t able to find a mate either. So, we decided to be life mates. We promised to be together forever like mates would, despite the fact that neither of us was romantically or sexually interested in each other.”

“Do you mind if I ask why you couldn’t find a mate? Is it something related to RHDS?"

“Yes. Like I said before, my omega was asleep for 18 years. I could barely feel him. I really would have thought I was born an alpha if I didn’t have yellow eyes and if they hadn’t seen two wolves in my initial wolf scans. Well, I was also born asexual and aromantic. I don’t claim to fully understand it but the best explanation I could come up with is that I’m too omega to want an omega and I’m too alpha to want an alpha. The conflict made my brain and body decide to cut off those urges.

"My aunt and her colleagues seemed to think that I had to find an alpha stronger than me to make me submit to him. They thought that would wake up my omega and make it so I wasn’t asexual and aromantic anymore. They were right. I didn’t have feelings for or attraction to anyone until I met Jeong Guk. I actually hated him at first, but he pulled my omega out of me. Even before I submitted to him, he woke my omega up. Anyway, not the point.” I stopped immediately because I could feel myself getting upset at the memory of submitting to that alpha.

He nodded, undoubtedly picking up on the fact that I was avoiding the topic. I’m sure he was curious. I wasn’t looking forward to talking about all of that, but I knew I’d have to eventually. I was surprised at his patience when he spoke again and it wasn’t related to that alpha.

“You said that you and Mi Ran were life mates and that you taught her how to not fall into traditional omega stereotypes. Did you have any other interactions regarding your thoughts and opinions on ranks?"

“All the time. We created the Omega Protection Club at our school to keep omegas safe. We helped out as many omegas as we could. A friend of mine was almost raped at school by probably the biggest asshole in the world and I kicked his ass. That started me beating up any alpha that messed with an omega. We would talk every day about how much we hated alphas, how they're horrible, and how we were going to do everything within our power to change the world. Until we met the pack, we honestly questioned if decent alphas existed.”

“The pack?” Dr. Hwa asked, wanting to clarify.

“Jeong Guk’s pack. It’s a group of six alphas who are pack bonded and call themselves family. They’re all great guys. Well, all but one of them.”

“I’m going to respect the fact that you obviously don’t want to discuss whatever happened between you and Jeong Guk. However, you will have to talk about it eventually.”

“Right now, I’d rather avoid it.”

“As long as you know you have to get there at some point.” He waited for me to grunt in agreement
and continued. “If I’m understanding everything correctly, you and Mi Ran bonded over your omega status. A lot of your interactions involved your common rank and your dislike for alphas.”

“Yeah. We did other stuff too, but most of our days were spent trying to show the world that we weren’t just omegas.”

The therapist paused for a few moments. It seemed like he was trying to gather his words. He stared at me as if he expected something. When he didn’t get it, he decided to talk again. “If Mi Ran has always known you as her omega life mate who hates alphas and wants to prove that omegas aren’t weak, imagine how she felt when you told her that you don’t want to be an omega because they’re the exact thing that you’ve been spending your entire relationship convincing her that they aren’t.”

I instantly felt sick when his words clicked. “How could I have said something so stupid? Of course, she hates me! I’d hate me too if I spent our whole relationship saying one thing just to do the opposite. That’s why I hate Jeong Guk. Why the fuck did I say that to her? I don’t think she’s weak at all. She’s been so damn strong her whole life. She’s the strongest omega I know, besides me. She doesn’t need my protection. But, I guess she does. She can’t fight multiple alphas like I can. I really do think she could take one of them though. I’m definitely stronger than she is, so she’s always sort of needed me to protect her. That’s my job. I’ve always been her alpha. I don’t know if she would have made it this far without me really because I’ve had to save her so many times. I love taking care of her. It makes my alpha happy. It makes me happy too. I’ve always been the tough one between the two of us. I guess it’s just natural because I’m an alpha. But she’s not weak. She’s really strong for an omega.”

Dr. Hwa held his hand up and interrupted me. “I’m going to stop you here because that’s a lot to unpack. You seem to associate being strong with physical strength, which isn’t always the best measure. You also don’t appear to realize that you just contradicted yourself. You started off by saying that she’s the strongest person you know. Then, you said she needed you to take care of her. You immediately followed with ‘she’s really strong for an omega.’ This phrase implies that it’s impressive how strong she is but she’s still an omega, so she’s not that strong—that the only reason her level of strength is something worth noting is because she's an omega and not because the amount of strength she has is actually significant. You have a really interesting perspective because you are both omega and alpha, but you don't actually think you’re both. You seem to have all of the same rankist ideas that you hate from alphas but you’ve internalized them because you’re an omega. It appears that you’re only comfortable in your alpha skin because being an omega makes you weak, which just proves my point.

“I’m guessing the reason Mi Ran got upset is that you’ve probably shown signs of being just like those alphas, but then you’d switch back to omega mode. Now that all of the pretext is out of the way, she sees what you really think. I do want to make something clear, Ji Min. I’m not typically this confrontational with my patients. You’ve made it obvious that you’re not going to respond to my normal methods. I’m not sure if you noticed that I tried a different approach every time we met over the last week. I was trying to avoid being this way with you, but it might be for the best. More direct and borderline combative therapies often work better for alphas. In our sessions, I’m going to call you out on the inconsistencies and differences in the way you identify yourself and the way that you talk about the ranks. Since we’re getting all of the initial discussions out of the way, would you like to talk to me about Jeong Guk? You can say no. I don’t want to push you too much on your first official day of therapy. However, I do think it would be good if you at least told me the problem.”

“I might at well at this point. I don’t really want to talk about it, but I’m already spilling my guts about everything else. Jeong Guk was my alpha. Is my alpha? I don’t know anymore. I don’t really want anything to do with him. He was the sweetest person I’ve ever met. I fell for him, pretty hard actually. He was courting me. Is courting me? He even ordered our rings, ones he designed himself.
Had the sweetest fucking explanation for the design too, bastard. I swear to the goddess he can read my mind. He always knew when something was wrong. He always knew what I was feeling. He was so perfect. Like I said before, he also woke up my omega and made me submit. That led him to be all of my firsts. I gave him everything I had, short of bearing my neck.

“Then, my heat hit and my omega took over. I wanted everything omegas usually want during their cycle. It was the first time I’ve ever gone through an actual heat and it’s his fault I did. It’s his fault I begged for all of those things and that I enjoyed them. It’s that fucking alpha’s fault that I’m an omega now. I never had these problems before him. When I remembered some of what happened during my heat, I freaked out and made him go home. That’s when I got sick and my wolves started fighting. All of this is his fault. I know I keep saying that, but it’s true. None of this would have happened if it weren’t for him. Had I never met Jeon Jeong Guk, I wouldn’t be locked up here hoping that you’ll tell me I can finally go home. I’d still be myself. I would still be Alphabet instead of some stupid fucking omega that just wants an alpha’s knot and to tell him how much I fucking love him.”

I took a moment to catch my breath, having not really paused during my rant. Unbridled tears ran down my face but I didn’t bother stopping them. Wiping them away wouldn’t get rid of all of my anger and pain, nothing would. I avoided the other omega’s gaze, not wanting to see the expression on his face. The silence was unnerving and it gave me too much time to think. I didn’t want to remember the way he smelled or his face or all of the incredibly sweet things he did for me. They were all lies. He took advantage of me and made me into something I never wanted to be. I’ve been changing since the day I met him and I didn’t realize it until it was too late. Just as I was going to speak again to drown out the lack of noise, Dr. Hwa moved closer to me.

“What I got from all of that is that you’re mad you feel like an omega, so you’re taking it out on Jeong Guk. Technically, it is his fault that you’re experiencing being an omega. But, it’s your fault for thinking that’s a bad thing. You’re making him the scapegoat because it’s easier to blame him and be mad at him than it is to look at yourself. Unless he did something horrific that you’re not telling me about, he sounds like an amazing person. Honestly, I think a lot of your issues with Jeong Guk are going to work themselves out as you process your identity crisis. I don’t think there’s much to deal with right now as far as this is concerned. We’re going to focus on the main problem and then address any lingering issues with Jeong Guk afterward. I’m fairly sure your wolves are fighting because of your views on the ranks. You implied that they have fought before. Can you tell me what the circumstances were surrounding that?"

"They’ve disagreed a lot on little things—whether I should kiss Jeong Guk in public, whether we should let him carry stuff for us, whether we really need an alpha or not. The first time they really had issues was the heat before this past one. My omega wanted to take over and my alpha stopped him. Jeong Guk's rut is synched with my cycle, so my omega wanted to let his alpha take care of him and to take care of his alpha. It got really bad during my rut. My Alpha kept rejecting Jeong Guk but my omega was trying to keep him close. They ended up fighting so much that I got sick like I am now. It was a really rough couple of weeks. The worst of it was me passing out on my way home from school a few days before my rut."

"How did you stop it? We might be able to use that technique again."

"I didn't. Jeong Guk did. He kicked my ass and I submitted to him. He didn't actually mean to make me submit. It just happened. After that, my wolves only had small arguments until now. After I kicked Jeong Guk out, it got bad again. My alpha was glad that he was gone and my omega was devastated that we disowned our mate. That's how my omega refers to him. He calls Jeong Guk our alpha and our mate. I guess that's only fair since he was courting us. My alpha hates it."
"Like I said, we're not going to talk about Jeong Guk as much as we will the other issues. However, I'm sure that the topic will come up. I'm not sure if you noticed, but most of your answers have involved him in some way. I'm going to say we should end our session here. You've got a lot to think about and I've got to come up with a plan. I'm leaving it open like this so that you can reflect on everything I've said. I don't expect you to agree but I do expect you to at least take it into consideration. Tomorrow, I'll present my plan of action and we'll see if it needs to be adjusted and if you have any additions or changes. Then, we'll start working everything out. Since we have so few patients here, I'll be able to work with you for an extended amount of time every day.

“That works well because the sooner we start to process all of these issues, the sooner your wolves will stop fighting. That means you can go home. It won't be easy and it probably won't be quick, but it's necessary. If we get you to a point where I feel like your wolves aren't going to try to hurt each other at the first chance they get, I'll let you go back home and we can do our sessions over video call. We have to get there first. For that, I need your cooperation. Your effort, input, and feedback will be needed the whole time. This is all about you, what you're comfortable with, and achieving the best outcome. I'll push you but I don't want you to be completely uncomfortable. You need to communicate okay? Will you commit to working this out with me?"

"You sound just like Jeong Guk. Do we need to have a therapy safeword too?” I joked before I realized what I said. Dr. Hwa's curious face brought me back to the reality of the situation.

"I'm really sensitive and I usually tell him to stop when I didn't actually want him to. So, we made a safe word."

"He seems like a good guy who knows how to help you."

"He's gonna be a therapist and he's been in therapy for 10 years. I think it's changed how he is. He's very receptive to people's needs and helps them a lot. Anyway, I guess I should trust you with this because I don't really have a choice. I'm not getting out of here until I work with you."

“Is that why you’re being so open with me right now? I wasn’t expecting you to actually talk to me this much.”

I shrugged. “When my wolves aren’t fighting and trying to control everything I do, I’m usually pretty level-headed and logical. I hate every bit of this. I’d love to tell you to fuck off and never talk about anything, but I’m smarter than that. I realize I’m legally stuck here until you deem me safe to leave. If doing this is the only way that I can go home, then I’m gonna do it.”

“I hope you continue to be just as willing when things get difficult. Also, I can teach you some skills to help you with controlling your wolves. That might make your life a little easier.”

“Whatever you feel is best, doc. I’m just here for the ride.”

“I know what you meant, but you have to participate in order for you to make progress. You can’t just be passive. Therapy doesn’t work like that. I’m not here to tell you some huge secret that is going to change your life. I’m here to point stuff out to you and guide you in changing your own life. You’re doing all the heavy lifting. I’m just supervising to make sure you’re using the right techniques and that you don’t hurt yourself.”

“I guess it’s a good thing I’m so strong,” I said with a chuckle.

Dr. Hwa smiled in response, but then his face grew serious. “I know you’re physically strong, but there are a lot of types of strength. Intense therapy has a way of showing you exactly what you can handle. Even if you don’t have any extreme trauma to process, it’s still going to be a lot for you. I
That night, I didn’t get much sleep. I tried to process the fact that this doctor and my life mate think I’m rankist. I’ve dedicated myself to showing everyone that omegas are way more than people give them credit for. How could I be rankist? A large part of me wondered if I was focusing so hard on it because I was trying to avoid thinking about Jeong Guk. He would always creep into my thoughts but I instantly changed the subject every time my mind started to wander towards him. I didn’t want to consider what Dr. Hwa said about that alpha being my scapegoat. I wasn’t putting this all on him as if it was his fault. It is his fault. There’s a difference. I finally drifted off to sleep as the sun was rising. It wasn’t long before I was being woken up to eat breakfast and take my medicine. I was allowed to leave my room but I didn’t see much of a point in it. There weren’t any people for me to talk to and I didn’t feel like sightseeing at the hospital. I’ve seen enough of this place to last a lifetime.

Over the next week, I worked with Dr. Hwa to pinpoint my feelings regarding the different ranks. It took me several hours and countless roleplaying and inventory exercises to understand that I really do think I’m an alpha. I’ve apparently never really referred to myself as an omega in my mind, even though I always said I was to others. After we uncovered these feelings, we started to work on trying to develop a positive self-identity that encompasses both of my wolves. When we started doing this, my aunt took me off of the sedatives. Dr. Hwa insisted that I needed both of my wolves present for the session if I was going to incorporate them into the way I see myself. It was really hectic for the first session, but everything calmed down a lot after that. This whole process was sort of astounding to me.

My intense meetings with Dr. Hwa made me think about how people normally do therapy and it seemed really ineffective. How do they make progress in an hour or two every week? My shortest session was four hours and that was just because Dr. Hwa got an emergency call from his mate. Surprisingly, I was the one pushing for longer sessions. As soon as I realized that I was actually the opposite of what I called myself, I demanded that I have as much time in therapy as possible. Dr. Hwa was up for the challenge and didn’t have any other patients to attend to, so he humored me. My omega was rather excited about the prospect of getting proper representation in my mind, but my alpha was not. I learned a lot of tricks to calm my wolves down and ways to regain control when they were trying to get their way. They wouldn’t prevent it if my wolves tried to take over completely, but they actually helped a lot.

As my rut got closer, my alpha got stronger. This always happened during my cycle but I was worried this time. What if I start getting aggressive again? I feel like I haven’t honed my skills well enough to be able to combat rut rage. I guess this might be the best place for me to be if I do get a little out of hand. I’m sure Dr. Hwa can help me calm myself down. I also wondered if I would have the same sexual urges that I had during my last rut. It didn’t seem like I would. I didn’t feel any arousal in my sudden bursts of agitation, just anger. My alpha’s thoughts kept bleeding through, during the last few days leading up to my cycle, and interrupting my therapy sessions. Dr. Hwa encouraged him to talk. The therapist insisted that understanding all of the feelings within me is important, even the irrational-sounding ones that my alpha had during his rut rage.

The key was to allow my alpha and my omega to be heard, giving them both the chance to express themselves. If they both felt like they were being taken into consideration, then they were less likely to act out. Dr. Hwa took me to one of the physical testing rooms the day before my rut so that I could work off some of the pent up aggression I was experiencing. My omega was nowhere to be found, but I expected that. I’ve been teaching them that their respective cycles are their own personal time to be more in control of my thoughts and feelings. I created a compromise I was still trying to get them to agree to. They could have six days—the three days leading up to their cycle and the three days of
their cycle—to be at the forefront of my mind. I hoped that would allow them both to feel like they were allowed to come out some, but would also set the boundary that this is my body and I’m supposed to be in control most of the time. So far, they haven’t consented. I’m still hopeful that they’ll say yes. That would make my life a lot simpler.

After I lifted some weights and ran for an hour, I ate lunch and settled in for my afternoon session with Dr. Hwa. He had become a pretty constant fixture in my life over the past two weeks. It was nice to have some consistency and routine in this place. After my rut, I’m going to be seeing a new face and I’m not sure how I feel about it. My aunt worked out a deal with my school that would allow me to be able to stay in my year, despite the fact that we’re not sure how much time I’m going to miss. A tutor is going to be coming to teach me lessons and give me tests. The scores will be given to the school and they’ll count them as my grades. I don’t know how she manages to do this shit, but I’m grateful. I don’t want to have to be held back again. I know it wasn’t my fault the first time, yet I still felt weird about it. People usually think I’m stupid when I tell them. I stayed with Dr. Hwa for six hours, not wanting to cut off the session in the middle of a breakthrough. I apparently compartmentalized my opinions on omegas. I wanted to avoid the conflicting feelings I had on them, so I put myself in a different category. I viewed myself as different from other omegas so that I could see omegas as strong without seeing myself as weak. How the fuck did I manage that shit?

The longer I spent in therapy, the more respect I had for therapists and the field in general. The human mind is so fascinating and it’s only made more complex and interesting with the addition of our wolves. No wonder Jeong Guk wanted to do this for a living. I was slowly starting to find it easier to think about him without feeling a ton of anger and pain. I was no longer trying to downplay how good he is in my own mind. Dr. Hwa told me that behavior isn’t fair because it means I’m still projecting my anger. So, I’m using the cognitive restructuring techniques Jeong Guk taught me to stop talking about how horrible he is. After the session ended, I was moved to an observation room. My aunt wanted to watch and record everything that happened during my rut. To pass the time, I ate and practiced calming my alpha while I read a book. It didn’t work very well. He wasn’t cooperating. He even tried to take more control the longer I practiced. I eventually stopped and decided to go to sleep. I hoped he was going to be easier to deal with in the morning. I also hoped that my sex drive wouldn’t surface. I didn’t need to deal with that.

I woke up with a splitting headache and a bandage on my head. My right hand was also wrapped up. Before I had time to fully wonder what was going on, my mom was rushing to my side. I was so groggy that I couldn’t focus on her very well. I felt like someone hit me in the head with a baseball bat. I didn’t understand why she was here or what happened. Did I get into an accident or something?

“How are you feeling, Minnie? I bet your head feels absolutely horrible. Now that you’re awake, I’m getting Hee Yeun to give you some pain medicine. You’re going to feel really out of it for a while. They had to keep you sedated for three days. Your alpha took over and tried to break out of the hospital. Two of the orderlies tried to restrain you and you hurt them both pretty badly—knocked one out and broke the other’s arm. You also tried to punch through the door. Three of your fingers are broken and you’ve got some really bad bruises. They couldn’t medicate you when your alpha took over because it can cause permanent damage to him if they do. Whenever you’re fully awake, there’s something really important I need to show you. I want you to get your bearings, get a hold on your headache, and eat a little before then.”

I didn’t have much mental capacity to think about everything she said. It felt like my heart was racing in my head while a knife was being pushed in deeper with each beat. The pain meds made the hurting stop but they added to my disorientation. I fell in and out of sleep several times before I was completely lucid again. My head still hurt but the medication made it and my hand tolerable. After making sure that I wasn’t going to fall asleep again, I decided to eat. Mom forced me to use a spoon
for my rice because I realized I’m terrible at using chopsticks with my left hand. That’s going to be a pain in the ass. Mom refused to answer any of my questions about what happened to my head, assuring me that I would find out soon enough. It sounded ominous and made me a little worried, but I had to trust her.

When I was done eating, mom led me to the security room. There were a bunch of monitors on the wall and a control panel that looked like it came from some sort of sci-fi movie. My mom asked the guard to show me the footage, something I assumed they must have discussed earlier. There was no way he would have known exactly what she meant if they hadn’t. Three of the screens lit up with the various angles of the observation room and I saw myself curled into a ball. I was cradling my hand and snarling. The door suddenly opened, but I couldn’t see who was on the other side. I heard the last voice that I thought I would hear while I was in Busan. I could tell that me in the video didn’t expect to hear Jeong Guk either because I watched myself tense and begin growling. The alpha’s back was to me as he was yelling loudly at someone outside of the room.

“I don’t care what you see or hear in here. Don’t stop me unless I’m going to mate him or kill him. If you have to sedate one of us, sedate me. I don’t care if my alpha takes over, sedate me if you have to. Don’t touch him”

I saw him walk on screen and I saw myself staring at him, with my fangs and claws bared. There was an almost feral look on my face. I’ve never seen my own eyes glow crimson before. It was actually kind of scary. I noticed that the sudden spike in anger made my alpha completely forget about the previous damage to my hand. Jeong Guk apparently posed a bigger threat than actual injuries in my wolf’s mind. He stared at me for a while but I couldn’t place the mixture of emotions on his face. He looked sad more than anything. I growled louder at him and he just kept his eyes on me. After a few seconds, my wolf decided it was enough and he lunged at Jeong Guk. Since he was expecting an attack, my efforts were easily dodged. The alpha went to pin my wrist behind me but realized that my hand was messed up. He stopped and let me go.

“Ji Min, please stop. I know your alpha has taken over right now, but I don’t want to hurt you. I’m only here because your mom knew I’d be the only one who could stop you,” his voice sounded strained but I couldn’t tell why.

I watched myself swing at him with my left hand, trying to make some kind of contact. The next several minutes were filled with me trying to slash at him or punch him. I even attempted to kick him a few times. He sighed loudly and I could tell he was getting sick of my assault. His eyes were glowing pretty brightly and I wondered how he managed to control himself. He was being attacked and he was in his rut. He should have snapped my neck by now.

“I really don’t want to hurt you, but you’re getting on my nerves. I was hoping you were going to be tired by now. If you don’t stop, I’m going to stop you. I know you can still understand me. Please don’t make me hurt you.” I could hear how much he was struggling with the idea of injuring me more than I already was.

He grabbed my arm the next time I aimed at him. He pushed me up against the wall and moved to hold me there. I could tell something was off because he didn’t try very hard to keep me from getting out of his grasp. Jeong Guk should have no problems holding me in place. He’s done it multiple times. I saw myself wretch my hand free and swipe at his face, leaving several bloody gashes along his cheek. A loud growl echoed through the room right after. He grabbed me, yanked me to the side, and slammed my head into the wall. He immediately caught my body as I started to fall to the ground. I could tell by the way I hung limp in his hold that I was completely knocked out. The alpha picked me up and carried me to my bed. He gingerly tucked me in, taking a moment to run his hand across my face and apologize for what he did. He walked up to one of the cameras and addressed me
"After your heat, I was afraid I’d have to do this. I didn’t want to but I know I don’t have a choice. I tried to avoid it, but you’re not gonna know otherwise. It won’t work if I tell you. I… I’m sorry, Manggae, but it’s over. I can’t be with you when you’re like this. I… Goddess, there’s so much I want to say but I can’t. You have to figure this one out on your own. Come find me when you do. I’ll be waiting for you. Please, don’t hate me. I’m hating myself enough for the both of us. My alpha is so mad at me right now. I’m doing this for you. I hope you’ll understand that after a while. It’s been so hard keeping it to myself. It’s been hard lying to you about this. I’ve been hiding something from you since the moment I met you and it’s made me feel like a horrible person. It’s nothing bad, but it is something important. I hope after a while you’ll forgive me. You’re still my little manggaetteok omega and you always will be. But, this… you being here and me keeping the truth from you changes everything. Just… don’t hate yourself too much, okay? Promise me you’ll take care of yourself because I’m not there to do it. I’m sorry I hurt you. I hope your headache isn’t too bad when you’re watching this.

“It’s been hard not talking to you for a month. I really miss you. It’s going to be even harder knowing that you’ll be trying to contact me after today. Don’t bother. My phone will be off and I’m going to disappear for a while. The pack won’t help you. I’ve made them swear on the pack bond that they won’t talk about me to anyone. I know you won’t be able to, but try to pretend you never met me. I say that, but I’m doing this so you never forget. Maybe this is more selfish than I thought it was. Either way, it’s done now. Like I said, I’m doing this for you so you can heal properly. Your alpha hates me for a reason and I’ve known why he can’t accept me since the first day I laid eyes on you. That’s not the only thing though. You’ll figure it out soon. I’m sorry for the pain you’re going to have. I’m sorry for the tears that will be all my fault. I’m sorry that I won’t be there when you need me. I really hope you forgive me. I know you will. You’re still my life mate, right?” He chuckled bitterly before he continued.

“I guess you aren’t anymore. For now, we’re nothing—less than strangers. That hurts me to say. I keep telling you that I’m doing this for you, but it’s also for me. I’m so tired, Ji Min. I’ve been patient with you and I don’t feel like I can do this anymore. You’ll understand soon.”

He wiped the tears from his eyes before he finished speaking. “I’m setting you free, Park Ji Min. I’m giving you exactly what you wanted a month ago when you told me to leave you alone. You and I are no longer together. I’m not your alpha, your life mate, your packmate, or your friend.”

His voice broke when he said the words. “I’ll introduce myself again if you find me. Please… please don’t hate me. I know you’ll be angry for a while and you’ll be sad. Just… come find me when you’re better. If you think about it hard enough, you’ll know exactly where I am. I have to go. I can’t be here any longer. I’m sorry.” He took one last look at my body before walking out the door.

The video stopped and I wasn’t sure how to process everything. I could feel my mom’s gaze on me, her anticipation of my reaction almost palpable. Once the dissonance in my mind quieted, the first thing I thought was that this explains what happened to my head. I tried to figure out what Jeong Guk was saying in the video but he seemed to be talking in circles. My first reaction was that I’m not surprised he’s been hiding something. I’ve always recognized that there’s a secret within him. I never thought too much about it being related to me. It pissed me off, but it didn’t surprise me. Of course, that alpha would do something like this. I can’t believe that he’s got the audacity to “break up” with me over a fucking security camera. That made me even angrier until I thought about the fact that I probably started it. I kicked him out first, my omega reminded me.

Dr. Hwa’s voice played in my head, reminding me not to discredit Jeong Guk as a person because I’m angry. I scoffed at the thought. My emotions are justified. That asshole has been lying to me...
about something from the moment we met, he left me in one of the most confusing and impersonal ways I’ve ever seen, and he slammed me into a wall. Who the fuck does that? My head started to hurt again the more I thought. My mom led me back to my room and had them give me some more medication to make me sleep. She told me that I had plenty of time to figure everything out when I wasn’t in so much pain. I slept off and on for the next couple of days, my mom forcing my aunt to keep me out of it as long as I was hurting. I was eager to vent to Dr. Hwa when we resumed our sessions, excited to show him how much of a jerk Jeong Guk was. Maybe he’d finally believe everything I’ve been telling him.

I impatiently waited for my morning tutoring lesson to be done. I couldn’t wait to explain what happened. I started to wonder about the best way to describe everything and hoped I could remember all of the important details. As I walked to the therapy room, I briefly worried that he wouldn’t believe me. That was immediately cut off by the sight of a television in the therapy room.

“I figured we’d watch a movie today, Ji Min,” Dr. Hwa said with a smile. I could tell he’s already seen the video and was looking forward to reviewing it with me.

“And here I was wondering how I was going to explain everything.”

“We’ve both already seen it but I thought it would be important to talk about it together. Before we do, tell me how you feel about everything. I’m sure you’ve already formed some opinions.”

“He’s a fucking asshole. Who the hell tosses someone against a wall and then breaks up with them? I can’t even begin to explain how pissed I am that he’s been lying to me the whole time we’ve known each other. I always thought he was such a great guy but all of this really affirms everything I’ve been feeling about him lately. I know you always tell me I have to try to consider the other person’s thoughts and emotions, but I don’t want to. He didn’t even say anything. He hates himself? Good. I do too. He’s tired? Yeah, me too. He doesn’t want me to hate him? Too late. The rest of it was just confusing bullshit.”

We watched the video together, Dr. Hwa writing down a few notes here and there whenever I scoffed or rolled my eyes. I’m sure he’s already analyzed the whole thing and figured out which points he wanted to address. This viewing was just a formality to familiarize me with the video again. I noticed a few things that I didn’t see the first time, but I avoided letting them sink in. I didn’t really care to figure out why Jeong Guk winced when my head hit the wall, why he placed a small kiss on my hand when he tucked me in, or why he looked incredibly sad when he was talking to the camera. I didn’t want to start feeling sorry for him. This is all his fault and he brought it upon himself. The omega looked at me after the video ended and carefully studied my expression. After a few moments of observing me, he looked over his notes and began to speak.

“Let’s start with the beginning. If he’s such a jerk, why did he tell the orderlies to sedate him instead of you, even if his wolf took over?”

“Because his instincts are to protect the weaker thing. No matter how strong I am, I’m still weaker than he is.”

“You told me before that he sees you as his omega and that he’s really protective over you. You don’t think that has anything to do with it? You think it’s him being protective in general instead of being protective over you specifically?”

“Probably,” I said with a shrug.

Dr. Hwa could tell that I wasn’t going to give it any more thought, so he moved on to his next topic. “He was very patient with you when you tried to attack him. Despite the fact that his wolf was
actively trying to take over, he still controlled himself and was gentle with you. I could see how hesitant he was to touch you when he saw you were injured. He didn’t even try to hold you in place when he restrained you. It wasn’t until you attacked him that he tried to hurt you. Even then, he immediately incapacitated you without trying to draw it out or injure you more than necessary. Did you see the way he pulled you away from the wall at the last minute to make sure you didn’t hit it too hard?”

“So what if he did? Does that change everything else? He’s still hiding shit from me and he still said whatever the hell all of that nonsense was. He still fucking left me without even really telling me. What kind of pathetic alpha breaks up with their mate through a fucking video?”

“You just said—”

I cut Dr. Hwa’s words off with a growl, letting him know that my last statement was not open for discussion. He raised his hands as a sign that he wasn’t going to say any more. “As long as you’re aware,” he said before continuing to comment on the video. “So, Jeong Guk said he was hiding something from you, that it changed everything, and that you should find him when you’re better. Aren’t you curious about what it is that he’s hiding? It seemed like a big deal. He looked like he was really bothered by having to keep it from you and how you would react whenever you figured it out.”

“If it was that much of a problem for me to know, why did he bother telling me? That’s just dumb.” My tone was bitter when I thought about how confusing all of this was.

“I think he wants you to know whatever it is, but he wants you to figure it out on your own. He even said that it wouldn’t work if he told you. Do you have any idea what he might be talking about?” The therapist’s voice and face were even, giving me no indication of what he thought or felt about the subject. It frustrated me.

“No. Maybe this is his fucked up way of saying he’s cheating on me. Probably with Jang Mi, that bitch.”

Dr. Hwa seemed taken aback by the pure spite that filled my tone when I talked about the other omega, but he was quickly able to piece it together. “I take it you’ve had problems with Jang Mi being interested in Jeong Guk?”

“That fucking bitch tried to get my alpha’s attention even after she knew we were together. I don’t even know why I still hate her so much. She apologized and dropped it after she realized that Jeong Guk wasn’t interested. I guess it’s just because he insisted on keeping her around. I’m guessing it’s because he either wanted to or was fucking her.” I growled loudly at the prospect and dug my claws into the table. “Fuck both of them.”

“I’m going to let you know that I don’t think he was cheating on you and I highly doubt he’s got someone else he’s interested in. I guess it’s possible, but I would almost be willing to promise you that he’s not.”

“How would you know?” I spat at the doctor.

“First, you talk about him all the time, even when you don’t realize it. We have purposely avoided talking about Jeong Guk but he’s still mentioned every few minutes and the context is always different. This lets me know that he is around you constantly.” I nodded in response. “When would he have had time to cheat on you if he was always with you? Second, he approached me after he left the room that day and made me promise that I would do everything in my power to make sure you’re okay. He even said that he knew he was failing you as your alpha right now but that he was going to
make it up to you when you’re both doing better. I can’t be certain, but I think that means that he’s not pursuing other options. Anyway, we’re not focusing on Jeong Guk right now. How did your first day of tutoring go?"

I was grateful for the abrupt subject change. I couldn’t handle thinking any more about this. We spent the next few hours talking about my classes, how I feel after my rut, and ways that I can discipline my alpha for taking over. We pressed the topic until my alpha finally admitted that he came out because he wanted to escape and because he was angry that my omega controlled me during my heat. I can’t believe that petty asshole threw a tantrum. Goddess, that’s pathetic. Dr. Hwa reminded me that it was probably because my alpha was feeling insecure. He’s been the only wolf for so long that not having any say in what happened during my heat probably unsettled him and made him feel insignificant. Alphas don’t handle it well when they don’t feel important. Regardless, that’s not a great reason to take over, attack people, and break our hand.

My mind over the next few days was gradually filled with Jeong Guk. I couldn’t help wondering about his wellbeing when the thought of him kept me up at night. We hadn’t talked about him again in therapy, but I started noticing how often I mentioned him in passing. Ever since Dr. Hwa said that he would be curious about the alpha’s secret, I found myself contemplating what it could be. Whenever I dreamt, good memories of us cuddling and laughing played on repeat. It was starting to drive me crazy how much I thought about him, how strongly I still reacted to all of the smiles and times he called me cute names. It finally became too much when I zoned out during a therapy session and the doctor asked me what was wrong.

“I’m still in love with Jeong Guk aren’t I?” I asked quietly, not wanting to speak the feelings into existence.

“Yes,” the omega responded with a tender voice.

“Even though I’m mad at him right now because of everything that happened, I’m still in love with him.”

“Yes.”

“And he’s gone now. My alpha left me. He’s not coming back is he?”

“No. He said he’s waiting for you to figure out and to process everything. After that, he wants you to find him.”

The stinging of tears didn’t surprise me as much as the horrific pain that ripped through me. It was an insurmountable pressure that crashed down on my chest, not allowing me to breathe. I gasped for air. Dr. Hwa rushed to calm me once he realized I didn’t have the ability to do it myself. After what felt like hours of struggling to catch my breath, I was finally able to inhale and exhale normally. The therapist patiently waited for me to collect myself and refrained from talking. I’ve seen him process enough of my emotional moments to know that he’s always quiet when he knows I need to talk the issue out with myself.

“He told me he wouldn’t go anywhere I couldn’t follow. Why did he lie?”

“Why do you say he lied? You can follow him wherever he went.”

“No, I can’t. I don’t know where he is and I’m stuck here!” I started crying again and the doctor didn’t press it.

Our session ended after a few more failed attempts to discuss how empty I felt after I realized that
Jeong Guk left me. Even the word empty seemed like an understatement. That term implied that something could fill whatever was empty and everything would be all right. This was deeper than that. This was a void, complete nothingness. I laid in my bed contemplating the fact that the only person I’ve ever had romantic feelings for is gone, and I felt the exact moment that my heart broke. I’m alone now. My alpha, my lover, my life mate, my actual mate is gone. No. I can’t call him those things anymore. He told me that we’re less than strangers now. If we’re less than strangers, then why does my heart feel like every drop of blood has been forcefully squeezed from it by a boulder that my ex-alpha dropped directly on top of me from the peak of a mountain?

Both of my wolves paced anxiously inside my mind. My omega’s howls of pain echoed so loudly within me that I was sure people in other areas of the hospital could hear. I didn’t sleep or eat that night, unable to still myself or my omega enough to rest. Dr. Hwa didn’t mention me abstaining from these things until I was disengaged during our session and he could hear my stomach growling. I assured him I would eat when I felt hungry and I was positive that I wouldn’t throw up the second I got something into my stomach. By the third day of not sleeping, I was completely dejected. Even my alpha had begun to feel the absence of the one person he ever feared. He said that he was sick of hearing me and my omega bitch, but I wondered if he actually liked Jeong Guk as well. At the crumbling of that last barrier, the true pain sunk in.

I managed to push away the only person who was capable of loving me and being my mate. I told him to leave me alone. Regardless of whatever secrets he might have and everything that happened during my heat, I still want him. I realized too late that I’m willing to overlook almost anything to be with him. I needed him in my life. It felt like I was tied to him, that my very heart and soul were connected to his. There was always this strange pull towards him that I could never seem to ignore. It was as if everything in him called to me and sucked me in. As soon as that thought crossed my mind, my vision blurred. It seemed as though the room itself was spinning and I was unable to get my bearings. As I clutched to my pillow, trying to will away the tumultuous chaos that had invaded every atom in my body, an overwhelming realization settled over me—a truth that undeniably changed every single thing in my entire life.

Jeon Jeong Guk is my fated.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed the chapter. Do you like Dr. Hwa? What do you think about Ji Min's identity crisis and the information he found out at the end? What about Jeong Guk's video? Thank you all for reading. Please tell me what you think!

You have no idea how many months I’ve been waiting for you all to know that JiKook/KookMin are fated... I am so happy to say it now!

Twitter: @HimeSakuraLani
Curious Cat: SakuraLani.
Again, there is a lot of therapy stuff in this chapter. Please don't take it as definitive therapy. It's altered to fit the story.

I demanded to meet with Dr. Hwa first thing in the morning, telling him that it was an emergency. To me, it is. Realizing that I’m fated to someone who I had—just days ago—tried to convince myself I didn’t hate definitely counts as a crisis. My lessons for the day were rescheduled for tomorrow because I knew that I wasn’t going to get out of my therapy session any time soon. The look the doctor gave me let me know that he was concerned that I called our meeting early but he was trying to contain it.

“Good morning, Ji Min. I’d ask if you slept well but I can tell you didn’t sleep at all last night. What happened? Is it related to why you called me in so early?”

“I figured it out,” I said in barely a whisper.

“What did you say? I couldn’t hear you.” He leaned closer to me, trying to catch what I said.

“I figured out what Jeong Guk needed me to know. We’re fated. He’s my fucking soulmate. I guess that explains why we’re basically made for each other. Of course, I think he’s the perfect alpha. He was always meant to be the perfect alpha for me.”

Dr. Hwa cut off my musing before it turned in to full-fledged rambling. By now, he knew that I was prone to rumination and getting stuck in my own head when I was stressed, sad, or overwhelmed. “Is that why you didn’t sleep?”

“Yeah. The world spun for a while when I found out and then it like things were moving inside of me. Does that make sense? I sound crazy but that’s what it felt like.”

“That doesn’t sound crazy at all. That’s exactly how mating feels but much stronger. You can basically sense every strand of your DNA rearranging to be connected to your mate. It really seems like you and your mate’s atoms are taken out of your body, thrown into a container, shaken up, and then poured back into you. There are bits of you and bits of your mate everywhere. It doesn’t surprise me that realizing you’re fated would be a lesser version of that. I’m also not shocked that you’re fated. I had my suspicions after hearing a little more about your story together and how you two kept being thrown together. That’s what happens when you’re fated. You can try to avoid that person as much as possible and you will still end up next to them. After I watched the video and heard what Jeong Guk had to say, I was pretty sure that he already knew about your bond.”

“Why didn’t you tell me?” I cried out indignantly.

“You can’t tell someone they’re fated. It doesn’t do anything. They have to realize it. If they don’t uncover the bond themselves, there really isn’t a bond. It would essentially be like when I told you about your internalized rankism. You didn’t believe me and it didn’t impact you at all. Now that you’re starting to realize that you actually are rankist, those words mean something to you. I’m more
curious how long Jeong Guk knew and how he figured it out. I've never heard of one mate realizing they're fated but not the other. Then again, you both have very rare conditions that make you quite different than other people. The typical standards don't apply to either of you."

“He can’t have known for very long. I would have figured it out if he did, right? He did say he was hiding something from when we met but he said that was about my alpha not liking him. Maybe he realized it when I kicked him out after my heat. They always say if you don’t recognize the bond immediately then you have to go through something bad with your fated to see it. Maybe that was his bad thing.”

“Wouldn’t that have been your bad thing too?”

“I don’t know. I’m just guessing here. Me having two wolves could have impacted it somehow. I didn’t start to think about how connected we always were until my alpha admitted that he missed Jeong Guk too. Maybe my alpha finally acknowledging that he’s attached to Jeong Guk is what unlocked it?”

For the first time since my sessions started, Dr. Hwa didn’t have an immediate answer for me. He paused for a moment and decided the best way to approach the topic. “I’m not sure how he could have realized your connection before you, but it doesn’t actually matter. We could spend the whole day speculating about why or how and make no progress. Jeong Guk is the only one who knows the answer and he’s unreachable for now. I think the best thing to do is figure out what you need to do from here. How do you feel about all of this? What are you going to do when you see him again? How are you going to approach your relationship knowing that he lied to you but also knowing that you will end up together no matter what? Those are the things you should be focusing on. Talk about the logistics of his revelation when you see him again.”

I contemplated his words for a few moments, my rational mind battling with my curiosity. The other omega was right. Only my fated knows exactly how he discovered our bond. It was much more important to process how this changed my life and our relationship than it was to ponder something that was impossible to figure out. Still, I couldn’t help but wonder. What could have caused him to recognize me before I could recognize him? I guess this is also why he left. He must have known that I would realize I’m in love with him and that the heartbreak from him breaking up with me would be enough for me to understand our bond. Stupid fucking perfect fated alpha. I sighed and shook my head, chuckling as I thought about him.

“You’re right about the curiosity thing, even though I’m probably going to keep wondering until I learn the truth. I can’t believe I’m stuck with that perfect asshole for the rest of my life. I mean, I could do worse but I’m still mad at him.”

Dr. Hwa smiled at me nodded. “That’s completely valid. Just because you’re fated doesn’t mean you can’t be mad at him, dislike something he did, or that you have to instantly forgive him when he does something. You’re still a normal couple who will have fights and disagreements and tense moments.”

“True. But we’re just stuck together even if we’re pissed,” I said while rolling my eyes.

“You can look at it that way. You can also look at it as you have the comfort of knowing that no matter how bad things may get between you that you will always have each other to lean on. That’s a level of companionship and relationship security that very few people get. If you two are careful and conscious of each other’s emotions, you can take that knowledge and use it to temper whatever negativity that comes your way.”

“That honestly just sounds like I’m not allowed to get mad at him.”
"You’re allowed to get mad at whoever you want to, Ji Min. Let me try to explain this in a different way. If you and Jeong Guk were to get into a huge fight about something and decide to break up, you are still fated. If either of you wanted to stay mad, be harmful to one another, or stay away from each other, you can do that. However, you’re still fated. If you two fought so badly that you chose to have nothing to do with each other for the rest of your lives, you will still end up together. I’m stressing that point to say that you might as well try to work out your problems instead of letting them build. Again, you can be mad or feel any other emotion that you may experience. All of your feelings are valid and worth exploring. I’m just saying you should use your bond as a reminder that if you avoid solving the problem, it will just cause issues. Why would you go through the pain of being away from your mate, or worse suffer through either one of you being with someone else, when you could address your concerns and stay together?"

“So, I just have to forgive him no matter what he does? That sounds like bullshit.”

“Not exactly, but sort of. If you’re looking at it that way, then he also has to forgive you for the things you do. I think it will be similar to what happens when most mates fight. No one wants to feel their mate’s pain and know their mate is upset. They want to forgive their mate’s transgressions because they don’t want their mate to be unhappy or to have disharmony in their bond. I’m not sure if that will be exactly how it works, but it’s likely. This is similar to the conversation we had about how Jeong Guk found out about your bond. We could discuss it for the rest of the day and never come to a solid conclusion of how you might handle everything when you see him again. You don’t know what you’re going to do in a situation until it actually happens, no matter how much you try to prepare for it.

“Our time would be better spent figuring out how to proceed. I’m sure you’re ready to get out of here so you can get answers, yet you are still here for the time being. Your wolves have been getting along a lot better but I’m not convinced they can work together well enough for this to not be a recurring issue. I don’t want you to have to be back here every few months because your alpha or your omega didn’t want to play nicely. I’m sure your newly discovered fate bond will unify them some but I don’t know how much. I still need to keep you here for a little while to monitor you.”

I nodded, understanding his reasoning. “I am really excited about getting out of here but I don’t want this to happen again. As much as I would like to go home or find Jeong Guk, I’d hate to have to come back here. I guess coming up with a plan is a good idea. The first thing I want to try to resolve is getting my wolves on the same level. A lot of my inner dialogue isn’t as hateful as it used to be and my alpha is starting to realize that my omega isn’t someone he can just bully away like he has everyone else. I want to keep working on that. I want them both to understand that they have to work together.

"My omega needs to learn that he doesn’t have to submit to my alpha’s wishes, but he can’t force me to be all omega either. My alpha needs to learn that he can’t just boss us around whenever he wants, but that he also has an important place in our lives. They both need to understand that this is my body. I’m in charge of both of them. I’m happy that I’m getting there and I don’t want to stop that progress. I came to you with the mission of getting Mi Mi back. I still want to do that but I don’t think I’ll be able to unless I’m more at peace with myself.”

“What I’m hearing is that you want to prioritize getting better control of your wolves and combating your rankist or negative self-talk over rushing after Jeong Guk. Is that right?”

“Yeah. Like you said, he’ll still be there when I’m better. Plus, he said he didn’t want me to find him until I was. We have the rest of our lives to sort out the problems between us. My own issues will get worse the longer I wait to solve them. I don’t want to relapse and end up in this situation again. I also don’t want to resume my relationships with Jeong Guk and Mi Mi without really working on myself.
I don’t like having something wrong with me. It makes me feel broken and completely not okay. If I can fix it, I’m willing to do anything that I have to.”

The next part of the day was spent creating our plan of action to solidify my identity as both an alpha and an omega. We decided to incorporate taking an inventory of the positives and potential of each aspect of myself, as told by the other parts of me. This required me to make a detailed list of things that I liked about my wolves and things that I thought they were good at, as well as them making one about me and each other. We also determined that discussing our wants, needs, and preferences with each other were crucial. A few of these conversations have happened over the last few weeks, but nothing had been structured to specifically address everyone's concerns. This was the time for all of me to figure out exactly what we wanted. After this was completed, we were going to make modifications for each of us and create compromises on the things that we wouldn't budge on. This would allow me to establish boundaries and see what areas I really needed to work on. These things were going to happen while I acquired the skills to allow my wolves to come to the surface without taking over. Dr. Hwa said that would be the last of my in-patient therapy. If I could manage the exercises he had planned, then I would most likely be ready to leave the medical center.

During the last part of our session, I learned the steps to coax out one of my wolves without giving them full control. I was told that this would be necessary to be able to complete some of our other therapy goals. Doing role play and learning how to maintain my composure and lucidity during a variety of scenarios would be the best way to continue developing balance within myself. It required an immense amount of self-control, which I was lacking because I hadn’t eaten or slept in longer than I can remember. We didn’t actually practice the technique because Dr. Hwa was worried I wouldn’t be able to manage my other selves if I called them out. An orderly brought lunch to the therapy room and I cautiously ate. When I was able to keep down the first few bites, I opted to eat everything. It felt nice to finally have something in my stomach after a few days. As I ate, we talked about how I felt about our plan of action. It was relieving to finally have a solid idea of what I needed to do to get out of here. Now that I know what the problem is, I can concentrate on fixing it. As a way of keeping up with my progress, analyzing past events, and sorting my feelings, the therapist encouraged me to keep a journal.

“What would I even write about?” I asked when he handed me a blank book.

“Anything that comes to mind. If you can’t think about anything, why don’t you write about random interactions you’ve had? Write about the things you used to do with Mi Ran, beating up random alphas at school, or when you first met Jeong Guk. We can look at the way you used to think and act and see how it compares to how you are now. When you’re talking about the past, try to be as accurate to what happened and how you thought and felt as you can be. That will allow you to get the most out of it. I know it seems like it may or may not help but indulge me while you’re here. If you dislike it and don’t think it’s good to continue, then stop after you get out.”

I decided to write after Dr. Hwa left for the day. It was a little strange to address it the way I usually see omegas in books and movies, by saying “dear diary.” It also seemed weird to jump directly into the day’s events with no preface. I eventually decided to write a little about how Mi Mi and I were before we met the pack. I figured I could work my way up to the present and see my journey for myself. It could be fun and, like the doctor said, I could always stop if I wanted to. After several pages of gushing about how much my life mate means to me and how close we were, I started to feel sleepy. I tried not to think about how nice it was to finally feel tired or how this was likely just my body deciding to shut down after everything that has happened. I wanted to accept the sleep for what it was and enjoy it as much as I could. I was learning that my stressful states meant missing rest and nourishment. I didn’t want to take those things for granted while I can get them, just in case I faced a lot more episodes of stress in the future. Maybe that was smart planning and maybe it was a survival instinct. Either way, I fell asleep thinking about how good of an idea it was—my slightly delusional
ramblings likely the side effect of my lack of sleep.

The next couple of weeks were filled with a lot of very difficult and trying sessions. I was grateful for having developed a simple and consistent schedule. I woke up and ate breakfast. I attended my tutoring sessions in the morning. The lessons went much more quickly than normal classes because I was the only one there to ask questions and need explanations. After lunch, I had therapy with Dr. Hwa for five hours. We decided to limit the length of the sessions when I was trying to draw my wolves out. The omega assured me that it would be very draining while I was learning how to master the techniques. Every hour, we paused for 20 minutes and attempted to pull out one of them. We split the time evenly between them so that neither would feel like the other was getting preferential treatment. I quickly figured out that one of the most crucial parts of managing the two beings inside my head was to make them both feel important. As I started to grasp the finer points of the skills I was learning, I also discovered that one of the best ways to keep control over my wolves was to allow them to have free reign every once in a while.

That concept is how I got them to agree to my six-day policy. In exchange for them letting me command my body for the majority of the time, I gave them six days to be more prominent in my mind. In addition to the six days, every third mating cycle they would be allowed to take over completely. That allowed them to feel free enough to know that they are valued but also comfortable letting me have power over myself. Many of the sessions blended together but the day that I made my potential and positives lists stuck out. All of us struggled with saying nice things about each other. My wolves decided to show how much they fit into their rank stereotypes when my omega said the only redeeming quality of my alpha was that he was alpha-y and my alpha said the only thing my omega was good at was taking a knot. I later learned this was them being petty because of the things that they did when they were last in control of our body. After some behavioral correction exercises, we decided that we needed to talk out those frustrations. That was the day that things started to change for the better. It marked both of my wolves being more open and honest with themselves, each other, and me.

Over the course of these sessions, we ended up getting into heated discussions about how inferior my alpha feels when we’re around Jeong Guk and how that spurred the majority of his actions. He hates that he’s not the best in comparison when our fated is near, hates the fact that he can only ever be second. Dr. Hwa assured him that he’s still incredibly strong and that he is the best alpha he can be. The doctor also insisted that my wolf should not compare himself to Jeong Guk or his wolf. Not only is it not fair to hold himself to someone else’s standards, but it is also an unattainable goal. The fact of the matter is that my alpha is one of two wolves trapped in an omega’s body. He will never be able to compete with someone who only has one wolf and is genetically designed to be the most alpha-like of alphas. Dr. Hwa convinced my alpha to make a list of all of the things he envied about Jeong Guk and his alpha, wanting to see exactly what it was that made him so admirable. I wasn’t surprised to see strength, presence, and ability to intimidate or win a fight on the list.

I can honestly say I wasn’t expecting him to praise our fated’s maturity, sense of duty and responsibility, and ability to handle omegas and us. He said even though he felt like Jeong Guk tended to treat us more like an omega, he understood why. Apparently, the body language and scent changes that my wolf used with our fated was a very clear sign to leave and never come back. Even when Jeong Guk tried to get closer and to be friendly with all of us, my alpha refused. That part of myself didn’t want to accept everything that came with getting to know someone who was better than us, who was actually the alpha that he wanted to be. Being an omega also made him never feel like he could be taken seriously as an alpha. That’s why he did everything in his power to push my omega down and be our only wolf. That’s why he always took it upon himself to prove how much of an alpha he is. Jealousy and insecurity were at the core of his behavior and it took a long time for him to be able to admit that. We felt a lot more unified and at peace when we were able to release the feelings that he had kept inside for so long.
My omega was hurt by both my and my alpha’s actions. Our whole life, we’ve never embraced him or treated him like he mattered. Even though I didn’t really know my omega or feel him, I never tried to bring him out. It didn’t occur to me that I should be the one to try to contact my wolf. I always just assumed he would appear when he wanted to. I didn’t realize my alpha was keeping him subdued. Out of fear, my other wolf stayed where he was and kept quiet. When we met Jeong Guk, that unsettled my alpha and pulled him out of his element. My omega took this as an opportunity to show up more and more. Each interaction we had with our fated allowed my other wolf to grow a little stronger and a little more confident in assuming his place in my mind. He said that even if Jeong Guk wasn’t meant to be our mate that he would always love and appreciate the alpha for being the only one that acknowledged his existence. I guess that was the strange twinge I always felt every time we were addressed as “little omega.” It was hard to hear about his feelings of being unloved and unwanted, knowing that I had a hand in making him feel that way. To be honest, we all did. He wasn’t lying when he said that our fated was the only one who paid attention to him. Mi Mi, my mom, me, the pack, and random people I’ve had interactions with in the past have typically approached us as an alpha.

Even though my mom had always hoped I would be more like an omega, she rarely tried to get him to wake up. The most she ever did was get me to do activities that were usually enjoyed by omegas and wait to see if that would work. Dr. Hwa had my wolf make a list of all of the things Jeong Guk did to make him feel loved and appreciated. Asking our opinion and including us in decisions, addressing us directly by our rank, allowing us to express our thoughts and feelings, and showing how much he worried about the way his actions would impact us were among the most important. When I thought about it, it made so much sense. These were the things no one gave him. These are basic common courtesies that I never extended to a part of myself. It was difficult to understand how I could reconcile the issues between my two wolves when one of them had purposely hurt the other so that he could feel better. The therapist assured me that we could work at building their trust and developing an understanding between them. It might take a while for my omega to forgive my alpha but we could get there if we worked at it.

Me as Ji Min started to feel lost the longer I spent in therapy. I realized that I don’t feel like I have much of a personality outside of the chaos of my wolves. Who am I? I tried to figure out how to answer that question but I didn’t feel like I could think of something adequate. Dr. Hwa had me come up with a variety of roles that I play in my life. It didn’t seem like what I had on my list made sense but he insisted that it was perfect. I see myself as a son, best friend, life mate, fated, alpha, omega, student, club leader, and pack mate. The therapist told me that there was a lot of merit in exploring the duties that we fulfill in our lives, that they can often show us who we think we are. I wanted to try to develop a sense of self completely exclusive of other people, but he explained that isn’t possible. How we view ourselves is tightly tied with how others view us, how we feel like we live up to the expectations of others, and how we interact with the world around us. I’ve assumed the identity of Alphabet because the only thing I've felt very successful in doing was protecting omegas. It also dawned on me that this was the only thing that allowed both of my wolves to express themselves. My omega was allowed to help combat the injustices against omegas that we see every day and my alpha was able to prove that he was the best. We refrained from going too in-depth with finding myself because Dr. Hwa didn't want to overwhelm me.

The main issue keeping me here is the disagreements between my wolves. We can address my lack of personal identity over video call whenever I get out. It seemed strange to me that I would be willing to continue therapy after being so strongly against it in the beginning. Yet, I knew that it was bringing many good things to my life. During one session, I asked Dr. Hwa if all of his patients made this much progress in under two months. He laughed and explained that we've probably done close to a year of therapy while I’ve been here if we’re taking into consideration that most people have one or two one-hour appointments per week. I’ve had four- to eight-hour sessions between five and
seven days a week. It didn’t feel like it had been that much, but I also didn’t have much else to do. School and therapy were my jobs now. Despite how far I’ve come, I’m well aware that some of the things that I’m learning will take a long time to fully sink in. Growing to love and accept myself is a lifelong process and I will probably always have a hard time with it. My wolves will always disagree about something and I will be left to play the mediator. Even though I will never be completely perfect, I will get to a good place eventually. That thought is what made me so excited to continue.

“Your heat is in three days, Ji Min,” the doctor said at the end of one of our meetings. “Your aunt wanted me to give you the reformulated version of your Primemmeryn. She analyzed the levels of each medication and the strength of your wolves to reconfigure the dosage. She said that the reason it stopped working before was that it was crafted to cater to your alpha’s aggression, not to your omega or arousal hormones. Now that it’s been redone, you should be able to go through your cycles without any issues. I also think you should be able to just take it during your heat and rut instead of every day.”

“I was starting to feel some pre-heat symptoms. I’m not horny but the clinginess and emotional reactivity are starting. Is it weird that I haven’t been aroused since my last heat? I feel like that’s not normal.”

“It isn’t normal but that’s perfectly fine. I think it’s because you and your wolves are at odds about the concept in general, but you all agree on Jeong Guk being the only person you feel that way about. In other words, one part of you might find someone attractive or the situation arousing, but the other parts don’t. My theory is that Jeong Guk is probably the only person who is going to make you feel that way because he’s the only one you’ve let through all of your barriers.”

I wasn’t sure how to feel about that concept when we talked about it. I ultimately decided it was a good thing because I’m going to end up with my fated no matter what. I might as well be attracted to only him. In some ways, I’m sure that will make our relationship easier. He won’t have to worry about me cheating on him at the very least. The concept made me laugh. Why would I ever leave the person who has my heart and is destined to have it for the rest of my life? Honestly, who could compete with that? I fell asleep that night excited to potentially have my cycles under control again. I also pondered the fact that I am perfectly fine not being interested in anyone but Jeong Guk.

“Today, I want to do something drastic,” Dr. Hwa announced after we had finished our session exercises.

“As long as it’s not dangerous, I guess I’m up for it. I trust you enough to know you’re not going to do anything to get yourself fired.” We both laughed at my joke. By now the therapist knew that I did trust him and he understood my sense of humor.

“I want you to talk to Mi Ran. I reached out to her to see if she would be willing to have a short conversation with you. She agreed to it and I believe it will help give you some peace regarding your fight. Are you willing to do that?”

I paused for a while and contemplated what I would like to say. A million different things shot through my mind. I was excited, happy, scared, worried, hopeful, and sad. Dr. Hwa took a few minutes to remind me that those feelings are completely valid but focusing on them for too long might make me decide against what I want to do. I had to take a deep breath and try to calm myself. I tried my best to assess the situation. I would like to speak with her and try to at least explain myself a little. I quickly checked with my wolves to see what they thought was best. My omega was nervous that Mi Mi might hate us but he missed having her around. He really enjoyed not only having her company, but another omega’s presence too. My alpha was very happy with the idea of talking to her again. He has always seen my life mate as our omega. It’s been frustrating for him to be away
from her. After the inventory of our thoughts and emotions, we decided to speak with Mi Mi.

“We’ll do it,” I said with a small nod.

“Good! Also, I have to say great job on using some of your skills to make sure your wolves felt included. That’s exactly what we’ve been working towards and you applied them to the situation perfectly.”

“Thanks. I didn’t really think about it. I just wanted their input too because this involves all of us.”

Dr. Hwa looked at me, eyes sparkling and a smile plastered on his face. As soon as I realized what I said, I understood why. I finally had one of those “click” moments where things arranged themselves exactly how they should be. He was proud of me and that made me proud of myself. Thinking about it more, I realized that the intense hours of therapy were finally starting to pay off. Dr. Hwa pulled out his phone and dialed a number. I got a little nervous when I could hear it ring, but I tried not to let that bother me. My feelings are valid and it is acceptable that I am worried. That doesn’t mean I have to let it consume me. I tensed slightly when I heard the familiar voice on the other end of the line.

“Hello, Mi Ran. This is Dr. Hwa. We spoke a few days ago about you and Ji Min having a conversation. He and his wolves have agreed to it. Are you still willing to talk to him?” I couldn’t stop myself from holding my breath in anticipation.

“That’s wonderful! I’ll give him the phone. It was nice speaking with you again, Mi Ran.”

The omega leaned over and handed me his phone. For a moment, I sat frozen. I was still somewhat terrified that she would tell me she never wanted to speak with me again. I honestly wouldn’t blame her.

“Hello?” Mi Mi’s voice called out.

“Hey, Mi Mi. I’m sorry I’m a dick and that I suck, but I’m getting better. I hope you don’t hate me.” I figured I would say what I needed to tell her before she spoke again, just in case she decided that she really didn’t want to talk to me anymore.

“I did for a little bit but Gukie calmed me down and told me that I wasn’t being fair to you. It took a few days for me to stop being pissed and then a couple of weeks for me to realize that I was overreacting. I didn’t even try to see things from your perspective and that’s not ok. You’re definitely still a dick but you’re my life mate. Speaking of Gukie, I’m not sure if you care but he disappeared a few weeks ago. No one knows where he went and the pack pretends like they’ve never heard of him.”

“He told me he would. I was hoping that maybe it was an exaggeration after everything that happened.”

“When did you talk to him? Are you telling me that your bitch ass talked to your alpha before you talked to me? I take it back. I hate you now.” I wasn’t sure if I could hear the giggle in her voice or if it was wishful thinking.

“He came to stop me from hurting myself when my alpha took over during my rut. I don’t even remember seeing him. He knocked me out and then left me a message breaking up with me. He told me he wasn’t going to be around for a while. But that’s not really important right now. We should talk about—”

A loud yell interrupted me and I was surprised by how upset Mi Mi got. “HE DID WHAT? I swear to the goddess I will kick his ass the next time I see him. In fact, he better hope I never see him again.
I can’t believe that asshole. How dare he break up with you? I thought he was better than that.”

“Mi Mi, please stop. If you and I are still life mates, then you’ll see him again. We don’t really have a choice.”

“Are you seriously taking his ass back after what he did? Look, we will find you another alpha. He’s not—”

“We’re fated, Mi Mi. I have to take him back eventually. I’ve still got a lot of negative emotions surrounding what he did and how, but at some point I’ll have to move on. It may not happen any time soon but it will happen. Plus, I’m in love with him.”

“Holy shit! Okay… umm… that’s a lot. Congratulations, I guess? And I can’t believe my baby’s in love! That’s so fucking cute. I hate that you had to get locked up to realize it, but I’m glad you did. What are you going to do now? Do you even know where he went? He’s seriously your fated? That’s crazy. I knew he was perfect for you but I didn’t think he was actually made for you.” She sounded just as stunned by the information as I was when I found out.

“I should be getting out of here in a week or two. Then I’m going to go find him. He said if I thought about it hard enough that I would know where he is. I honestly have no idea but I’ll try my hardest to figure it out. Past that, I don’t know. I’m really just taking this one step at a time. I’ve only come up with those two steps so far.” We both chuckled at my admission, acknowledging that any sort of plan was more than I normally have.

“Knowing Gukie’s overprotective alpha, he’s still in Busan. Honestly, he’s probably camping on top of the hospital waiting for you to get out.”

I chuckled and agreed before her words fully processed. That sounds exactly like something Jeong Guk would do. Of course, he would stay in Busan. Not only is he closer to me that way, but his favorite place is here. The only pleasant memory he has of being with his parents was when they visited Seokbulsa Temple near his childhood home. He thought the temple was fun, but he really enjoyed hiking there. He found a hill that faces the temple head-on and has a beautiful view of everything. Jeong Guk told me he likes to disappear there sometimes if life gets really overwhelming. That’s the only place he could be after everything that’s happened.

“Ji Ji? You still there?”

“Yeah. You helped me figure out where he is. You’re right about him being in Busan. He’s on a hill across the river in front of Seokbulsa Temple. It sounds crazy but I know he’s there.”

“I don’t know shit about fate bonds, but I’m sure it gives you some sort of weird powers involving your mate or something like that. If you know that’s where he is, then that’s where he is. Are you gonna go find him after you get out?”

“I might as well. BMC is only an hour away from the temple. It’s going to be a pain in the ass to hike across a damn mountain but I can handle it. I have a decent idea of how to get to him, so it shouldn’t take too long. Regardless, I didn’t call you to talk about Jeong Guk. I called to talk to you. How have you been?”

“Other than the drama between us and Gukie going missing, I’ve been great. School still sucks but the pack has taken over the OPC and made sure that none of the alphas are messing with anyone. Chi is driving me fucking crazy though. I’m so ready for her to ask me to be her girlfriend that I can’t stand myself. I was going to ask her but then I remembered she said she wanted to be the one to ask her potential mate out first. She said it would make her really happy if she could surprise them. So,
I’m very impatiently waiting for her to put on her big omega panties and get on with it. I finally stopped stuttering and blushing every time she flirts with me. Now, it’s every two or three times.”

I laughed at the look of pride I knew she had on her face, glad that I could still tell how she was feeling just by the tone of her voice. “That’s great! How is the pack?”

“I can tell they miss Gukie, but they’re all right. Yunie and Chae have decided to mate! They’re going to wait until you and Gukie are home so that we can have a party for them. Tae and Dae are fucking gross and I’m not even going to start repeating the horror stories Dae told me about his maturation heat. He apparently finished maturing a month early. I could have lived my whole life without knowing some of the things he said. Jin and Joon are great. Seok is the only one who’s alone but he’s been hanging out with a couple of omegas. None of them seem to interest him too much. He’s not really stressed about it. He’s more worried about getting good grades right now.

“Jang Mi is still around. She’s actually kind of cool ever since she stopped being a bitch whore. Before you ask, no she didn’t try to bother Gukie after you were gone. She actually asks about you every so often to see if any of us have heard from you. Your mom is good too. After our life mate talked some sense into me, I started speaking to her again. She misses you but she knows that you’re exactly where you need to be right now. How are you holding up? I worry about you, you know?”

“I’m actually pretty good, all things considered. I was angry for a while that I was stuck here, at everyone and everything. Sometimes I still feel a little bit of it, but I’m doing a lot better. I realized a lot of the problems with myself and my wolves. I’m working on them. It’s been a slow process but I am trying to sort almost 19 years’ worth of repressed feelings and poor coping. I’m sorry again for what I said. I don’t think you’re weak. Physically, you might be weaker than me but that isn’t a true measure of your strength as a person or an omega. I was wrong for what I said and I hope we’re okay now.”

I got nervous when she took a moment to respond and I worried that she was going to say she wouldn’t try to forgive me. “Of course, we’re okay. I still stand by what I said. You’ve always sort of been a dick about your rank but you also became an omega basically overnight. I can’t expect you to be totally chill with everything in your life-changing so quickly and against your will. We can talk about it more when you bring our life mate home with you. Right now, I’m fine with knowing that you’re getting better and you’ll be back soon. I’ve missed you. Chi is amazing but she’s not my wonderful life mate. Gukie is my life mate too but he’s not a replacement for you and now he’s gone too. We haven’t been apart for a long time and it’s weird.”

“I agree. I’ve gotta go, Mi Mi. Dr. Hwa says that I need to go eat dinner and get some rest. Take care of yourself and tell everyone I said ‘hi.’ I guess you can even tell Jang Mi too. I love you, my wonderful life mate. I will see you soon enough.”

“Bye, Ji Ji! I love you too! You better get out soon. I don’t want to be left alone with Dae and Tae anymore. They’re disgusting.”

I handed the phone back to the therapist after I ended the call. It made me happy that Mi Mi was still willing to be my life mate. Neither one of us handled the situation very well but it was incredibly relieving that we were willing to work it out. I could only hope that things would go that smoothly with Jeong Guk. Something tells me it won’t be that easy, but all I can do is hope. Like Dr. Hwa said, we will end up together whether it’s simple or not.

“How do you feel? It seems like everything went well,” the omega said with a small smile.

“It did. We’re still life mates, she’s still Mi Mi, and we’re good. We talked a little bit about it but she said she wanted to talk more when I get out. I feel lighter now. It’s reassuring that our relationship
can survive something like that. I know it wasn’t anything incredibly drastic by normal standards but that’s the worst thing that’s ever happened between us. We have gotten into disagreements and tiny fights before. None of them were ever that bad. I was terrified that it would break us, especially since it was about me being a rankist piece of shit.”

“You were rankist but you weren’t the other part. There were a lot of underlying causes to your fight and both of your reactions but that doesn’t mean either one of you are bad people. You shouldn’t talk about yourself like that.” I could hear the concern in his voice as he tried to make it clear that he didn’t want me to refer to myself negatively.

“It was a joke but you’re right. All of me is awesome. I’m the best alpha/omega hybrid ever. I guess the good thing is that I’m starting to believe that.”

“That is absolutely amazing, Ji Min. I’m going to go now so that you can rest. Tomorrow we’re focusing solely on pulling your wolves out. Since you’re getting out of here soon, I need to make sure that your alpha and your omega are able to handle what I have planned and that you can control them. I think it’s best to do as much as possible tomorrow because your heat starts the day after. Since you haven’t been on Primemmeryn in a long time, I’m not sure how your wolves will respond. They might be too affected by the medication to do the exercises. Make sure you eat to keep your strength up for tomorrow.”

I bid him goodbye as the orderly brought food to my room. I was content having my meals delivered instead of eating in the mental health wing’s dining area. If I was going to be by myself anyway, I didn’t see a reason to leave my familiar territory. It also gave me the chance to write more in my journal. I found that the more I wrote the more I enjoyed writing. I didn’t expect it but I was pleasantly surprised. Dr. Hwa encouraged me to have several activities that I liked so I could use them to destress when I needed to. It reminded me of Jeong Guk’s alternative aggression outlets.

The next day was rough. The first half of our session was spent roleplaying and testing my alpha. We ran through every imaginable scenario, from having one of the orderlies try to establish dominance over us to someone else saying really perverted and rankist stuff about Dr. Hwa. There were definitely moments where I lost my temper or reacted poorly. I’m not ashamed to admit that I tried to punch the alpha that was talking badly about my therapist. That wasn’t the best reaction but it was much more acceptable than my alpha agreeing with him, which he probably would have done when we got here. The rest of my aggressive wolf’s time was spent doing “omega things” that would challenge his self-concept. Although it made him feel really uncomfortable sometimes, he responded a lot better than I was expecting. The doctor insisted that this would help gauge how my wolf would respond to doing the things that I would normally do that he might consider omega-like. I understood the concept. If we were okay with dancing to girl group songs while wearing full makeup, then holding hands with Jeong Guk wouldn’t be so bad. I was quite surprised that he handled that test as well as he did. He didn’t like the bright pink lipstick, but my omega and I didn’t either. It wasn’t anything I didn’t consent to and that I couldn’t handle. Exposure to strong triggers was necessary to test how my alpha would react in extreme situations.

The remainder of the session was spent assessing my omega. Roleplaying was particularly difficult with my omega. A couple of the alpha orderlies gathered around and intimidated me. I got really scared for a little while but I remembered the things that Dr. Hwa told me. My omega is strong and he is fully capable of taking care of himself. He still has access to the same physical and mental strength that I praise my alpha for. Nothing in me has to change just because one wolf is more present than the other. I stood my ground and growled at them, brandishing my claws and baring my teeth until I was pretty sure they were afraid I would actually attack them. Some of the other scenarios were focused on empowering my omega to be comfortable in my body just as much as my alpha and I are. It wasn’t incredibly successful, but we made some progress. He wasn’t as outgoing
as he needed to be in order to do this. It was definitely something I would have to keep trying. We also did some self-esteem building drills. It was interesting to me that they were so similar to the ones that we used on my alpha. It solidified the idea that they’re more alike than either of them would care to admit. The rest of the tests centered on teaching my omega how to stand up for himself when he was being ignored, annoyed, or even degraded. I cried a little after those but I made it through. Dr. Hwa was right when he said that intense therapy would teach me how strong I really am.

I was given a day off from our sessions after that. The therapist wanted me to recover and he wanted to see how my wolves might react after the session. It also coincided with the first day of my heat, so we were waiting to see how the medication would affect me. The emotional reactivity and clinginess from my pre-heat disappeared, but I didn’t seem to be different in any other way. My wolves were still present in my mind and they were fairly active. They were tired from the exhausting day before but that had nothing to do with my Primemmeryn. Everything seemed completely normal, the way it was before I met Jeong Guk—with the exception of my omega being present. I spent the day relaxing, reading, and writing after my lessons were over. Honestly, I feel like I could get used to not having to go to school. I loved the interactions I got with my friends but it was really nice only having to worry about how quickly I could grasp the information. I also had far fewer projects to complete. I much preferred having tests and papers as a way to assess my knowledge. I was almost starting to get excited about school again because of the difference.

The week leading up to my release was spent doing more wolf integration and strengthening. We focused on the areas that the initial tests revealed needed work. It was nice to be able to feel all of myself trying to coexist peacefully for the first time. I was very proud of the way my wolves and I had grown in the last two months. Despite that, I know I have a long way to go. There is so much that I’ll probably always struggle with. Even now, I still catch myself thinking negative thoughts, being down on myself, or negating either of my wolves’ feelings. It’s a lot better than it used to be though. Therapy really did amazing things for me and it will continue to for a long time. I’ll always be grateful to Dr. Hwa for his patience, guidance, wisdom, and inspiration. I still feel weird about it a little. I understand the idea that needing help or needing to be in therapy means you’re broken or something is wrong with you. It took me a long time to be able to make peace with the fact that I can’t do everything by myself. I can’t solve all of my own issues completely alone. I need support, reassurance, and a push in the right direction. That’s perfectly fine. It’s okay to need help.

“So, today is the big day. Are you excited?” Dr. Hwa asked with a huge smile on his face.

“Yeah,” I replied nodding. “I’m super nervous and scared. I have no idea what’s going to happen, but I’m really excited about it. I can’t wait to see him and get some answers. I miss him even though I might try to punch him when I get there. I’m still mad but I also get it. I know there’s got to be a reason why he lied and hid stuff from me. I don’t know if it’s a good enough reason in my opinion. Ultimately, it doesn’t matter if I think it’s a good reason. He did it and that can’t be changed. I have to figure out where I’m going now that it happened.”

“That’s all you really can do. You’ve made a lot of progress, Ji Min. I can say that I’m very proud of you. I know this might feel bittersweet and like goodbye, but I’ll see you soon. Our first teletherapy appointment is on Monday after you get out of class. We’ll do that as long as you need. You’ve got a lot of the tools you need to be perfectly fine without it, but I know you wanted to work on developing your own sense of self after we took care of your wolves. I know you’ll be fine. You, Jeong Guk, and Mi Ran will work everything out. Just keep using your skills and take inventory of yourself when you need to. Don’t push too quickly. Give yourself some time to get used to your normal life and don’t be down on yourself if you’re not perfect at everything. You will stumble and regress. That’s part of recovery and growth. I don’t recommend punching Jeong Guk. That won’t solve anything. Maybe hug out your frustrations instead.”
I said my final goodbyes, signed my discharge papers, and got the final instructions for my medication and therapy. At my mom’s request, my aunt left a bag for me full of some clothes, snacks, and water. I haven’t hiked before but I assumed it couldn’t be much different than walking up a steep hill with rocks. I told Mi Mi and mom that I was going to get Jeong Guk and then we would be home sometime. I wasn’t sure what was going on with him or how long our conversation might take. I didn’t want them to worry if we weren’t home tonight and I wasn’t sure if my phone would have signal in that area. It felt a little weird to leave the medical center and go to a temple, almost like I was going on a spiritual journey. I walked to the designated bus stop and waited. I knew I needed to ride the bus for a little while and then walk the rest of the way. I was glad for the time to sort myself and my wolves. I assumed walking towards the temple would be my best option. Once I found the river, I could locate the hill and head in that direction.

More quickly than I would have liked, my stop came up. I got off and took a deep breath. Soon I would be face-to-face with someone that disrupted my life, made me love him, and broke my heart. It was very conflicting. I wanted to hug him, kick his ass, kiss him, and yell at him about how much I hate that I care about him. But, more than anything, I was excited. I felt a light buzz of electricity as I walked, almost like my body could tell I was getting closer to him. I kept onward as I pondered the potential outcomes. When I arrived at the river, I found the temple. As I walked towards it, I searched for some indication of where Jeong Guk was. It took longer than I wanted, but eventually I saw a hill with a few trees and a tent. That has to be it. I closed my eyes and tried to quiet the growing chaos in my body and mind. My wolves were also on edge, pacing uneasily. Once I managed to calm myself slightly, I took a step forward. I counted as I went, using that as a way to keep my mind from wandering. Each stride was one closer to the answers I needed and the reunion that I knew would change everything.

Chapter End Notes

So, how was it? There was a lot that happened in this chapter. What do you think about Ji Min's progress? What do you think will happen when he meets Jeong Guk again?

I wanted to let you all know that the next update might take a while. Life has been getting a little hectic, I'm supposed to be finishing up my twitter AU, and the chapter will be tricky to write. I will definitely do my best to get it done soon though! Thank you for bearing with me.

Twitter: @HimeSakuraLani
Curious Cat: SakuraLani.
Reunion

Chapter Notes

This chapter is 18,000 words of JiKook being cute. I hope you're ready. Please read the chapter notes at the end when you're finished.

Thank you to Virre for being so wonderful and encouraging throughout writing this chapter and for helping me edit the mess out of everything.

Thank you to Sarah for making me very confident that everyone would love this chapter as much as you did.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

As I finished scaling Jeong Guk’s hill, I held my breath. I couldn’t smell or see him yet, but I knew he was close. The jolt of energy that I felt as I grew closer to my destination slowly developed into a thrumming deep in my bones. His presence somehow resonated inside of me. I felt weak in the knees at the first hint of his scent, having forgotten that my two favorite fragrances were passion flower and bitter orange. It made all of me eager to lay eyes on the alpha who was meant for us. Even my alpha was excited about the reunion. He somewhat gave up his resistance when he realized that Jeong Guk was our fated. He still wasn’t happy about being stuck with the constant reminder that he’s not as perfect of an alpha as our future mate, but there was an underlying sense of understanding that he belonged to us—that he was almost an extension of us. My omega was thrilled to be in the company of his alpha. He thrashed about excitedly as we walked. All of the chaos from my wolves perfectly mirrored what I was feeling inside. There were no simple words for the combination of thoughts and feelings that surged through me as I came to the clearing and was met with a dark stare. I froze for a moment, unable to move under the weight of my own emotions. Jeong Guk stilled too, his expression unreadable.

I snapped out of my daze because my omega could no longer wait to be closer to his alpha. My movements forward seemed to wake my fated up. He called out to me, telling me to stay where I was, with a look of panic on his face.

“Fuck that!” I shouted as I kept walking. “You have a lot of explaining to do and I’m sure as hell not going to yell at you from across the hill. I’m going to yell at you to your damn face! Why the fuck do you think—”

When I got about 15 paces away from Jeong Guk, I was met with a whirlwind of sensations that felt like running into a wall. An overwhelming pain brought me to my knees and surrounded me. I curled in on myself, having never felt anything quite this intense and inexplicable. Happiness, excitement, love, fear, anger, panic, and anxiety prevented me from moving and made me cry out. I couldn’t think or speak. I could only hold myself tightly and pray for it to stop. As suddenly as they came, the emotions were gone.

“Just lay there for a few minutes, Ji Min. It’s going to normalize. I’m sorry about that. You didn’t give me time to get myself under control before you got too close.”

I decided to heed his advice and used the time to regain my composure. After I was finally able to breathe and focus again, I contemplated his words. Did he have something to do with whatever the hell that was? I sat upright after a while and looked at him. I wanted to get closer, my omega trying
to pull me forward, but my logical mind told me that I needed to stay. I don’t want to feel that again. I watched my fated as he studied me, looking for further signs of discomfort. He smelled upset and worried.

“What was that?” I managed to squeak out after a while. If his hearing wasn’t as good as I know it is, he might not have caught it.

“When you recognize your fated, you can feel their emotions the way mates can. The only difference is that mates can feel it anywhere and we can only feel it within a certain distance. I was going to try to calm myself and warn you beforehand, but you didn’t give me the chance. I’m sorry. I didn’t want you to find out like that.”

It took me a few moments to be able to fully process what he said. It didn’t make sense but it explained so much. How else would he have instantly known what’s wrong with me at any time? If it was because he could feel my emotions, does that mean he’s known for longer than just a couple of months? I reminded myself that I didn’t have to be curious anymore because he’s finally in front of me. I am going to get my answers.

“How long have you known?” He looked away from me, worry apparent on his face. He fidgeted with a rock in his hands. I could tell he was avoiding the question. “Just tell me how long, Jeong Guk. You owe me that much, don’t you?”

Even at this distance, I could see the guilt shine in his eyes as he looked up at me. It didn’t seem easy for him to discuss this, but he had to. He took a deep breath and stared directly in my eyes. “I’ve known we were mates since the moment I first smelled you.”

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“How?” My brain hadn’t fully comprehended the weight of his statement, so I opted to gather information until I could understand it completely.

“My alpha can detect when people should be mates. I don’t fully get it, but it’s something about the way their scents mix. When we smelled you for the first time, he wouldn’t stop repeating the words ‘mine’ and ‘mate’. I didn’t realize that meant we were fated until your fight with Jae Seok. I could feel you slowly losing yourself, how desperate you were to be heard and to stop him. That’s why I stepped in. I couldn’t let my mate do something that would get him in trouble. I never even tried to calm you down after the fight. That was all my alpha. He released way too many pheromones and accidentally charmed you. Anyway, I’m getting off topic. I can tell mates by people’s scents.”

“Do you have to smell them together or do you know when you smell one of them?” I asked a follow-up question to allow myself time to think.

“It depends on the situation. If it’s someone I know, I just have to smell the other person’s scent to know that’s their mate. I knew Dae was Tae’s mate and that Chi was Ranie’s mate when I first smelled them—same thing with Yunie and Chae. That’s actually why I wanted to keep Jang Mi around.” I could hear the tension in his voice when he mentioned her, knowing she was a touchy subject.

“Please don’t tell me she’s someone you know’s mate, or one of the pack’s mate. Please, don’t let her be stuck with us forever.”

He smiled at my exasperated tone. I didn’t have the same level of hatred for her that I once did, but I still didn’t like her. “No. After she decided to leave us alone, she came to school smelling like blueberry and juniper. Whoever that scent belongs to is Seok’s mate. I know you were so angry with me for convincing the pack to keep her around but I couldn’t let her get away. How could I have faced him knowing that I didn’t pursue the only clue I had about his mate? I think that person is
someone that Jang Mi knows from her other school because she hasn’t smelled like them since. I
couldn’t tell you why I needed her. I know the first question you asked would have been if we were
mates and I didn’t know how to answer. You wouldn’t have recognized our bond if I told you.”

I nodded, acknowledging that I probably would have asked him if we were mates immediately. I
understood his reasoning but I was still upset that he didn’t tell me. I was also relieved that Jang Mi
wasn’t a pack member’s mate. As I thought about the pack, I wondered if they knew about Jeong
Guk’s ability. A spike of anger went through me at the idea. Even though it would make complete
sense for them to know, I would be really upset if they kept it from me. Then again, I don’t see why
they would have acted the way they did if they already knew.

“What’s wrong?” My fated’s voice pulled me out of my mind.

“Can you feel me from there? I can’t feel you.”

“No. I started to associate all of your scent changes with emotions after I figured out what all of the
small differences in your feelings were. I can’t feel that something’s wrong with you, but I can smell
it. I think you’re angry and a little confused. It’s been a couple of months since I’ve been around you.
I might be wrong.”

“You’re right. I was thinking about the pack and if they knew we were fated.”

“No. I never told them I could smell mates. I didn’t want to deal with them bothering me all the time
about whether or not someone was their mate. I know that’s terrible, but I didn’t feel like getting
asked 20 times a week if I had found their mate yet. You know how Tae and Seok are. They would
have bugged me so much. I promised myself that I’d do anything I could to find their mates and get
them together, but I wouldn’t directly tell them. I also did it for the sake of their relationships. They
trust my judgment too much. They would have completely committed to someone that I said was
their mate, even if they didn’t like that person. I wanted them falling for each other to be natural.”

He paused for a moment when he saw me stretch and move around. My ass was starting to go numb
after sitting on the ground for a while. “Do you want to go sit somewhere more comfortable? We can
go to a cafe and talk for a bit. If you feel okay being around me, we could go back to the place I’ve
been staying at and sit on better chairs. I could cook something if you’re hungry.”

I eyed the tent curiously and he chuckled. “I’ve only been camping out here since you talked to
Ranie on the phone. After your rut, I moved into an apartment nearby. Jin’s grandparents let me use
it for as long as I needed. My therapist talked to the school and got them to let me complete my
classes online until I got back. I came up here for a few hours each day to help clear my mind and
process everything. The pack let me know that you told Ranie you were getting out soon, so I
decided to stay here. I wasn’t sure if I would get much notice that you were coming and I didn’t want
to miss you. I’ve been going to the house really early in the morning to make food and do my
schoolwork. Then, I come back here. So, do you want to go somewhere? We don’t have to, but you
don’t seem very comfortable here.”

“We can go back to the house. I’d like to sit on something softer while we talk about this. The topic
is hard enough. These rocks aren’t making it any easier,” I said, pulling a stone from underneath my
leg.

“Let me pack up and we can head out. Umm…” He looked at my proximity to the tent. “Could you
move over to that tree? I don’t want to get too close to you while I’m gathering everything. I’m a lot
calmer now, but that doesn’t mean much. You can still feel everything I’m feeling. It just won’t be as
intense as it was before. I don’t want to overwhelm you.”
I moved out of range and watched him quickly gather his belongings. The way he broke the tent down without even thinking let me know that he’s camped out here many times before. He put everything into two large bags and slung them over his shoulder. My body and my omega were yelling at me to stand next to him. It felt wrong to have this distance between us when I could basically sense him under my skin. There isn’t an easy way to explain what having him so close is like. It feels as though his existence reverberates throughout my body, which makes no sense. I was taken from my pondering by a call to leave. I followed behind Jeong Guk as closely as I could without being able to feel him. I let him lead the way because he knew the quickest route to our destination.

The space between us made it difficult to talk while we walked, so we moved in silence. We walked for a while before we got to the bus stop. It was strange to sit on the bench and have the person I was traveling with stand so far away from me. He was to the left of the enclosure, staring off into the distance. It was unnerving. The bus ride was 20 minutes of me watching my fated and internally freaking out. As angry as I might be and as much time as we might need to grow as close as we used to be, I never imagined having to keep myself away from him. Any confrontation I thought of involved me being directly in front of him, within punching/hugging distance. This was a strange type of hell that made me think of the heat when I met my omega, when all we could do was pine over each other from across the room. I didn’t like it then and I don’t like it now.

As I trailed after Jeong Guk through the streets of Busan, I tried to figure out what to do from here. I don’t want to feel whatever the hell is going on inside of him, but I also don’t want to be away from him. I wasn’t sure if it was me, my omega, or our bond that was pulling us together. Regardless, I felt the draw growing stronger as we entered the apartment building. With each step, I changed my mind. I was too unsure of how to approach the situation. Even my alpha offered no help, telling me that I’ll have to deal with it eventually no matter what I choose now. The alpha in front of me entered into the apartment and asked me to wait outside. I heard him set down his bags, I heard footsteps, and then he called for me to come in. I took in almost the entire apartment in one glance. It was a loft-style home, with a living room, kitchen area, and a small stairway leading to a bed over the kitchen and bathroom. I found Jeong Guk sitting on the bed, eyes fixed on me.

“It’s not a very large place but there’s enough room to stay out of range of our bond. If I stay up here and you sit down there, you won’t have to feel me.”

He looked sort of heartbroken when he said it, making me wonder if he was upset by my reaction to feeling him for the first time. He smelt bothered, but there was no way to tell the cause from his scent. I moved to the nearest chair and sat, maintaining eye contact with him. After months of intense therapy, I’ve learned the best way to deal with problems is to address them. If I want to know what was affecting him, I need to ask. It’s not completely up to him to fix our issues. He seemed willing to talk, but I sensed hesitation within him. I think he’s waiting for me to bring it up.

“Are you upset by how I responded when I felt you earlier?”

“No. I remember the first time I went through it. It sucked. The first dozen times I felt you were overwhelming and really hard for me, especially since there’s three of you. I would have been surprised if you weren’t impacted by it. Something tells me that you’ll get used to it quicker than I did. You’re a lot better at sorting through stuff than I am. Then again, feeling me is going to be very different than what you normally feel.”

I wasn’t expecting the last part of his answer and it sparked my curiosity. My alpha perked up at the admission that we were better at something than Jeong Guk. My more dominant wolf wanted to test our endurance and ability to process our fated’s emotions so that he could live up to the other alpha’s compliment. My omega agreed that we should get closer to his alpha, wanting to feel him near us
again. It felt like even my blood was calling out for him, so I made the decision to get closer. Not wanting to startle him, I voiced my idea.

“I’d like to get near you because I want to get used to feeling you. Would you prefer me to come up there with you or for you to come down here?”

“I’d prefer neither, but you seem to have your mind made up. I don’t think you really understand what you’re asking for. There’s a reason I’ve been dreading the day you find out about our bond. On the one hand, I’ve been hoping you’d recognize me since I met you. On the other, I knew you’d have to feel me. I’m really anxious all the time. I obsess over stuff way more than I should. I worry a lot. I’m pretty much constantly freaked out about something. I’ve just gotten used to hiding it. I’m good at looking like I don’t care and my Primatin makes it pretty easy for me to mask my scent. I don’t want you to have to feel all of that. Plus, it’s going to be a lot for me to feel your responses to what you’re feeling from me. I get overwhelmed easily. But, if we’re doing this, I’d like to come to you. We’re not really in a place to be sitting in bed together. It will probably be a while before we’re able to do that again. My wolf isn’t very happy about that, by the way. He’s had a very hard time being without you. We both have. I’ve been kind of a wreck really. You tell me when you’re ready and I’ll get closer.”

I didn’t really know how to respond to everything he said, so I continued to stare. I never would have thought any of that about him. I figured it must not be as bad as he said it was. He was probably just being hard on himself. I gave him the signal to move towards me and he slowly descended from the loft. He hesitated at the halfway point, the last step before he got close enough. He gave me one last pleading look and I nodded. I needed to get used to this. This is the best time. If we deal with these issues now, we can fix them sooner. He moved forward and sat down. At least, I think he did. I was so overcome by a vicious bout of panic and terror that I couldn’t breathe, let alone figure out where he was. There were twinges of other emotions, but those two quickly overthrew anything else that Jeong Guk might be feeling. When I didn’t think I could handle any more, it was gone. I gasped for air and tried to calm myself. At length, I was able to look at him. I saw sadness, guilt, and fear in his eyes.

“How long have you felt like this? How the hell do you deal with it?”

“Since the moment I realized we were fated. It’s been difficult to handle, but also sort of easy? It’s hard to explain. My wolf has helped a lot. His drive has always been to take care of you and make sure you’re okay. Whenever I’ve been too worried about something to be able to function, he’s helped me. He’s a big part of the reason you think I’m so perfect. He’s the perfect alpha. I’m just a fucking emotional disaster. I know that we are our wolves, but there’s so much difference between how he and I handle things that it doesn’t seem like it.”

“What did you feel like before? I’d like to hear all about what you’ve been going through.” I wanted to coax him into talking as much as I could, hoping that would help relax him.

“When I was younger, it was nothing but anger and aggression. After I finished maturation, everything more or less settled. I developed a sort of calm, I guess. Then, you came into my life and turned it upside down. I’ve cried more, fought with my wolf more, had more panic attacks, and experienced more anxiety since I’ve met you than I have in my entire life. Don’t get me wrong, I love having you around. You are my favorite person in the entire world and I couldn’t imagine being without you. But that’s exactly why I feel this way. My wolf knows that you belong with us. He knows that no matter what, you will end up with us. I have a hard time believing that. Logically, I know that’s how it works, but it doesn’t feel that way to me. I’ve never trusted our bond. I felt how much you hated me. I felt how disgusted you were and how you couldn’t wait to get away from me. Every bit of doubt, mistrust, rage, sadness, and abhorrence that you felt for me, I felt it too. I had so
many breakdowns.

“I didn’t go through an angsty, emotional phase during maturation like most alphas, but I did after I met you. When we started hanging out more, I had to find ways to control myself around you. I didn’t know what to do. Everything involving you made me and my alpha more sensitive. That’s why I started going to my therapist three times a week and taking more Primatin. I ended up telling my therapist about our bond because I needed someone to talk to. I was going to go crazy trying to keep it all inside. Hiding it from the pack was very difficult. They all assumed I had a really intense crush on you and didn’t know how to process it. They kept bothering you about us being mates because they wanted to try to convince you to date me. They were hoping it would make me stop being moody. I should have told them, but I couldn’t risk one of them telling you. Before we started getting closer, you would have disappeared if you knew we were fated. You hated me so fucking much that I know it would have been years before I saw you again. Call me selfish, but I wanted to keep you close to me. I wanted to see if I could win you over at that time, instead of having to wait who knows how long for another chance.

“For a while, you were the only person I talked to. When I got home, I would ignore the pack. I blankly stared at my therapist in our sessions. I zoned out in class. The only time I ever spoke was when you were around. I eventually started talking to Ranie, but I stopped when I realized she was trying to get us to date. I didn’t know how to explain to her that we couldn’t be together. Everything with your wolves just made it so much worse. Your alpha did everything in his power to get me to go away. I don’t even think you realize how much posturing you did or how many scent changes and intimidation tactics you used. It hurt so much to know that my mate didn’t want me. I used to have constant headaches from how much I cried after seeing you.

“Speaking of your wolves, I’m glad to feel your omega being quite strong. When we met, he was so weak. My alpha tried to call to him whenever he could. We wanted to pull him out of you so that he wouldn’t hurt anymore. Goddess, it broke my heart every day to feel how lonely and hated he was. Your alpha was so mean to him. That’s why we decided to be extra nice. We probably went overboard with addressing you as an omega, but my alpha needed your omega to know it was okay to be what you are. It was also selfish too. We knew your omega was attached to us. You’d be much less likely to go away if your omega was bothering you to be near us. I hoped you would somehow recognize our bond when he started to like us but you never did. It’s fucked up. I feel like 90% of everything I’ve ever done for you was to keep you close to me. I’m really sorry about that. I wanted to be such a good alpha for you and I couldn’t even get that right.”

I watched Jeong Guk as he spoke, the way his head hung in his hands and his scent change let me know that this was a lot for him. When he lifted his head, his eyes were closed. I saw him wipe them before he looked at me. As crazy as it sounds, I never thought about him hurting. I only started considering his feelings recently and it was never in this type of context. I honestly didn’t know how to feel about everything. It was too much all at once. I was torn between trying to process it now and letting him get it all out first. It was obvious he had a lot to say. He kept this inside for months. He’s been in pain by himself for so long. Something in me felt like it broke when that thought crossed my mind. I’m sitting here worried about how much it hurts me to deal with his anxiety for a minute and he’s been doing it since we’ve met. My fated has endured every bit of negativity, insecurity, and uncertainty that I’ve felt—on top of his own emotions—without any complaint. How fucked up is it for me to not do the same when he needs me?

“Stop, Ji Min. I don’t need to be able to feel you to know what you’re thinking. You don’t have to feel bad about it. It’s not your fault. You also don’t need to push yourself to feel me before you’re ready. I wasn’t lying when I said your body responds to your thoughts. I can tell by your posture that you were about to stand up and come over to me. I’ll be all right. I’ve had a couple of months to sort through all of this. It’s only this bad right now because I’m worried about how you’re going to react
to everything. It is so much harder to control when you’re near me. It kind of reminds me of our first
date.” He chuckled as he thought back on one of the first real turning points in our relationship.

I wanted to discuss it all with him, so I just started talking. “It’s not fair that you felt how much I was
freaked out about everything during our first date and I have no clue how you felt. I’m realizing the
more I think about it that there is so much I want to ask you about. We’ve never really had those
types of conversations. I’m curious how you felt when you first met me, during our first date, and all
of the random conversations we had when we were trying to figure out if we would be together. Oh,
goddess! That’s why you were so fucking chill with whatever I decided! You already knew we’d be
together, so you just let me choose. How were you okay with that? I wouldn’t have been able to
handle it.”

“I just had to try to be okay. I kept telling you that I had my own stuff to deal with and I didn’t
understand any of it either. That was true. I wanted to keep you with me so badly, but I knew that
might not happen. I knew that you might decide you didn’t want to be with me and that I would have
to wait. I wanted to leave it all up to you because I didn’t want you to resent me. If I pushed you
before you were ready, it would just cause more problems later. Yeah, we’re supposed to be
together. But, what if you regretted not dating someone else before we mated? What if you wanted to
experience having sex with someone else before we decided to be together forever?

“It makes me sick just thinking about it and my alpha hates the idea, but it could happen. That’s why
I kept telling you that I wanted to make all of your firsts special. Even if they weren’t your only
experiences, I wanted the first ones with your mate to be important to you. I wanted you to be able to
look back and say that you enjoyed your milestones with me. I also had to say it to remind myself
that you might be with other people. I had to keep trying to cement that in my own mind. Until the
day we mate, there’s always a chance you won’t be mine anymore. As much as that tears me apart,
it’s true. You’re not mine, Ji Min. Even though you’re supposed to be, you’re not. It drives my alpha
crazy. That’s part of the reason he’s so obsessed with you submitting to him and with marking you.
He keeps thinking that if you submit to him or he leaves enough marks, that you’ll have to stay.

“Everything got a lot better after we started feeling your interest in us. I realized you liked me before
you did. I think the first time I felt like I could breathe again was when you were jealous. Not the
time you were jealous of Chae or Jang Mi, but when I told you about having sex with Hwa Young.
That was the moment I started to relax a little. The purring, the butterflies, and the possessive
moments all gave me hope that we might get to keep you. My wolf wholeheartedly believes that
we’ll be together, but even his instincts take over from time to time. That’s why he would react the
way he did when you got into fights or when that alpha touched you right before your heat. He’s so
fucking possessive and it’s hard not to feel the same way. Regardless of his moments, we both were
able to be more at peace after you started having feelings for us. You were so cute when you got
confused about your emotions. I just wanted to tell you how you were feeling to make it easier, but I
had to let you figure it out on your own.

“Your omega loved the butterflies so much. I could feel him rolling around and purring whenever
you felt that way. I may or may not have done done things on purpose, more than once, just so he could be
happy. And to piss off your alpha, if I’m being honest. Although, that was mostly my wolf. My
alpha realized the day we met you that your alpha hated us because he was jealous and insecure. My
wolf cycled through trying to prove we weren’t a threat, trying to establish dominance, and doing
stuff specifically to annoy your wolf. I tried to ignore him as much as possible but sometimes I
couldn’t control him. Being near you makes him stronger because it’s our wolves that are connected
by the bond. You and I as people are just kind of here. That’s why I wanted to get to know you and
have you like me as a human. Even if you hate me, we still have to be together. I wanted to do
everything I could to make sure you liked me.”
He stretched and tried to get comfortable on the tiny stairs. Discomfort was apparent in his face, but I couldn’t tell if it was due to the subject or his sitting position. Either way, I didn’t like it. I still love him and I don’t want him to hurt if I can help it. My omega reminded me that he’s my mate and we should take care of him. My alpha even noted that the stairs looked hard and Jeong Guk appeared very smooshed sitting there. I decided that I would at least relieve his physical uneasiness. There was one of two ways I could force him to get back into the bed. I opted for the simple one first.

“Can you go sit in bed while you talk? I don’t like seeing you crunched in that little spot and my omega is freaking out because you’re uncomfortable. Even my alpha is bothered by it. They’re getting along a lot better now.”

My fated smiled at me and nodded as he walked to the bed. “I noticed there wasn’t as much anger and tension between them. I didn’t feel you for very long, so I didn’t get the full extent of it. I’m really glad. I know their issues were hard for you. You never realized how much they affected you, but it was a lot. I feel like if I talk any more that I’m going to keep rambling. I could go on a million tangents about you and all of my emotions surrounding you. Ask my therapist. She’s probably heard so much about you that she could recognize you in a crowd. I don’t do well deciding what to say. It’s much easier and more familiar to make it about you. That’s how I’ve managed to stay sane for this long. So, please, tell me what you want me to talk about. I can’t promise I won’t get off track, but I’d much prefer to rant about the things you actually want to hear.”

For some reason, his admission hurt. Had I really been so selfish in our relationship that I let him make everything about me and I didn’t even notice? It was touching and made me feel nice, but it also unsettled me. He’s supposed to care about his own wellbeing. I’m also supposed to care about how he feels. Neither of us managed to make him a priority. My omega mentioned that he always did. At least one of us tried to care about Jeong Guk. Our fated looked at me expectantly, hoping that we would take the lead in the conversation. I could tell how out of his element he was. He looked so young and so lost. Because he was always incredibly mature and collected, it was easy to forget that he’s only 16. He’s just barely not a pup anymore. I was still rather numb to the majority of the information he was telling me, yet I wanted to indulge him. I knew he needed to talk and he wanted me to decide what to talk about. I might not be able to care for him any other way right now, but I could ask him some of the things I’ve been wondering. I walked over to my backpack and pulled my journal. I wrote about a lot of our encounters, making special note of the things that I felt impacted our relationship the most. I flipped to the beginning and decided to ask him questions related to the topics I highlighted. I got comfortable on the couch and picked out random things as I read.

“What did you think the first time you saw me?” I was more nervous about the answer than I would have thought. Did my hatred of him impact how he saw me in the beginning?

“It was insanely conflicting. The very first thing that went through my mind was how blessed I was to have such a beautiful, handsome mate. Then, I felt utterly shattered because you couldn’t stand me. I found you incredibly interesting. That’s actually why I kept staring at you. That was my morbid, torturous fascination. It was just me being an idiotic masochist for wanting to be around you when I knew you’d rather die than be in the same room as me. You were outspoken and lively but also reserved and introverted. It was intriguing to feel you and your wolves. You were intoxicating and addicting, a puzzle I had to figure out. All of the little weird stuff you did was cute to me, like when you kept calling me grey shirt because you didn’t want to learn my name or how you still wanted to fight me even though you knew I was stronger than you. I know it was supposed to be mean, but I just wanted to laugh about it. I would go from giggling to sobbing in a matter of seconds when we first met. It was so much. Sorry, I’m off topic again. Next question.”

“Did you think Mi Mi and I were dating? I’ve always wondered about it and I never asked you.”
“I did for a little while. I found it weird that you never felt strong relationship-related emotions about her, but I really did think you were dating. That night you said you didn’t know what love is was the moment I realized you weren’t together. It was also when I committed to making you fall for me. I wanted you to feel how good that could be. I didn’t really know what those things meant myself but I felt slivers of them through the pack bond because of Jin and Joon. My alpha and I wanted to give you a positive experience with love, just in case your next one wasn’t good. For the longest time, I was terrified that you having a horrible relationship with someone else was going to be how you realized we were fated. That’s another part of why I tried so hard with our relationship. I wanted to prevent you from getting hurt. Is that weird? I was convinced that you would only recognize me if someone else broke your heart, but I still wanted to prevent it. I would much rather you never acknowledge our bond than be in that type of pain. I learned quickly that pain from someone you care about was something you would go out of your way to avoid causing to someone you care about.”

“Does that mean you cared about me right away?” I blurted out. I wanted to blame my omega for the question but he wasn’t the only one who was curious.

He smiled at me and tilted his head to the side. I wanted to know what he was wondering as he studied me so intently. I was used to these kinds of stares from him, but this one looked different. I could only assume it was because he didn’t know what I was feeling. I’m sure that was difficult for him. He has relied so heavily on being able to sense my emotions throughout our relationship that he must not know how to fully understand me when he doesn’t have that luxury.

“Before I answer, I want to say that I can’t wait to feel you again. You’re different, more at peace with yourself. In case you’re wondering, it’s not a bad thing. It’s wonderful. I like that you’re more open with your feelings. You didn’t hesitate to ask me something that you would have kept to yourself before. I love seeing you like this. But, I want you to take your time with being around me. Don’t rush yourself. I meant that I can’t wait as in I’m eager not that I can’t actually wait.” The bright smile on his face told me that he really was excited about my newfound solidarity.

“To answer your question, no I didn’t like you right away. I was interested in you as a person, but not romantically. I know I was completely gone for you by our first date, but I don’t know when I started to like you. Maybe sometime around us trading scents? That first heat around you was so hard for me. The second I smelled you at school, I left. I knew it would be trouble if I stayed. I packed a bag and went to my hill to clear my mind and try to convince my wolf to behave. I wanted to be there for movie night so badly, but I didn’t trust myself. It had only been a month since we met. I hadn’t had enough time to learn to control it. Having something that smelled like you really helped. It also calmed my wolf when Ranie sent me that picture of you wrapped up in your hoodie and smelling the sleeves. It’s actually the background on my phone. Next question.” The huge grin on his face caused me to smile too. It was absolutely adorable that he put a picture of me as his phone background. Mine is some generic factory default picture.

“What do you mean ‘completely gone’ for me?”

His gaze felt as though he was looking through me when his eyes met mine. I couldn’t see the finer details of his expression at this distance, but he seemed like he was holding himself back. I was pretty sure I already knew the answer. Still, something in me needed to hear it. Another part of me wanted to feel it too. I knew I wasn’t ready for that, despite the strong desire to have the first time he confessed be when I can feel it. I looked up at him and implored him to confide in me. He sighed heavily and then took a deep breath.

“This isn’t exactly how I wanted to tell you, but I’m pretty sure you’ve already figured out that I’m in love with you. That’s what I meant by completely gone. I’m not sure when it happened, but I woke
up one day and you were the only thing I could think of. You don’t have to respond. I already know. I knew what it was before you did. It was so hard to pretend that I had no idea what you were feeling when I was so fucking happy that you finally felt the same. You wanted to say it during your heat but I wouldn’t let you. I wasn’t sure how much of it you would remember, but I didn’t want the first time you said it to be something you regretted. It’s good to know you still feel that way. I was worried after your heat that you hated me again.”

I wasn’t sure if I was ready to discuss the circumstances surrounding my heat with him. I’ve gotten over all of those feelings of disgust and betrayal, but he might not know that. I didn’t like thinking of all the horrible things that might have happened to him after I made him leave. I was equally as unprepared to address my love for our fated. It didn’t feel right to say it now. Even though I am definitely enamored with him, I wanted to wait until we got all of the messy unpleasantries out of the way. I still haven’t forgiven him. I say that but I’m finding it increasingly difficult to be angry with him when I think about the way he kept everything inside so that I could fall at my own pace. He shouldn’t have hidden anything from me and he shouldn’t have lied. However, I get why he did it. In the beginning, I would have made sure I never encountered him again if I knew he was the person I was supposed to be with. Before I fell in love and processed so many of my own issues, my alpha would have convinced me to disappear and I wouldn’t have questioned it. It could have been another 30 years before I met Jeong Guk again. Panic settled in as I thought about the prospect of being almost 50 when I finally ended up with my mate. There is no doubt in my mind that I would have been alone until then. I now know that only this particular alpha was capable of waking up my omega and making me feel things. How guilty would I have felt when I finally recognized the bond?

“What’s wrong?” He inquired abruptly.

“I was thinking about how horrible it would be if I hadn’t recognized you until much later. I would feel terrible for wasting so much time that I could have been spending with you.”

“It would have been worth it. I’m glad that you realized it now though. We have the potential of being together for a lot longer—in theory, at least.”

The last part of his sentence sounded so ominous, yet he was right. We could still find a reason not to be together. Until we’re mated, we could choose to not be a couple. That thought sent a new wave of distress crashing through me. Jeong Guk is our fated. I wouldn’t want to be without him or have him be with someone else. The idea made me sick to my stomach. I finally understood a lot of the issues he had. The uncertainty was maddening. I was starting to feel a little unhinged and it had only been minutes since the thought of our mate being with someone else invaded our mind. I couldn’t imagine what several months of this might feel like.

“How have you dealt with this for so long? I just thought of us not being together and about you being with someone else and I’m ready to growl at literally anyone that comes within viewing distance of you. It hasn’t even been five minutes. It just feels so fucking wrong, like the atoms in my body are revolting against the idea. I’m still upset about everything and I’m still kind of mad at you, but you’re mine. I’ll be damned if I live without you or let someone else have you.” I’m still not sure if this abrupt territorial streak came from my feelings for Jeong Guk or the fate bond, but the result was still the same. I wasn’t prepared to let him get away.

“Welcome to life as a HADD alpha with a fated who doesn’t recognize your bond.”

Something about his voice when he said it shook me up inside. I didn’t sense any malice in his words, just the final crumbling of the barrier that held back over half a year’s worth of suffering. I didn’t have to look at him to know that he was about to cry. I could smell the sadness emanating from him. I wanted to comfort him. I haven’t been able to do that for the rest of our relationship, so I
wanted to try now. I steeled myself to bear the weight of his emotions and committed to being the
same kind of support for him that he’s been for me. I almost started to tear up when I thought of all
the times he helped me through things I couldn’t understand and didn’t know how to handle. I took a
deep breath and ran to the stairs. If I could get to them while he was distracted, then he wouldn’t be
able to stop me from coming to him. There wasn’t another way to get down. As I crossed into our
bond’s range, I was almost incapacitated by the intensity. Wet streaks painted my face by the time I
sat next to the bed, unable to handle that level of heartache without some of it escaping. I crumpled
into a heap on the floor. It was only seconds before I felt Jeong Guk pull me onto the bed and place
me in front of him. He looked at me and I was rendered breathless by the gorgeous scarlet flecks I
didn’t realize I was desperate to see again. Even with tears in his eyes, he was beautiful.

“If you insist on torturing yourself, you might as well be comfortable,” he said, attempting to chuckle
even though he was still crying.

I drew my knees to my chest and sat in the fetal position, the alpha mirroring my actions. Together,
we cried until there were no more tears to shed—until we felt the lightheaded emptiness that often
accompanies the catharsis of exposing yourself and breaking down. We stared into each other as we
fully felt one another for the first time as a fated couple. There are no words to describe how
connected and content you are when experiencing the emotions of your mate/fated. I have tried for
years to find the right combination but none of them feel right. It’s like exploring the depths of
another person while also inspecting yourself. It’s easy to tell that the emotions did not originate
within you, yet they are an extension of you. You feel them as though they are your own, but you
Treasure them in a different way. They are almost more sacred because they come from the one that
you care about the most. Despite any pain or negativity that the sensations may bring, they are
priceless.

Feeling Jeong Guk will always be one of my favorite things about our bond. He is a rather stoic
alpha, one who will gladly and quietly endure hardships to make life easier for those he cares about.
Thanks to our bond, I get to see underneath that tough exterior. I now know how concerned he gets
when dealing with things that he’s never encountered before, that the thought of what could happen
unnerves him to the point of panic attacks, and that I am the only person who can manage to calm
both him and his alpha when the world feels like it’s crashing down upon them. This revelation
automatically endeared him to my omega and made my alpha feel more at ease in his presence. It
made all three of us happy to know that the perfect alpha was still human after all.

Sitting in that moment with our fated, we were bombarded with so many different things. Grief,
loneliness, and pain were at the forefront, being the most active of what he felt at the time. There was
also a large amount of anxiety and uncertainty. Strong twinges of anger, excitement, hope, curiosity,
and acceptance were pulsing underneath the surface of the more prominent emotions. Flashes of
happiness and comfort appeared randomly. At the very bottom, forming a solid foundation on which
the others were built, was love. Once I uncovered the purity of that feeling, I wanted to cry again. I
was glad that I didn’t have anything left because I wasn’t sure how to explain that I started sobbing
because he loves me. I tried to focus on why he had each emotion. It distracted me from the sheer
force of what he was feeling.

“I get most of what you’re feeling, but why anger?” I asked after a few minutes of placing
everything.

“I’m mad at myself for making you feel the way you’re feeling and for not being able to make you
recognize our bond without having to do what I did during your rut. What kind of alpha breaks up
with their mate over a video?”

“That’s what I said!” I chuckled a little at his face when I said that. It was a mixture of sad, hurt, and
proud. “At the time, I was really pissed. Now, I realize that leaving me was the only way I was going to recognize our bond. I don’t know if I forgive you for everything yet, but I’m more okay with it than I was. You obviously had a reason. It was much easier to be mad at you when I thought you were a horrible asshole. As far as the bond is concerned, you either recognize your fated immediately or you have to go through something. That had nothing to do with you.”

Jeong Guk had a dazed look on his face as he looked at me with wide eyes. Happiness bubbled to the surface, tearing through the top layer of gloom. It was a bright and airy feeling that instantly sparked contentment within me. His sweet smile was suddenly buried by guilt and another spike of anger.

“What’s wrong?” I asked, finally understanding how he could so quickly pick up on my mood changes.

“I’m sorry. Even if you were to forgive me, I would still feel bad about doing that. I also feel like I should have been strong enough to not get tired. My alpha and I talked for a long time about whether we would let you go or not. It wasn’t a decision we took lightly. We actually argued about it right up until we started talking to the camera. Feeling how much you hated us and seeing how you were willing to hurt yourself more just to attack me was what made up our mind. I was so exhausted. It wasn’t just dealing with you, but also the absence of you. When you were gone, the only time I slept was when my body physically stopped being able to function. I would pass out for like 10 hours every few days, which is also about as often as I ate. After a while, Jin made me promise I would start taking sleep medication or else he was going to get my therapist involved. I knew she would lock me up, so I agreed. That was only a few days before your mom called me to restrain you during your rut. The pack didn’t want me to go but I went anyway. They didn’t understand what happened. They still don’t. The only thing they know is that we spent our cycles together, you kicked me out, and then you disappeared. I told them that they had to accept you as my omega, whether they liked it or not.

“The only person I talked to before I left Seoul was Ranie. I tried to help her sort out her feelings about you. It was the only thing that kept me going, the only purpose I had after my mate disowned me.” He closed his eyes for a moment and tried to push down the surge of pain that ripped through him and I did the same with the guilt I felt. He took a deep breath and kept talking after a moment.

“Ranie was basically the only connection I still had to you. Even though she talked about how much she hated you, she was just angry because of your conflicting views on ranks. That’s not really my story to tell. When I saw you during your rut, I felt how much your omega called out to me. The love was still there, so I knew it would only be a matter of time before you realized we’re fated. I needed time to get myself together and deal with the guilt of breaking up with you. I also had to process my resentment towards you for how you treated me after your heat. I know it’s ridiculous because you couldn’t help it, but I was so mad and hurt. It was hard for me to be blamed for something your omega did.

“I admit that I shouldn’t have told you to present yourself, but it was the only way I could think to calm you down. My alpha blurted it out before I fully committed to saying it. It was his instinct. He knew that if we told you to present yourself, you would realize that we see you as our mate regardless of you not being able to have pups. It wasn’t the best choice, but alphas can’t handle their mates being freaked out. A HADD alpha with a mate who doesn’t recognize him feels like he’s got a lot more to prove, so he goes out of his way to please and take care of you. If you’re upset, he would find a way to realign the planets to make it right. I know that sounds ridiculous, but that’s honestly how strongly he feels when you’re unhappy. I do too. I’m just a little more rational about it. I usually try to remove the thing causing you distress before I assume that I have to find a way to move celestial bodies. I’d still do it if you wanted me to. I consider it my job to keep you happy and
healthy, and you’d be surprised what I’m capable of doing if it’s for you.”

Jeong Guk’s face lit up when he felt my omega frolicking with the butterflies that erupted in my chest. I couldn’t stop a grin from spreading when I felt his alpha preening at my wolf’s response. It was a lot to experience each one of my fated’s emotions. At times, it was more than I thought I could handle. However, I wouldn’t trade the ability for anything. A wave of tranquility overcame him, spurring my own peacefulness.

“I’ve really missed you, Ji Min. I know this sounds crazy, but I felt very empty when you were gone. I got used to your company and having you be a part of me. You’re also just a fun person. It’s been dull without you. You feel so different now. I don’t know how to explain it. There’s not an underlying sense of unrest in you anymore. I can still feel some caution and uneasiness between your wolves and a little bit of distrust from your alpha towards me, but you seem like you’re much more together than before. I knew something was going to happen to you. I didn’t think it would be quite as serious as it was, but I could sense the tension getting to a tipping point. It was hard knowing that I couldn’t do anything to stop it and even more difficult to acknowledge that I started it. Even if you’ve always had issues with your wolves, I’m the one who called out your omega. This wouldn’t have happened to you if it weren’t for me.”

The calming pheromones that I released were my omega’s automatic response to his alpha’s mind-numbing explosion of turmoil and shame. It caught him off guard and served to quickly give him some ease. I don’t think he was expecting me to use my scent willingly for a while. Some people were okay with changing their scents for strangers, but he knows I’m not. It made a small bit of hope spring forth within him. I looked into his eyes and decided to address his concerns directly.

“I blamed you for a while, but I didn’t have a breakdown because of you. Dr. Hwa told me on the first day of therapy that it was your fault my omega woke up but it was my fault for seeing that as a problem. It took me a while to realize he was right. My internalized rankism was the issue, not you. I can’t think of anything you’ve ever done wrong, other than lying and hiding things. I wasn’t mentally there when you had me present myself, so I can’t comment on whether or not it was necessary. I vaguely remembered it afterward and I know it made me feel better. I guess that means it was a good thing. I’m not really sure. As far as I can tell, I’m over it. Maybe I’ll experience some lingering frustrations after a while or if something brings them up. I honestly don’t know how this all works. All I know is that I went through a fuck ton of therapy in the last couple of months. I don’t feel like the same person I was and I’m not mad about my heat anymore. It was an issue within myself and I took it out on you. I’m sorry for that. I don’t hate you. I don’t think I ever really did. It was just easier to hate you than to realize that I had my own problems to deal with. I shouldn’t have told you to leave me alone, even if it turned out for the better.”

It was Jeong Guk’s turn to soothe me when my emotions hit me a little too hard. It wasn’t just the pain he had after my heat that bothered me, it was also the months of hardship that I knew he faced. It was everything that he went through so I would be comfortable and have time to grow into my feelings. I couldn’t fully comprehend that sacrifice but I could feel the love behind it. I slowly relaxed as I was enveloped by a sweet floral and citrus fragrance. The weight of missing him crashed down around me. I felt lost without him, despite the fact that he was sitting in front of me. How can I need to be closer to someone who is physically with me? I felt my fated’s wolf call out to me, trying to nullify the growing sadness.

“I can fix it,” he offered when that didn’t work. “I have to touch you though. Nothing big, just your hand.”

I nodded, not wanting to have this gaping hole inside any longer. When he took my hand and laced our fingers together, the feeling lessened to a dull aching in the background. My omega was pacified
and happily curled into a warm ball. My alpha sat peacefully next to him, content to watch. My more dominant wolf still wasn’t crazy about the other alpha, but he acknowledged that our place is with him. Plus, he was beyond pleased that our omega was no longer whining about how much he missed his mate.

“The small bit of longing rarely goes away. It lessens when we’re near each other and even more when we touch. Other things we’ve done make it basically vanish, but it’s usually there. I haven’t been able to talk to Jin and Joon about it to see what else there might be. I couldn’t find a lot of reliable information about fate bonds when I tried to do research. It’s mostly just people talking about them on forums and social media. I found an interesting theory though. A lot of scientists think that everyone has a fated. The belief is that people end up with their fated but they mate before they recognize their fate bond. It’s just a theory because there’s no way to detect a fate bond. Anyway, I’ve been waiting for you to figure it out so I could talk to Jin and Joon. I don’t know how they survived four years of this before they mated. I know they had to, but I just can’t understand how. Maybe it’s because they knew about their bond immediately and they both agreed to be together. They never had the fear that one of them might end up with someone else.”

“I don’t know how you’ve dealt with it. I thought I was going insane when Jang Mi bothered you for a few days. I can’t imagine thinking every person around me might be a threat to our relationship. No wonder you wanted to murder Jae Seok when he tried to claim me. I guess it also explains why you weren’t interested in Jang Mi. Why look at someone else when your soulmate is right in front of you?”

“That’s always been my way of thinking. I’m only interested in you and I see no reason to ever worry about someone else. Like you said before, you’re mine and I’m not going to let you go.”

“That explains why my omega was so adamant about you being our alpha. Even though he didn’t know we’re fated, he could tell you were ours. I thought that feeling of ownership was ridiculous when I first felt it. Then again, you probably know that.”

He chuckled and played with my fingers as he nodded. “I liked those moments. They gave me hope and put my wolf at ease. I know what it’s like to argue with yourself about it. The first time we had sex, I couldn’t sleep because my alpha wouldn’t stop rolling around in happiness. In his mind, marking you and claiming your body was just as good as a mating bite. He wasn’t happy when I finally explained that you weren’t our mate until we mated. He didn’t want to hear how sex didn’t mean that you were permanently ours. That’s why I made our rings immediately. We wanted them to be a reminder of our bond, even though you didn’t know about it. He wanted physical proof that you’re going to be ours. And goddess forbid, if we broke up, I knew you wouldn’t throw your ring away. It would still serve as a connection to us.”

I stared at my hand, nestled firmly in his, and I eyed the spot where my ring would go. I didn’t think I was ready to wear it yet, but I still wanted to see it. When my eyes met Jeong Guk’s, I realized he was thinking the same thing.

“I have them with me,” he said quietly.

He could tell by the look in my eyes and the way my omega perked up that I wanted to see them. He smiled and whispered “goddess, you’re so cute” as he stood and walked over to a bag in the corner of the loft.

“I’m not used to hearing compliments from you,” I replied, trying to ignore the happy yips from my wolf.

“I had to stop myself from saying stuff like that. I was worried I’d say something that gave our bond
away. You’re obnoxiously adorable. It was so hard to keep it to myself, especially when you didn’t even realize how cute you were being. I thought I was going to die during your pre-heat when we made your nest and you got scent drunk. I guess death from endearing omega overload isn’t the worst way to go,” he joked as he rummaged through his bag.

He returned to the bed with a small, black box. My fated handed it to me and I carefully opened it. I released a shaky breath when I looked at them. They were more beautiful than the picture. They were completely perfect. I traced the colored band on the outside of each ring and then picked them up. The gold inside my ring was a stunning complement to the blue and black on the outside. It was the perfect accompaniment to his. They felt heavier than I expected and I couldn’t help wondering if that was because of their meaning. I was left in tears the first time I heard Jeong Guk talk about them. It was also the first time I felt how much I loved him. That emotion came back tenfold when I locked my hand in his and glanced up at him. I’m still in love with him and I don’t think anything will ever change that. This perfect mess of an alpha is mine, the one I’m meant to be with for the rest of my life. I felt the same sensations echoed within him and we both couldn’t hold back our foolish smiles.

“I’m giving them to you. When you’re ready, we’ll wear them. We’re fated but nothing has changed. We still move at your pace. That’s going to be a lot easier now that I can share how unsure I am about everything. I hope you don’t take this the wrong way, but I’m very uncomfortable with courting or dating you. Both me and my wolf have been anxious because you’re not marked. I’m not saying I want to mark you right now. Neither of us is ready for that. I guess I’m just saying that to warn you. There will be times when I panic because I’m feeling insecure. I know how you feel and I know that we’ll end up together no matter what, but I’m terrified you’ll change your mind. I’m constantly afraid of the day I wake up and you’re not next to me. It already happened once.

“I think you knowing about our bond is going to help. My alpha is going to be possessive and dominant no matter what, but he already feels calmer. He’s happy that you will be ours and that’s good enough for him, but he also probably won’t be satisfied even when we’re mated. I’m pretty sure you could be having a completely innocent conversation with someone—20 years after I bite you—and my alpha is going to want to rip their throat out if they look interested in you. I’m told that’s a normal alpha thing. It’s still weird to me. I just want to keep you to myself all the time. I also want you to have fun and make friends and thrive. But I want you to do it in a way that you can always be wrapped up in my arms and never be bothered by other people. I’m rambling again. I’ll stop.”

I tightened my grip on his hand when I felt the jolt of sorrow run through him as he talked about me leaving. He didn’t pause, but he did squeeze a little harder in return. By the end of his rant, I understood the concept of something being overwhelmingly cute. The combination of his doe eyes peeking at me through his hair and his lips curled into a tiny pout made a bunch of weird things happen inside of me. It felt as though alarms were going off in my body and mind, telling me to make that expression disappear. My omega lunged forward, not giving me a choice when he wrapped our arms around our fated. I felt everything in the alpha brighten when I embraced him. It was surreal to have him this close to me again, to smell him so strongly and sense him inside of me. Even my alpha was happier to have him near—something he would never admit out loud. My body was eager to keep him in our grasp forever but my brain reminded me that it wasn’t time for this. We’re still “less than strangers” as Jeong Guk put it. I reluctantly peeled myself off of him and sat in front of him again. I could feel his curiosity and I smiled.

“Maybe my omega thinks you’re a little too cute to handle when you pout.”

“Maybe I should pout more often,” he said with a sweet smile.

I chuckled and told him that there’s no way I could handle that. My heart was full of too many
emotions the first time. I took the ring box, which had been discarded when I flung myself at the alpha, and walked downstairs. I wanted to make sure it got safely to my bag before I could misplace or forget it. As soon as I stepped outside of the range of our bond, I felt empty and cold. The void was staggering. I was consumed by the silence within myself. The thought of dealing with this for any amount of time was daunting. I quickly shuffled to my bag, wanting the turbulence to end as quickly as possible. Being able to sense my anxiety without the bond, Jeong Guk rushed to my side and asked what was wrong. Before I could answer, he grabbed my hand and smiled at me.

“The nothingness eats at you after a while. It’s hard to get used to. I should have warned you. I got too caught up in how happy I was to feel you again. I wish I could tell you it gets easier, but it doesn’t. Every time I wasn’t around you, it was just as bad as the first time. Actually, I think it got worse after we started having sex. That’s a big part of the reason I had to be near you so much. It’s worse at night and I don’t know why. Up until a couple of months ago, the most I could handle without sleeping next to you was three nights. I would take all of the shirts of mine that you wore, put them over a pillow, and hug it. It’s the only way I could sleep.”

I could feel the shame rising up as he admitted this, but I quickly shut it down. “If it always feels like that, I don’t blame you. I couldn’t imagine dealing with that all the time. Not even a minute of it had me almost panicking. I feel like you’re going to get sick of being near me because I’m going to avoid feeling that at all costs.”

“I could never get sick of being near you,” he whispered softly. My body was taken over by a storm of butterflies and both of my wolves were happier after his statement. “I love being with you. I love feeling you. When we mate, we won’t have an uncomfortable separation anymore. Until then, we’ll have to tolerate it sometimes.”

A rumble tore through my chest and the sound of my purring made sheer giddiness fill my fated. I wasn’t expecting his words to impact me so much. I suddenly wanted to tell him what it meant to me. Voicing my emotions had become second nature and it made me think of the times when all I could do was capture Jeong Guk’s lips with my own to express what I was feeling. I chuckled at the idea. I never had to rely on my kisses to convey anything. He always knew. He looked at me inquisitively. “I was laughing because I used to hope you could feel the meaning of my kisses when I was too overwhelmed by emotion and didn’t know what to say. I started purring because I’m happy you still want to mate me. Logically, I know you’re going to mate me. It’s still nice to hear that you want to even after all of the pain I’ve caused.”

The alpha put his hand on the side of my face and tilted my head back. He looked directly into my eyes as he spoke. “You’ve been my mate since the day you were born. Of course, I’m going to mate you. No amount of pain that I’ve suffered is irreparable. Even if I had to see you in the arms of someone else for the next 10 years, I would endure it. I will wait for you as long as you need—in whatever capacity you want. I can’t say that I’d be happy approving of your new alpha and I hope it doesn’t come to that, but I will do it if that’s what you need from me. I’d help you find someone great if I had to.” His voice wavered at the end of his sentence as he tried to blink back tears.

The crimson was glowing in his eyes, showing me the consensus between him and his wolf. Even though he couldn’t look at me when he said it, I could feel that he meant it. I was touched by his confession. I put my hand over the one on my cheek and slotted my fingers into his. “I’m yours, Jeong Guk. I don’t want anyone else and I don’t think I could ever ask you to help me find someone to try to fill your place. They wouldn’t be able to, by the way. That’s because you’re also mine. I’m not going anywhere and neither are you. I will rip the throat out of anyone who thinks they’re getting a shot at you because we had some drama. I’d love to see someone try to take you from me.”
As I looked up at him, I wanted to kiss him so badly. My resolve to not jump immediately into our previous relationship was quickly dissolving. Dr. Hwa’s words about mates came back to me. I wanted to forgive him because of our connection. I felt his sincerity, his pain, his love, and it made all of the anger inside me lessen. We were both hurt and we both need to learn how to fully trust each other and our bond. Still, I did not want to fall into the temptation of moving too fast. Resisting the immobilizing pull of his lips, I pulled his hand toward my mouth and placed a small kiss to his palm. A blissful expression spread across my fated’s face as he left a peck on the back of my hand. We stood for a moment, eyes and hearts locked together. We eventually decided to sit on the sofa and continue talking.

I wanted to hear about his side of our interactions. Now that I can feel him, I was starting to become obsessed with knowing his emotions about everything. Over the course of the next couple of hours, I asked him every little question I could think of and had him recount all of our moments together. I had to know what he went through to help him. I also wanted him to be able to vent. He’d been keeping it all inside for so long and I knew he needed to tell someone. Sharing it with me would be the best thing for him because I’m the only one who can try to make it better. We held hands as we cried, laughed, and sorted through as many of his emotions as possible. We talked until we both decided it was time to eat. I sat and watched Jeong Guk cook, not trusting myself to keep a friendly distance. I remembered the last time we cooked together and it was too nice to not repeat. We weren’t ready to almost have sex in the kitchen, no matter how good of an idea my omega thought it was. So, I admired him from a distance. A domestic nostalgia settled over me as I saw him cutting and stirring various things. Memories of our cooking class date and fun times playing around while making food left me feeling happy. When he met my gaze and smiled, I knew he felt it too.

After we ate, our fated wanted to know about what happened to us after our heat. I spared him no detail, knowing that getting those feelings out was the only way to heal. He listened attentively and maintained constant contact to help soothe me. He was very proud of the progress I made with Dr. Hwa. He was also very impressed with the doctor’s patience and methods. Apparently, aggressive alphas are difficult to treat in therapy, especially by omega doctors. Listening to Jeong Guk’s explanation made me appreciate Dr. Hwa even more. We got into a long conversation about the benefits of therapy and how amazing the brain is. It was nice to be able to share this with my other half. Before, when he mentioned his love of psychology, I never gave it much thought. I never imagined I would have such an interest in it. The rest of the night melted into a mixture of happiness, sadness, anger, and adoration. It was a cleansing experience, serving to relieve the undeniable tension between us. We would definitely still have issues and struggle to figure out the best ways to exist as a bonded couple, but this was a very important first step.

The alpha convinced me to go upstairs when I started to yawn, even though I didn’t want to. In his tired state, my omega worried that we wouldn’t have more time with his alpha. My other wolf reminded him that this man was our fated and we’re stuck with him. There will be plenty of opportunities to talk in the future. Before he ushered me to bed, Jeong Guk grabbed a few things from one of his bags. He tossed me a large shirt and turned around, giving me privacy to change. I wouldn’t expect anything less from him, but it was still a very sweet gesture. He set up his sleeping bag next to the bed while I got dressed. He removed his own shirt and laid down after he made sure I was comfortable and didn’t need anything. Because he didn’t want either of us to be bothered while we tried to sleep, he decided to stay nearby. I did my best to quiet my wolves but they were very restless. I could feel the bond pulling me towards my fated, the call much stronger than it was before. It was so intense that even our close proximity was not helping. Jeong Guk’s alpha was drawing both of my wolves towards him and they were clawing to get out. No matter how long I laid there and tried to calm them they remained uneasy. I tossed and turned for a while before I couldn’t take it anymore.

“You still up?” I whispered, hoping that I wasn’t the only one who was feeling this way. I couldn’t
really sense my fated’s emotions. They were masked by the horrid pining that consumed me.

“Of course, I am. Your wolves are calling my alpha out of me and I’m super anxious being away from you. I told you that it gets worse at night.”

“I didn’t think it would be this bad. I thought us being this close would make it okay.”

“I did too, but I guess not. I doubt either one of us will sleep tonight. I’m sorry about that. I know you’re tired. We could talk some more if you want.”

I thought for a moment about how awful this emptiness is and how simple it would be to fix it. All I have to do is ask this alpha to get in bed with me. We don’t have to jump into anything romantic or sexual. It’s just to lessen the strain on our bond. My wolves immediately agreed to the idea, no longer able to handle the distance between us.

“Come up here.”

“I don’t want to rush you. I’ll sing you to sleep or something if you’d like.”

“Jeong Guk, please lay with me. We don’t have to do anything just because we’re laying next to each other. It will make us both feel better.”

“Are you sure? I can’t really feel you over my wolf freaking out, so I don’t know if you’re just saying that. I know it sucks, but I can’t let you move too quickly just because you’re in pain.”

It was a touching sentiment but I was only minutes away from losing my mind. The incessant pacing of my alpha and the despondent whimpers of my omega were going to make me genuinely go mad. I sighed heavily and turned towards him.

“Either you’re coming up here or we’re both squeezing into your sleeping bag. You decide.”

He chuckled and crawled over me. His warmth radiated next to me and it pacified my wolves, but not as much as it should have. Even though he was close enough to make the bed dip, our bond made it feel like a chasm was between us. I moved closer to Jeong Guk’s back and it didn’t do much. It wasn’t until I put my arm around his waist that the relentless anxiety dulled to a quiet hum. His body fit perfectly against me, something I had all but forgotten in the last few months. He was firm beneath my fingers and I had the sudden urge to trace his muscles and feel his skin on mine. It wasn’t even a sexual desire as much as it was the desperate need to have all of him as close as possible. The alpha’s joy surged through us both, letting me know that I wasn’t the only one who felt this way. He took my hand and kissed it gently before putting it back on his stomach.

"Good night, Ji Min. I hope you sleep well."

I smiled at the familiar phrase, although it seemed a little off. I wasn’t used to hearing my name coming from his mouth. It used to be one of his two nicknames for me that ended the bid for a good night and I would always reply in kind. I missed calling him Guku, but that was a name reserved for a more solid relationship status. I couldn't help but wonder how he would feel if I said it or how he would respond if I called him "my alpha." That was what I had decided to call him in response to the name little omega. I hadn't found the right time to use it before my heat. I pushed the thoughts aside and snuggled up to him. I opted to think of all the time we had and all of the nights we'd have just like this. I drifted off to sleep before long.

When I woke up, my cheek was pressed against Jeong Guk’s chest and his arms were around me. It was the happiest I had been in quite some time. I could feel his wolf peacefully resting and it warmed my heart. I laid there for a while, wanting to engrave this serenity into my very being. I felt him stir
and then a small peck was placed to the top of my head. It surprised me but also gave me more butterflies. He froze when he realized what he did, panic evident over the bond.

“I’m sorry! It was a reflex. I shouldn’t have done that. I’m not very good at this.” He was getting more upset with each word.

“It’s fine. There’s no need to freak out about it.”

“But, you’re not ready. I told you we’d go at your pace and I’m not fulfilling that.”

I smiled at his statement and slid my body upwards. When I was eye level with him, I kissed his cheek. My fated’s eyes grew wide and his mouth hung open. “I told you that it’s fine. It’s not like we can start over and meet each other again. There is a lot of space in between pretending we’re strangers and mating. We can be familiar and cuddle and have cute moments like this one without doing anything crazy. Maybe I’m not ready to shove my tongue down your throat, but I stopped myself from kissing you a few times already. It’s okay if we trust our instincts a little. The bond doesn’t leave us much of a choice anyway. I feel like I’m not close enough if I’m not on top of you. That’s going to force some level of intimacy.”

“Honestly, I’m beginning to wonder if the fate bond drives people so crazy that they decide to mate to make it stop. Because I feel the exact same way you do. If you’re not physically attached to me in some way, then you’re not close enough. It feels so natural to have you here but I don’t want to make you uncomfortable. I’m glad I’m not the only one who’s struggling with the distance. It’s been hard not to hold you captive in my arms and kiss every bit of you.”

“I feel like it’s too soon for that, but I want the same thing. I definitely agree with you about the fate bond, though. If every night is going to be like that, there’s no way I’m sleeping without you ever again.”

We decided to lay there in silence until we both got hungry. The prospect of getting out of the warm bed and being away from Jeong Guk was bothersome, but so was the cramping and growling in my stomach. I warmed up our leftovers and sat as close as possible to the alpha as we ate.

"I see why you would randomly pull me into your lap now. That level of contact makes most of the pain go away. It's weird to call it pain because it's not exactly painful but it is at the same time. I don't think there are proper words to describe it."

"I agree. It really is beyond explanation. But, yes, this is exactly why I would grab you and pull you close. Plus, you seemed to like it. You never stopped me or said you hated it, and I never felt anything from you indicating you didn't want me to keep going. Even the first time you sat in my lap during your rut, you were at peace with it."

I thought back on it and realized he was right. The strange draw I had towards him made so much more sense now that I know about our bond. It made me think of how peaceful it was to be here with him, to have him all to myself. I didn't want it to end. I didn't want to go back to school, deal with our family, or do anything except curl into him. How would I manage in class without him? How could I be at home without him? Just the mention of his absence was enough to have me crawling into his arms.

"You okay?" He asked as he held me close to his chest.

"I don't want to go back to normal life. I'm not going to do well without you."

"You don't have to be without me, except in class. Speaking of, we have to go back on Monday. I
don’t want to but we can’t stay here forever, as disappointing as that is.”

“Can we at least stay here until Sunday?” My voice was hopeful.

Jeong Guk’s alpha perked up in response to my question. I could tell he wasn’t expecting it. “You really want to spend a couple more days alone with me? It’s only Thursday.”

When I nodded, he couldn’t hold back his huge grin. He wasn’t used to me admitting my feelings so freely, even if he could feel them before. There was something much more impactful about hearing someone say their emotions. It meant that they weren’t denying how they felt and they wanted you to know. It was reassuring in a way that simply knowing someone’s feelings wasn’t. I stared at his cute bunny teeth and scrunch nose, wanting to kiss him again. I stopped myself by clinging to him tighter.

“We’re going to have to go shopping for more food. I thought you’d want to leave as soon as you got here, so I’ve been planning my meals one day at a time. I’ll tell the pack we’re coming back on Sunday morning. I’m sure they’re going to want to talk. Maybe we should just call a meeting and have everyone there. That would make it so we only have to tell the story one time. We can invite your mom too.”

“That’s a really great idea. I don’t know how many times I could stand to talk about this before it becomes too much. I told Mi Mi that we’re fated but I don’t think she told anyone. Possibly Chi, but not anybody else.”

“I would have heard from the pack if they knew. Ranie is great at keeping secrets and she’d never tell something like that without permission. I’ll let them know to plan for a meeting for Sunday afternoon. I’ll also tell Tae to let Ranie, Chi, and your mom know. I’m not sure if Ranie told you, but Yunie is mating with Chae. She’ll be there too since she’ll be part of the pack soon.”

“She told me. I have a question, though. Yunie and Tae share a room. How is that going to work?”

“Chae lives in an apartment near SNU’s campus. Yunie is going to move in with her. It’s going to be weird not seeing him at home, but we’ll still have lunch together.”

We talked about the strangeness of not having one of our packmates around all the time as we got ready to go shopping. My omega was difficult to control while we were at the store. He couldn’t get over the fact that it felt like Jeong Guk and I were mated and sharing a home. I agreed with him, loving the domesticity of these moments. When we got home, we watched movies until I could no longer control the restlessness of my wolves. My omega was whining because we weren’t attached at the lips to his mate and my other wolf was annoyed by his antics. My alpha wouldn’t admit it, but I could feel that he was growing more partial to our fated. He was slowly realizing that this alpha wasn’t a threat and was actually willing to do anything we asked. He said that having the world’s strongest alpha under our control actually made us better than him. My other wolf and I decided not to correct him. If his strange reasoning made getting along with Jeong Guk easier, we were happy to let him think whatever he wanted. We were both pretty sure it was his way of coping with falling for another alpha.

To relieve some of the nervous energy, I helped cook enough food for lunch and dinner. Then, we decided to explore this area of Busan for a while. We ended up walking through a bunch of stores and a park. It made me calmer, but I still felt like I was missing something. As it got later, the feeling worsened. I finally recognized that the emptiness was our bond. Holding hands wasn’t enough to placate our wolves. We quickly went back home and I straddled our fated as soon as we got home and sat on the bed. Having this much contact made everything quiet again. We continued to sit like that and talk until we fell asleep. Friday passed in largely the same way as Thursday. We finished
watching Love Stage!! and then came up with a plan to lessen the amount of issues we’ll have because of our bond. We decided that we’d sleep together every night for a while and then slowly try to be without each other. It wasn’t practical for us to be together all the time, but I had to get used to the separation pain. Jeong Guk had months to grow accustomed to this feeling, something that made me feel guilty when I thought about it. However, I needed to be eased into it. We theorized that I experience the anxiety worse because I have two wolves.

That night, a sudden rush of pure panic tore me from my sleep. My fated was tossing and whimpering in his sleep. His wolf was calling out to me, begging me to help end whatever terror they were going through. I shook the alpha gently and called to him until he jumped. The horror in his tear-filled eyes slowly melted into recognition. He immediately dove into my chest, locking his arms around my waist and listening to my heartbeat. I held him close and ran my fingers through his hair. I also sang to him, hoping it would help. It took several minutes for his breathing to regulate and his sobbing to quiet. Jeong Guk eventually relaxed his grip on me but kept his head on my chest. I waited until I could feel that he had calmed down to ask him what happened.

“When you were gone, I had a dream that you came back and everything was okay. I was completely shattered after I woke up and realized it wasn’t true. Just now, I had a dream where I woke up and you were gone. I can’t go through that again,” he said as he began to cry once more. “I barely survived the first time. Please, don’t leave me again. Plea—”

I could feel him teetering on the edge of hysteria as he spoke and my heart broke. I bent down at a weird angle, to be eye level with him, and kissed him as forcefully as I could. My omega decided that was the best course of action, the only thing that would stop his spiral into despair. I held his face close to mine and willed him to understand. I knew he could feel all of the promises I was making but I needed him to know—in no uncertain terms—exactly what I was trying to explain. After I felt a lull in his pain, I pulled away and forced him to look into my eyes. I didn’t think before I spoke, I just let my instincts and my wolves say whatever they needed to.

“You’re Jeon Jeong Guk, right?” He tried to speak, but I cut him off with a quick peck. “Just answer my questions with a nod for yes or a shake for no. You’re Jeon Jeong Guk?”

He nodded.

“That means you’re the alpha who is my life mate, right?”

He nodded again.

“That also means you’re the alpha who is courting me?”

His eyes lit up as he processed my words, nodding eagerly.

“You’re my fated, bound to me for the rest of my life?”

Another nod.

“You’ll be my mate someday, right?”

He sat up and grabbed my hands, “Of course.”

“Then, I’m not going anywhere. We don’t have to wait to commit to each other. I want you to be my alpha, my life mate, my Guku. Going back to that doesn’t mean we’re going too fast. You need reassurance from me that I’m not going to leave again. I can give that to you. I know we said we would wait, but this isn’t just about me. It’s about us. It’s incredibly selfish of me not to take into consideration what you need. You’re comfortable making everything about me, but I’m done letting
you do that. You’re half of this relationship. If you won’t start caring about your needs, then I’m
going to do it for you. I’m not letting you have another panic attack nightmare about waking up
without me. The only time you’re ever going to wake up without me again is if I have to go to the
bathroom in the middle of the night. You’ve taken care of me and watched over me since we met.
I’m going to finally repay the favor. Plus, it’s partially selfish. My alpha and I have been trying to get
my omega to shut up for a while now. This seems to be the only way.”

We both chuckled, knowing that he could feel how all of me wanted to be with him the way we used
to be. My omega was happy to be the scapegoat this time. Jeong Guk pulled me onto his lap, facing
him so that he could stare at me as he spoke. “If that’s what you want, then I’m fine with it. I’d love
to be your alpha again. I’ve dreamt about the day I can call you Manggae so many times that I’m
actually ashamed to think about them all. Thank you for calming me down. Those episodes are pretty
common for me and I hope you don’t grow tired of dealing with them. They’re better when you’re
around. I love you, little omega. Thank you for being with me and choosing to be mine.”

“I love you too, my alpha. Thank you for also choosing to be mine.”

I pulled him in for another kiss and wrapped myself around him as much as possible. The feeling of
his lips against mine made the strain on our bond soften and the emptiness virtually disappear. We
cuddled, with our lips attached and unmoving, until we could no longer keep our eyes open. I woke
up with my alpha’s head on my chest, unsure of when we laid down or got into this position. The
sight made giddiness and adoration bloom inside my chest until it seemed I would burst. I thought
about the fact that Guku and I resumed our courting status and it made me happier than I expected. I
thought for sure I would have some lingering feelings of mistrust or an overall sense of it being too
soon, but I didn’t. It felt right. We’re not jumping into sex or mating right away, so there’s no reason
to wait to officially call him mine again. It actually gave me some tranquility to know that all of me
still wanted to be with him. Honestly, I don’t know why I thought waiting would be the best option.
After the last couple of days, there is no way I’d be able to deny giving him confidence and security
in our relationship. I wasn’t able to stay mad at him after being able to explore his heart and knowing
that nothing he did had any malice behind it. I’m sure we’ll still have issues, but being able to feel
him alters everything I thought would happen during our reunion. There’s no need for screaming
matches, physical altercations, or hidden intentions when you can sense what your partner is feeling.
I know he’s being open and honest with me and he knows I’m doing the same.

Our last day in Busan was spent packing our bags, cleaning the apartment, enjoying each other’s
company, and trying to preemptively solve issues. We worked on a plan to help lessen our stress
when we had to be away from each other. Trading scents, keeping communication while separated,
and scenting each other when needed would help us both be calmer during classes and therapy
sessions. We also tried to put a system in place for when we were feeling certain ways. We discussed
the things that might help either of us if we were feeling possessive, insecure, or needy. During these
conversations, I was very grateful for my year’s worth of therapy. It gave me a lot of the tools
necessary to initiate important talks and process what I felt and needed. I never knew how helpful
those skills would be. This type of vulnerability and sincerity was a completely different experience
than the relationship we had before. Thinking back on it, I don’t know how we managed to get as far
as we did in that time. I can only assume it was the fate bond pushing us forward.

Guku’s alarm sounded way too early on Sunday morning. I wanted nothing more than to lay there
for the next several hours and pretend we didn’t have responsibilities outside of this bed. I turned
away when my alpha shook me gently, pulling his arm over me to cuddle more. He chuckled and
took the blankets off of me.

“Manggae, we’ve gotta get up. Don’t make me wake you up by spinning you again.”
“You’re only allowed to give me kisses to wake me up. No more spinning and definitely no bathtubs full of cold water.”

“Will you actually wake up if I give you kisses?” He asked, suspicion evident in his voice.

“Only one way to find out,” I replied with a laugh.

He snuggled up to me and kissed the back of my head a couple of times. He moved to the side of my head and my cheek, eventually stopping at my mouth. Once he gave me a peck on the lips, I opened my eyes, fake yawned, and stretched. He giggled at me and I could feel how elation overtook him. We looked around the apartment again to make sure we didn’t forget anything. Then, we left our little haven and headed towards our normal lives. We grabbed some food at the station while we waited for the train. When we were finally on our way to Seoul, I worried about the impending meeting with our family. Guku said the pack wasn’t happy with me for what happened. I was afraid they would hate me. They couldn’t deny me as a member of the pack because my bond with their packmate was a more valued connection than the one they had. Regardless of the hierarchy, I cherished them as my friends and relatives. I didn’t like the idea of them being angry with me. I felt three squeezes to my hand and instantly gave all my attention to my fated.

“It will be okay. They have to accept you no matter what.”

“That doesn’t mean I want them to hate me.”

“No one hates you, little omega. They don’t know your perspective and they only know part of mine. They aren’t able to properly assess the situation, so they’re making assumptions. That’s why we’re meeting with them. I can feel that this isn’t helping. Is there anything I can do for you?”

“Sing to me?” It had been so long since I heard his voice.

“What do you want to hear?”

“‘The Little Prince.’”

“Is it weird to hear that song now that you know everything?”

“What do you mean?”

He looked at me for a moment, trying to figure out if I was being serious. He knew I was but he seemed unable to believe it. “Don’t tell me you never listened to the lyrics. The song is about how difficult it is to win over someone’s heart, that you’re the only one for me, and that we are never going to be apart. I’ve been using a lot of songs to try to tell you about us, but that one was particularly meaningful. You really liked it too.”

“Sing it to me again and I’ll pay attention this time.”

I couldn’t help the myriad of emotions that I felt as he sang. I fell a little more in love every time I heard his voice, but it was also heartbreaking. I was already fighting tears by the middle of the song. The last few lines about being tamed, unable to see anyone else, and crying while thinking of that person are what broke me. I could feel the pain in his words but it was freeing in a way. The song served as a reminder of our bond and what we had been through. I pulled him in for a hug to comfort both of us. When we were calm again, I reached into my pocket, where I had stored our rings. If we were going to take such a large step in our relationship, then we were going to do it properly. I opened the box and handed it to him.

“I think it’s time, Guku. I want to do this the right way.”
Before he could protest or ask me if I was ready, I took his right hand and slipped his ring onto his fourth finger. He stared at me for a moment, completely overwhelmed by his emotions. I was pleased to find that most of them were positive. I kissed him and whispered reassuring words until he was calm enough to put my ring on me. He wiped the unshed tears from his eyes and smiled. I could tell he felt ashamed because of the display of emotions. I repeatedly told him that it was fine. It was going to take some getting used to but I liked seeing his vulnerable side.

“I can’t believe that I’ve cried every time you mentioned me being your alpha,” he said at length. “I can’t even hide it like I did the first time.”

“When was that?”

“We were texting and you said that your omega sees me as his alpha. I started sobbing like a child. That’s actually why I disappeared. I just told you I was cooking so you wouldn’t know anything was wrong.”

“Well, you’re my alpha. You better get used to it. You’re stuck with me forever.”

I laced my fingers with his and smiled brightly at the way butterflies danced and love bloomed inside us. We spent the majority of the ride home contemplating the best way to approach our meeting with the pack. We decided to cuddle in silence after that conversation, wanting to enjoy the last bit of unadulterated repose we would have for a while. I laid my head on his shoulder and inhaled his scent, noticing how easily our heartbeats and breaths synchronized. I waited for the potential clash with our family, the first issue we would face as a couple. It would be the first of many, but it was exciting to see how we could take on the world together. I know we’re completely invincible when we work as a team. I absentmindedly played with my ring and looked forward to what life had in store for us.

Chapter End Notes

Before I say anything about the chapter I want to apologize and say thank you. I know I was gone for a while and I'm sure some of you probably worried that Alphabet was abandoned. I know I said that it would be a while before the next chapter was posted, but I didn't think it would be quite this long. I am sorry that I wasn't able to keep you all updated very well. AO3 doesn't have a way for me to tell you all that the chapter is coming or it might take longer. That's a big part of the reason I put my Twitter and Curious Cat information at the end of the chapters. I post updates about the chapters on Twitter and you're more than welcome to ask me about the progress or anything else on Curious Cat or Twitter. Thank you all for your patience. Life got a bit out of hand for a while and things needed to be readjusted and reassessed. Now that I've got things a little more together, there shouldn't be any more long delays. I know I don't necessarily need to provide an explanation of why it took so long, but I like to. You have joined me on this journey, so I like to keep you informed on what's happening during it. Now with all of that out of the way...

JIKOOK ARE SO FUCKING CUTE!!!!!!! This chapter has been a long time coming. It was difficult to write because I wasn't sure how the shared emotion mechanics would work. I think it turned out well. What do you think about everything that happened? I know it was a lot, but indulge me, please. It's been far too long since I've interacted with you and I've missed you. Also, here's the translated lyrics to "The Little Prince" if
you've never heard it. Jeong Guk's sneaky self tried to tell Ji Min, but he didn't catch on. Anyway, thank you so much for joining me for this beautiful reunion. I can't wait to hear from you. I hope I get a lot of feedback because you all keep me going ^_^  

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