And I Can Feel The Eyes In The Halls, And The Ears In The Walls, And I Know I’m Not Alone

by EyesTheColourScarlet

Summary

Yoongi had always felt vulnerable. Vulnerable when he used to have to live with his father, vulnerable when Namjoon and Seokjin first took him in, vulnerable when he had been taken just weeks ago. It wasn't a new feeling, but it was amplified.

Every decision he made, every situation he found himself in, it all seemed to highlight how vulnerable he was to the world.

(Rewritten chapters will have an asterisk)

Notes

I'm really exited to post this sequel! I'm sorry it took a while, but I lost the original when I managed to break my memory stick, which kind of set me back a few months. I hope people enjoy!
(I'm planning to update weekly-ish, at least until I've completely finished writing, I'm only on chapter fourteen right now)
If Yoongi had thought it through in better detail, he might have decided to calm himself down more before he desperately pressed a number he knew off by heart, pulling it up to his ear with shaking hands. Sobbing into the phone probably wasn’t the best way to greet his boyfriend, especially when said boyfriend might have thought Yoongi was dead. His excuse was that he had had a very stressful day, stressful week, and he felt as though he almost deserved to not think fully about every detail of his actions anymore.

“Jeongguk,” he breathed out, sobs making it hard to hear the voice on the other end of the line, his own heartbeat too loud in his ears.

He tried to calm himself down, tried to slow his breaths until they came easier, tried to undo the tightness of his chest. Right at that moment, all he wanted was to hear Jeongguk talk, hear his sacred voice, the tone which made his heart skip a beat. There was no sedative more powerful than Jeongguk’s words, and it was all Yoongi wanted to listen to, all Yoongi needed to feel less like he was about to drop to the floor in exhaustion as the adrenaline left his body.

“Yoongi?” Jeongguk asked from the other side of the line, a wet smile growing on Yoongi’s face as he finally got what he wanted. “Oh my fuck-,” the younger swore, making a broken laugh fall from the other’s lips. “Yoongi, Yoongi where are you? Are you okay, oh fuck, Yoongi, Yoongi,” he heard Jeongguk saying frantically, and Yoongi squeezed his eyes shut at the sound as he basked in the sound of his voice.

“Jeong-guk,” he answered, a sob breaking the word in two. “I’m okay. I’m okay, he’s...” he gasped struggling to find his words. “I killed him, Jeonggukie, he’s gone, we’re okay,” Yoongi managed to push out through the tears, gripping the phone so tightly he was worried it would snap.

He could distantly hear Jeongguk shouting at the other end of the line, making sure his mouth was away from the device’s microphone. Yoongi couldn’t make out the words, but he assumed he was informing everyone that the elder was on the line, telling someone to track the call immediately. It was a second before Yoongi heard Jeongguk speak again, words still frantic, voice almost cracking from the tears Yoongi imagined the younger holding back.

“Oh god, oh Yoongi, we’re coming to get you, I’m so proud, I love you so much, he’s gone, I love you,” he repeated over and over like a mantra, words so perfect it just made Yoongi sob even harder.
Their phone conversation carried on just like that, lots of crying and declarations of love, time flying until Yoongi lost all sense of where he was, what was happening. The only thing that mattered was that everything was okay, he didn’t need to cast his mind towards the body on the floor ever again, could just spend his life in Jeongguk’s arms the way he was dying to. Nothing changed until he heard a car pull up close to where he was collapsed onto the floor, tires crackling along the ground, engine rumbling as the doors opened.

“Yoongi, we’re here, where are you?” Jeongguk rushed out in a single breath, and Yoongi could hear his real voice coming from outside the trailer.

It gave him the last bit of energy he could possible muster, his body heaving itself up off of the floor like it weighed more than a thousand tonnes of stone, legs shaking under the strain. Ignoring everything, Yoongi quickly stumbled out of the door, practically running towards his boyfriend, his Jeongguk. The younger met him half way, pulling Yoongi into his arms so tightly he was sure it wouldn’t ever be possible for him to let go.

In an instant, he was sobbing into Jeongguk’s chest, grapping on as tightly as he could to the fabric covering the younger’s skin. Yoongi could feel tears from Jeongguk on his head, dripping though his hair but he couldn’t bring himself to care. He didn’t care when he felt five other pairs of arms wrapping around his body, making him feel more safe than he had in a long time, he didn’t care when he realised everybody was crying, celebrating the fact Yoongi was alive. He didn’t care because he was okay, he was safe, and he would never let this happen again.

He promised.

It was like a heavy weight had finally been lifted from Yoongi’s body, his limbs finally relaxing in Jeongguk’s hold, finally safe to give in to the pull of fatigue running through his veins. He didn’t realise how tired he was, how much he craved to lie down in Jeongguk’s arms, to never wake up. It felt like he hadn’t slept in weeks, hadn’t had a single moment where his brain wasn’t racing, limbs weren’t poised to move. All the adrenaline from earlier had been used up, only leaving Yoongi’s limp body behind.

Jeongguk cradled him like glass, hands unmoving from his back, and Yoongi was sure he was putting all his weight in the younger’s hold, but there was no complaint. The touch was warm even through Yoongi’s clothing, the breaths coming from Jeongguk’s mouth tickling his scalp, making him try and bury himself deeper, deeper, as far as he could go into the younger’s chest, and he felt a small, watery laugh come from Jeongguk’s body to his throat, the noise almost breaking at the end. Kisses were pressed over his hair, hands from the others around them also not leaving his body, and despite Yoongi’s normal distain for being surrounded it was soothing, it felt like Yoongi was where he belonged.
His trembling limbs were about to give out, legs feeling like they no longer contained their bones, ready to melt into a puddle under his feet. Yoongi wrapped his shaking arms around Jeongguk’s neck, the younger automatically moving his hands to pick Yoongi from the floor, as though he weighed nothing but the mass of a single feather. Burying his face into his boyfriend’s neck, Yoongi took a deep breath, Jeongguk’s sweet scent filling his lungs, making him sigh in contentment. He felt Jeongguk rock slightly, like Yoongi was a baby, and it was almost like a hypnotist’s magic trick, making any sort of tenseness completely disappear from his mind, only sweet, sweet, Jeongguk left, the rest of his family right behind him.

The taller must have carried Yoongi into the car, the hum of an engine appearing through the fuzz of his ears, a soft radio being turned on and a man’s voice singing slowly, the song seeming familiar but not nameable. Jeongguk still had him in his arms, rested on his lap, head cushioned on the younger’s shoulder, and Jeongguk was tracing patterns where his hands were on Yoongi’s waist, stars and hearts and diamonds moulding together to make a masterpiece.

He could hear the others in the car, Hoseok, Jimin and Taehyung just behind them, humming harmonies along to the melody of the song, voices a perfect blend together, sounding like a hymn in a grand, royal church. Jeongguk had started to sing as well, his chest lightly vibrating as the words were produced, the sound working like a lullaby to Yoongi’s fatigued conscience. Namjoon and Seokjin were nearly silent ahead of them, Seokjin presumably driving, but every so often Yoongi was sure he heard hands moving, the elder duo probably not truly displaying their relief. Yoongi didn’t like to think about the fact that the couple had never lost a child, despite the dangerous life they lived, and it must have been hell for them, especially when Yoongi had been so near them when he had been taken, stolen from practically under their noses. A parent should never have to mourn a child, and Yoongi was relieved that he hadn’t been the cause for any worse pain.

He must have fallen asleep, the journey seeming far too short, although Yoongi hadn’t known where he was in the first place. The car’s movement was soothing, Seokjin ensuring he was driving as smoothly as possible, and Yoongi was thankful that the elder hadn’t tried to race home, travelling at a leisurely pace. Jeongguk’s grip didn’t relax for a second, his hands moving and yet never giving up their pressure, something Yoongi might have found distressing in the past, but now it was a welcome presence, because it meant the younger was right there, where he was meant to be.

The last thing he could remember from the car journey was Jeongguk’s sweet, melodic voice, singing like an angel in Yoongi’s ear, soothing and lulling him further into sleep like a child’s lullaby.

There was fuzz between his temples, like balls of cotton fluff were stuffed between his brain and his skull, not letting nerve impulses travel through his cell’s synapses, chemicals blocked by soft fabric. It was pleasantly light, and for one of the first times he could remember, he wasn’t
worrying about one thing or another, not his father, not enemies of his family, not stalkers or school or anything. He felt intoxicated, but in the best way, like his whole body was slowed and left in a pleasant haze.

The transition from the car into the house was all a blur, Yoongi not absolutely sure whether he remembered the experience completely, images sometimes flashing through his mind, too vague to focus upon. He was fairly sure Jeongguk had carried him to their bedroom, had changed his clothes and held him until he was fully submerged in sleep, which was thankfully blank, his common nightmares leaving him in peace. He wouldn’t have the resilience to deal with memories of his childhood at that moment, especially if they involved more recent events within them.

It would be a while before Yoongi was okay again. The word ‘okay’ was a weird concept, and Yoongi couldn’t decide if it meant he was back to normal, or whether it suggested an improvement. Would he be okay if he was visited by his old nightmares the night after? Or would he be okay if he recovered from his trauma, the multiple marks left over his mind from years of suffering? It was neither, Yoongi decided. He was okay if he could still get up in the morning; he was okay if he still had Jeongguk by his side. He was okay as long as he wasn’t in danger, and for him that was enough.

Despite the lack of nightmares, Yoongi found himself waking at a time the sky was still as dark as could be, eyes fluttering open and then immediately shut when he realised there was nothing to see. His body was tired, tired, and it took a moment for him to realise the weight upon him was not his own.

There was an arm over his chest, draped over his body and holding him tightly, as though he was about to float away. Jeongguk’s legs were tangled with Yoongi’s, the feeling of the younger’s strong limbs against his own frail ones making him feel safe, protected, seated on a golden throne in a fortress of metal, nobody able to enter.

It was the type of grounding he needed, feeling enclosed and trapped but it was nice, it was familiar, it was what he had always experienced with Jeongguk and it was perfect, perfect.

His lack of sleep wasn’t bothering him, Yoongi was content to stay like this forever, hearing Jeongguk’s soft breaths and matching his own to the rhythm the other held. The world moved on, and yet Yoongi stayed here, stayed the same, allowed his thoughts to become heavier despite his sleeplessness, rest invading his mind despite his body’s earlier rejection.

It was a side effect of what had happened, he supposed. Unconsciously, he didn’t want to sleep, too much had happened while he was blacked out in the last days, his mind didn’t want more risk, more possible trauma. It was stupid, because Jeongguk was here, strong, smart, perfect Jeongguk, Jeongguk who would protect Yoongi to the best of his capabilities, who would tie a rope around
the moon and bring it to the elder if he even hinted to the fact he wanted the actual moon in their bedroom. But his body was tired; his bones were dead weight in his skin, like metal had been implanted in every joint and hollow.

He didn’t quite realise the exact point he let himself drift off, he thought he might have felt Jeongguk shift in his sleep, but everything was far too blurry to fully remember.

Chapter End Notes

You can follow me on twitter @EyesTheColour if there are any questions ;)
The morning greeted him with the sun, bright rays falling though the edges of the curtains, casting the room in a dim, golden light. He was warm, surrounded by blankets, familiar arms wrapped around his body, one hand under the thigh draped over Jeongguk’s hip, the other wound around Yoongi’s waist. It was one of the best ways to wake up, head buried under his boyfriend’s chin, breathing in the scent of the fabric softener he used embedded in his sweater. The rhythmic rise and fall of Jeongguk’s chest indicated that he wasn’t asleep, and Yoongi lightly pushed his head further into the younger’s neck, gripping soft fabric in between fingers.

There was a hum from deep in Jeongguk’s throat, and the hand on his thigh trailed up past his hips, shoulders, finally resting in his hair, nails lightly scratching his scalp. If Yoongi had been a cat like Keopi, he was sure he would be purring, chest vibrating at the feeling. He shifted, the pins and needles on his side easing as he changed position, Jeongguk continuing the movements of his fingers. For a moment, it was just like they were normal people; a normal couple waking in the morning, and Yoongi couldn’t stop the pure want building up in his chest.

It must be nice, for other people. It must be nice to wake up like this daily, to be able to spend a morning in a pleasant high, not having to attend a meeting about illegal business, going on a task to kill people, or anything else of the sort. It must be nice to wake up slowly, just letting the sun tell you the time, and think of all the mundane things waiting to be done, just normal, simple things. Yoongi could spend his whole life like this, under expensive bed sheets with his boyfriend, living in the glow of a late morning, nothing to do but this.

As his body woke up more, Yoongi couldn’t stop the yawn that slid up his throat, inhaling a deep breath of just a scent that whispered Jeongguk. Everything was peaceful, even when the younger chuckled quietly, sending soft vibrations through Yoongi’s skin. Huffing, the smaller squeezed his eyes shut, sniffing once his mouth closed, the shirt in front of his face tickling the tip of his nose.

Lips on the crown of his head, small touches pressing kisses all over his hair, the entire action so soft it made Yoongi’s insides melt into goo. This was what he needed, the endless affection, the intimacy, anything that would take his mind off of the things that had just happened, anything that worked as a new distraction. Yoongi couldn’t even bring himself to think about it, Zack Goldeerd, the name sending shivers down his spine. But this was fine, this was safe, Yoongi didn’t need to think of anything but Jeongguk, nothing but Jeongguk.

“I love you,” was murmured in his ear, the first thing Jeongguk had said that morning.

The words were as soft as the sheets around them, embracing Yoongi like another set of arms. It made him smile, that just by habit those three words were the first thing that Jeongguk thought to say, that they were the first thing Yoongi heard on a day where he knew he would need the
confirmation that he was completely safe. Despite feeling completely content in his bubble, the world outside seemed far too daunting, and he would rather say here than ever leave the room again, no matter how impractical.

“I love you, too,” Yoongi murmured back, and Jeongguk’s hands moved to his arms, to his neck, to his jaw, carefully repositioning the smaller until he could look him in the eye.

Mindlessly, Yoongi leaned into the familiar fingers, calluses feeling oddly soothing against his soft skin, so distinct, so familiar. Zack Goldcerd had had calluses, rough tissue on his hands, but they were nothing like this, not so calming, comforting. Jeongguk was so different, was Yoongi’s, the only one, and nothing made that change, not a single thing.

If felt odd, to have this euphoric feeling after he had been so tense over the last days, this feeling of nothing but air in his chest. Even his heart had evaporated, but the rest of his body felt like it was recovering from running a marathon, heavy and tired. Even if he hadn’t moved much yet that morning, he could already tell how his limbs would ache, like when he had been training with Namjoon and Seokjin nonstop before he decided it was a life he didn’t suit.

Without even thinking much, Yoongi could assume with almost full certainty that Jeongguk felt the same, wanting to just lie down and do nothing for the rest of the day, waste time in the best way. It was the way the hands were so firm in their position, how he didn’t shift to get up for a second, entirely intertwined, making no move to change a thing. It was almost like he expected Yoongi to disappear if he let go, and it was a fear the elder could say they both believed wholeheartedly.

“No, no,” Jeongguk protested, thumbs stroking Yoongi’s cheeks. “I mean I really love you,” he emphasised, eyes wide as he looked over the other’s features, wide eyes gazing over every line.

The expression almost reminded Yoongi of a deer, large brown eyes looking far too pure and innocent to belong to someone who Yoongi knew killed when he was ordered, but it was just so simply, undeniably Jeongguk. He was just light in darkness, even when the younger contributed very well to the darkness himself, someone others would view as tainted when Yoongi knew there was nothing even stained on his soul. It amazed him sometimes, how someone even grown men feared was Yoongi’s greatest comfort, the only person that could bring him peace just like this.

“I was thinking, while you were gone,” the younger continued, and Yoongi’s heart clenched at the words. “And I realised that I don’t know what to do with myself when you’re not here,” he confessed, looking completely lost as he spoke.

It was an unfamiliar expression on someone who was normally so confident, a young force of
naturally infamous for being unstoppable. Of course, Yoongi wasn’t foolish enough to presume his boyfriend would feel nothing, would be strong and remain like a rock for the entirety of the aftermath of the whole situation, but the image in front of him seemed so otherworldly, and yet his response came as second nature.

“Oh Guk,” Yoongi murmured, bringing his own hands to run through his boyfriend’s hair, brushing long strands from in front of his face.

This was his whole world in front of him, Yoongi’s whole world with tears in his eyes, stars which seemed to shine the brightest when they hurt. In a way, it made Jeongguk seem so much more human, less of an untouchable idol, the god Yoongi placed on a pedestal in his head. It made his whole chest lurch, heart crying out to stop the diamonds falling from brown eyes, keep all the treasure in Jeongguk’s head instead of falling to the pillow beneath their heads.

“It was like there was a hole in my chest, and my heart missing,” the younger continued, his tone scratchy in his throat. “I felt as though there was nothing here for me, nothing when you were gone,” he choked, voice breaking on the last word.

As a quiet sob clawed itself out of the younger’s lips, Yoongi pulled Jeongguk’s face to his neck with gentle prompt, just letting the tears dampen his skin without care. It was rare that Jeongguk cried, he had had to grow up too fast, losing his childhood to a family that couldn’t accept him, losing innocence to dirty streets and damp shelters, and this was what he needed. It was unhealthy that Jeongguk always bottled up his feelings, always thought he needed to be the strong one for Yoongi, never once considering that maybe he should care for himself just as much.

It made Yoongi sad sometimes, that his boyfriend felt the needed to ignore his own needs and feelings and replace all that concern with just Yoongi, no care about anything else in the world. Sometimes it hurt to think Jeongguk was suffering, feeling something he refused to acknowledge and instead buried deep inside himself, substituting Yoongi’s happiness for his own.

“I know,” Yoongi cooed quietly, fingernails scratching Jeongguk’s scalp, removing any tangles he could find. “You must have been as scared as I was, my precious boy, my precious, precious Guk,” he murmured, feeling his own soul mourn at the sobs in the crook of his neck, the hands that were now gripping onto his shirt like he was about to disappear all over again, no trace, no whisper.

Just thinking of Jeongguk, restless, haunted, plagued by all the things that could be happening to Yoongi made him hurt all over, chest throbbing. As much as Yoongi was dependent on Jeongguk, the same could be said about the younger, even if it was more subtle, harder to notice at first. With the way Jeongguk had latched onto the elder as soon as he had been brought home, it was no wonder to Yoongi that he didn’t know what to do when he was missing, gone. The younger was better at coping, hiding the fact he was stranded, but it was all the same, the couple needing one
another to fully live.

“I’m not going anywhere now, I’m not going anywhere,” Yoongi promised, squeezing his own eyes shut, resisting the urge to cry at his boyfriend’s misery.

Jeongguk was like his emotional amplifier, the force that made everything he felt so much more prominent, bursting through his veins. It normally made Yoongi just feel happy to release anything inside his head, but this was different, today it needed to be different. Jeongguk was the one that needed the comfort, needed Yoongi to be the strong one for once, control his emotions in order to provide stability for the younger.

For the amount Jeongguk did for him, it was only right Yoongi did the same, returned the favour always paid in the other’s dept. The younger needed this, needed soft words and coaxes, needed the reassurance that Yoongi was there, Yoongi was okay, wasn’t going anywhere unless he was ripped from Jeongguk’s arms. It wasn’t a role the other wasn’t used to, despite being the elder, despite being the one who should care for Jeongguk the way the other cared for him, but he could do what was needed.

“I was so scared,” Jeongguk confessed, and the words broke Yoongi’s heart, made him hear the pieces shattering all in his chest. “I had no clue where you were, Namjoon and Seokjin just said you were gone and there was nothing I could do, nothing I could find, I just-”

Another violent sob was what stopped Jeongguk’s sentence in its tracks, stopped Yoongi’s breaths just as quickly, a pained cry muffled in the crook of the elder’s neck. It wasn’t like when Yoongi cried, a frail body shaking from the strain, breaths not coming through his lips fast enough to meet demand. Jeongguk cried how one might think him to, starting slowly then exploding in the emotion, violent sobs, tight grip.

“You must have been so worried,” Yoongi hummed, moving one of his hands to brace the back of Jeongguk’s head, holding him the way the other so often did for the elder. “You did nothing wrong, nothing was your fault,” he whispered, pressing a kiss to the crown of Jeongguk’s head. “You couldn’t have done anything, not a thing.”

“Nobody will even take you again, I swear, I swear on my life, my love” Jeongguk croaked, not moving his head but shifting his hands to pull Yoongi closer by his hips, slotting them together like a puzzle. “You’re mine, you’re mine, I promise I’ll keep you.”

Eventually sobs died down to sniffs, occasional hiccups and gasps, but Yoongi still felt tears on his skin, drops trailing down to the collar of his shirt. It was easy, to hold the other like this, to spend
his time embracing his boyfriend even when the situation should have been strange to him, different to how they normally worked. While Jeongguk was normally the comforter, Yoongi liked to think he knew what his boyfriend needed, knew how to make him feel better and like the rest of the world didn’t matter. Everything could have fallen apart and Yoongi wouldn’t have cared, not for a second.

Yoongi knew their lives were dangerous, interweaved with so many liabilities, so many factors that could ruin them in a blink, no going back. It was daunting, to think of the world outside the little bubble they constructed, the future they were destined to see, what could happen in the next minutes, hours, days, years. There was a time where Yoongi honestly thought he would never live past his childhood, would never grow to be eighteen, a legal adult. Now he was here, a whole new dessert of the unknown was unveiled, but one thing he was sure of was Jeongguk, the only thing he was sure of.

He heard Jeongguk take a shuddering breath, fingers playing with the skin on Yoongi’s hips under the blankets, mindless shapes and patterns being traced over his body like an intricate masterpiece. The delicate touch of circles and swirls all came together to make something hypnotising, like something Taehyung would paint and hang on the wall, a spectrum of colours creating a rainbow behind his eyelids.

Despite the younger having calmed down, the room’s air settling back into what it was before, Yoongi still held Jeongguk’s head to where it was rested, still brushing through long dark strands. After everything that had happened recently, it would take more than a single morning for anyone to feel better, the aftermath of Jeongguk’s breakdown only the beginning of a recovery process which would take a while. It was most likely the same for everyone, the whole family shaken by something which came so close to being tragic.

A quiet exhale came from between Jeongguk’s lips, tickling Yoongi’s neck, and the taller shifted his head, burying his face further into the space he had claimed. It was comforting, and Yoongi didn’t care if his boyfriend wanted to spend the whole day like this, entwined with one another, never letting go. There was just something about Jeongguk’s whole person that soothed Yoongi of any worry, any doubt, made him invincible.

“Marry me,” said words breathed right next to Yoongi’s ear, making him freeze completely.

The next inhale of air he pulled into his lungs was heavy, slightly shaking, emotions running about in his mind like headless chickens. That was not something he had been expecting, not now, not soon, and even just the idea was odd, odd and yet not something Yoongi didn’t want to think about, just out of place. It wasn’t like he hadn’t mulled the idea before, of tying himself to Jeongguk through the law and not just by the strings of his heart, but he hadn’t even imagined the conversation would come so soon, as soon as now.
“Jeongguk, I...” He began, trailing off after just the second word.

Every tone of Yoongi’s voice had somehow escaped him, vanishing into the morning air, flying around the room with no direction, nothing to make them work. It wasn’t that he was horrified by the younger’s suggestion, not at all, there wasn’t an inch of him that would even think to immediately say no. He had always planned to marry Jeongguk, always planned to spend every minute of the rest of his life with the younger, but the question came out of the blue. Did it not seem too soon, too rushed?

“You’re not even an adult yet,” he muttered, a slightly breathless laugh coming from between his lips. “We can’t just...”

Jeongguk moved, pulled his head away from its place to look Yoongi dead in the eyes, hands moving so that wandering fingers could be caressing over his cheeks, lips, jaw. For how soft the movements were, the action almost seemed frantic, desperate, like Jeongguk expected him to disappear before his very eyes, but the touches stayed so soft, so, so soft. It just told of how the younger had felt, the misery, not knowing the ifs and what’s and when’s of what was going on the whole time Yoongi was absent, even worry and concern illustrated before his very eyes.

Everything was so warm that a new image painted its way behind Yoongi’s eyelids when he blinked, something he had only dared to dream about in passing, hues mixing and moulding together to make a scene, a beautiful meadow of colour and life. There was a figure in a dark suit waiting for him at the end of a path; familiar faces smiling as he walked closer and closer, his own suit as light as the petals falling around them. The image was beautiful, beautiful, but it hurt, ripped Yoongi’s heart to shreds because that sort of peace wasn’t something he could have. Not here, not in this life, with these people he loved so much, anything alike to it being nothing but temporary, an illusion.

“It doesn’t have to be now,” rushed the next words, delicate even in their delivery.

Jeongguk’s voice interrupted the phantom pained dream, pulled Yoongi back into the now, didn’t allow him to become too lost in the setting so unfamiliar. It was darting eyes, examining all of the elder’s features, so beautiful even when they were so wide, nervous, apprehensive. Everything about Jeongguk was home, was the place Yoongi belonged, exactly where he was destined to live for years to come. What made an official commitment any different than him giving his heart away so long ago?

“It wouldn’t be now if you don’t want it to be,” more words promised, quiet, comforting. “It could be years away from now, love, but I just... I just want to hear you say it,” Jeongguk breathed,
fingers settling on Yoongi’s jaw, framing his face.

With gentle coaxing and direction, the younger brought their foreheads together, gazes only an inch away from one another. It made Yoongi close his eyes, lids fluttering shut as he allowed himself to bask in the feeling of Jeongguk, Jeongguk, the addicting drug that was Jeongguk. Nothing would change when everything was already set in stone; every cell of Yoongi’s body already belonging to the other out of his own free will, signing a paper wouldn’t let that change for a single moment.

“I don’t have a ring better than one in a Haribo Starmix, or anything fancy right now,” he continued to say, running through so many words at once that Yoongi struggled to keep up, head already spinning with thoughts. “And I wanted to do this at the perfect time, a different time, but I can’t imagine life without you. I love you so much, and I just need, I need...”

It was opening an even wider portal into Jeongguk’s soul, and it was slowly allowing Yoongi to realise just how severe the toll had been on his boyfriend from everything that had happened. There had been so much going on in the past days, weeks, months, everything together having affected the younger just like Yoongi, leaving scars not as visible, but still there. It showed just how much Zack had left his mark not only on Yoongi, but the rest of his family, something that he hadn’t doubted before, but only understood the extent of now.

It just made him admire his boyfriend so much more, knowing Yoongi wouldn’t have been able to cope if it had been him in the younger’s place, not knowing whether Jeongguk was alive or dead, what was happening. If it was his decision in the other’s shoes, he would never let Jeongguk out of his sight again, would never stop worrying had it been him in the younger’s helpless place. What Jeongguk needed was the physiological reassurance that Yoongi was there, tied to him somehow, and that was understandable, something he knew he could provide. After everything, Yoongi might just need it too.

“I’ll marry you,” Yoongi whispered after a pause, looking Jeongguk straight in the eye as he spoke the three words that just made their fates tie an even tighter knot together.

Something about the promise just felt right, felt like something he needed to say, as easy as ‘I love you’ when he looked at the only person his heart was owned by. They had never done things slowly, had fallen for one another and promised eternity just one month after they had first met, exchanging words of devotion, dedication. Even when it happened so soon not a thing had felt rushed, everything just falling into place like it was fate, destiny, anything you could dream of it being, the fairytale Yoongi had let himself fall into.

“I’ll marry you, Jeongguk,” he repeated, voice stronger than before, nodding along to his words and exhaling a breathless laugh.
It was almost madness, that he was agreeing so soon to something so big, never doubting for a second that it was meant to be. Even Namjoon and Seokjin, who had been together for probably over a decade, years upon years of dedicating themselves to only one another hadn’t gotten engaged yet, didn’t mention marriage, weddings. Despite that, Yoongi felt in his gut that this was right; it felt more right than most other things Yoongi did in life, and committing his life to Jeongguk’s side was a blessing more than any sort of curse.

“God, I love you so much,” Jeongguk breathed, smiling along with Yoongi so widely it was almost like he didn’t believe what was happening, eyes bright, sparkling. “I’ll get you a ring, a thousand bouquets of flowers, I’d buy you the world if you asked it, love” he declared, stars dancing in his gaze. “I love you, I love you, I love you,” he repeated, over and over, and all Yoongi could do was smile.

It was all tender, all so soft, and Jeongguk eventually let them settle again, holding Yoongi to his chest. As nice as it was, as comforting and sweet, Yoongi felt his throat call for water, stomach groan to eat. If he thought hard enough, he could maybe pinpoint his last meal to sometime before he was taken, his last drink to while they were at the meeting he was abducted from.

For a moment, he wondered what had happened, whether the man they had met had been involved, whether he was guilty, whether he was dead, but he couldn’t bring himself to care enough to ask. It didn’t concern him now, didn’t matter, and Yoongi was sure if the man had a part that it hadn’t gone unpunished, justice rightfully served. It was too much to think of when he was so hungry, when a part of him wanted to see the rest of his family too, make sure they were here, safe.

It took some persuading, Jeongguk not wanting to let go for a second, but eventually Yoongi broke free of the hold around his body, trying to slip from the bed before his boyfriend could catch him. The playful smile slid from his face as soon as he tried to stand, stumbling forwards to his knees as his feet screamed in agony, every inch of the hard skin crying underneath his weight. The pain at least made the carpet burn on Yoongi’s bare legs feel like a tickle, nothing more than a feather brushing his flesh.

Immediately, Jeongguk was beside him, holding him close, pulling him carefully to be on the younger’s lap, feet with nothing below them. They still burned, like a thousand bees were stinging the skin in a second, knives stabbing and coals singeing pale white to a charred black. It hurt, it hurt so much it made Yoongi’s eyes water, painful tears streaking down his face against his will, rivers of warmth misplaced in the fire. It was only marginally helped by Jeongguk hushing him quietly, soft hand rubbing circles over his body.

“You hurt your feet yesterday, remember?” The younger murmured quietly, making everything come back to Yoongi in a heartbeat.
Running, running with staggering breaths, muscles lit up in flames, not looking back, not looking back. Blind panic, needing to find a place to hide, hide, hide, somewhere Zack Goldcerd couldn’t reach him, running away, needing to escape, needing to escape. It was an instinctual thought, trying to outrun the predator after him, after the most vulnerable person in the area, Yoongi. He shouldn’t think of it, couldn’t, Jeongguk was here, Jeongguk was safety.

“We had to take glass from the soles,” Jeongguk told him, and Yoongi pulled himself from his head, forcing his mind to focus on now, not what happened yesterday.

“He took my shoes,” Yoongi murmured, that memory fluttering through his brain as a last thought, remembering the pain he had felt trying to put them on.

“I know, it’s not your fault,” Jeongguk hushed, moving to seat Yoongi on the side of the bed, the younger crouched on the floor as he placed one of Yoongi’s feet on his thigh.

Gently and with agile fingers, Jeongguk carefully undid the wrappings around his ankle, heel, the white cloth that run all the way to his toes, hiding almost the whole foot from sight. With every rotation, the fabric which had been at the base of Yoongi’s sole became more and more stained, red seeping into the spotless colour, the blood looking vaguely new. It must have been from Yoongi putting pressure on them, and he regretted even having the thought of climbing out of his bed now.

“Are they bad?” He asked quietly, frowning at Jeongguk’s concentrated face, eyes which were examining flesh Yoongi couldn’t see.

“You’ll be fine, just some cuts, nothing to worry about now,” the younger promised, Yoongi letting out a sign of relief.

As long as his feet were going to be okay, Yoongi didn’t allow his mind to linger on the injuries any longer, head drifting. He was thinking about a heavenly cup of coffee, Jeongguk reapplying new bandages, when he reached a hand to itch the skin of his neck, freezing when his fingertips made contact with scabs, tender skin. How could Yoongi have forgotten? The marks Zack Goldcerd had left surely painted bruises on his skin; discoloured splodges on otherwise spotless white, unwelcome imitations of rose blooms that normally made Yoongi feel so strong.

“My neck” he gasped, bringing his other hand up before it was intercepted by Jeongguk, who stopped anxious fingertips from brushing more pain and damage.
The memories this time were blurred, flashing scenes behind his eyes, unwanted hands, unwanted lips. It was the sensation of struggling; nowhere he could go as his whole body was tied down, rope burning bare flesh. It was wishing his tormentor would cease his torture, the teeth digging like spikes, mauled by a dog, a bear. Everything just accumulated to make Yoongi’s body tremble, shivers branching out from his chest, all over his nerves to the very tips of his toes.

“There’s nothing to worry about,” Jeongguk soothed with a smooth voice, moving quickly to join Yoongi on the bed, taking his jaw into careful hands. “Nothing that will stay, nothing at all,” he promised, and that brought a little comfort to Yoongi’s mind, that nothing was permanent.

“But he-” the elder tried to begin, but his mouth was refusing to move anymore, everything too heavy, too alien.

It was disgusting saliva on his skin, nails scratching his hips, ribs, closer and closer to danger, danger. There was nothing he could do, nothing he could do to move, to get away, thrashing and yet not moving an inch, stuck on the chair like a porcelain doll. Motionless, paralysed, panic building up and up, overwhelming every one of his senses, chest ready to explode.

Hands on him, but he knew these, he knew them, they were his, belonged to him, belonged to his Jeonggukie. There was no mistaking them, and they brought him down, brought him to a space he knew, no longer the dark room with the artificial light, corners untouched by the rays. Gentle hands on his waist, neck, firm but so gentle, so gentle in the way they held him, supported him, kept all his pieces together.

“He didn’t do anything more than that, did he?” Jeongguk checked in a low voice, tone harsh, threatening, but a strange comfort to Yoongi’s frantic head.

It was so Jeongguk, his boyfriend who was a puppy one minute and a guard dog the next, ready to rip out the throats of anybody who threatened the people he deemed ‘his’. As much as it had been an argued point in Yoongi’s mind for years, now he was grateful, knew he was safe when Jeongguk was holding him, when trained eyes watched over him like a guardian, always watching, always waiting.

“No, no, I don’t think so,” Yoongi nodded along with his words, a small frown on his face.

“Think so?” Jeongguk questioned, eyes narrowing as they searched Yoongi’s face, looking for a sign of anything, anything at all.
The pressing of the matter was only making Yoongi feel even more on the edge, planting seeds of
doubt in his memory. The demonised figure in his head, tall, shadowed, towering over Yoongi’s
helpless form, maybe doing something he couldn’t remember, touching him in a place he had
scratched out of his mind. Had Zack Goldcerd done more? Was there something Yoongi was
forgetting?

“He changed my clothes, I don’t…” Yoongi stammered, trying to reach through his head and
conjure any evidence that made the situation even worse, little details that would give what
happened away if he couldn’t remember.

There was a quiet hushing sound, Jeongguk holding him, a hand through his hair, fingers stroking
his back. Little whispers were mindlessly passing through the air, reminding Yoongi to breathe,
reminding him that there was nothing here that could hurt him, nothing but Jeongguk. It worked,
helped Yoongi to calm down when he had been teetering on the edge of a blade, swaying left to
right in large swoops, ready to fall.

“You would know, love, you know you would,” Jeongguk comforted, and it made Yoongi realise
the truth behind the words, his boyfriend completely right.

Jeongguk was right, Yoongi knew he was, the younger knowing about everything Yoongi felt after
they did anything intimate, the ache in his lower back, the sweet exhaustion hanging onto his
limbs. The feeling was distinct, Yoongi knew what it felt like when he had just been fucked, had
had experience enough to recognise it in an instant. It raised a weight, but at the same time was
condemning, because what if he was missing something?

“I know, but I can’t stop thinking it,” Yoongi murmured quietly, leaning into the body next to his,
the pillar he trusted to keep him upright.

Because even if he knew with one hundred percent confidence that nothing else was done to him,
there was always the what ifs, the unanswered questions destined to never be completed. What if
he hadn’t managed to escape? What if Zack Goldcerd hadn’t stopped when the smaller body
underneath him went weak, limp, retreated because the panic was half the fun? Anything could
have happened, everything could have been so much worse, and it was a plague on Yoongi’s
conscience, cursed him to always be asking the same rhetorical pleads.

“Only think of me now, okay?” Jeongguk whispered, pulling Yoongi even closer, cushioning the
elder’s head on his chest.
Despite the safety, the castle walls built around his body by his most favoured protector, Yoongi could still feel everything boiling beneath the surface of his skin, every emotion, reaction. He had an insatiable need to tell Jeongguk what had happened, a need to watch how his boyfriend’s face promised it would never happen again, fire building behind eyes which were normally the calmest of oceans. He wanted Jeongguk to know what could have happened, what did, every detail, because if he didn’t share it, if he wasn’t told it was all over, then the elder was worried he would fracture.

“He put a collar around my neck,” Yoongi said quietly, closing his eyes as he just thought of where he was, the person he loved surrounding his whole being. “Not like yours, yours is loving, yours is safe,” he continued, just saying what came to the front of his head, every thought that slipped through his lips. “It was like I was a dog, nothing more than a pet.”

The words broke off, Yoongi determined not to cry but it was too much an effort to keep speaking, emotions threatening to bubble over the surface of his lips, emerge as dry sobs, quiet sufferings. This was healthy, he knew, despite how it may feel, despite it seeming like the world outside the walls surrounding them wanted to do nothing more than plot Yoongi’s demise. He needed to get it out, all of it, needed Jeongguk’s reassurances, the little words that would make it okay.

“Yoongi…” Jeongguk murmured, nosing at the other’s temple, so soft, so right.

“I need you to love me,” Yoongi pleaded, moving so that he was looking the younger straight in the eyes, unbreaking. “I need you to make me forget him,” he breathed, and the gleam that came to Jeongguk’s gaze was the preamble to something so much better, firm fingers on his waist.

It was what his heart longed for, Jeongguk letting the world know Yoongi was his, only his, couldn’t be touched by anyone other than the owner of his soul. With a slow movement, Jeongguk leaned closer, hands moving again, all over, staking their claim. One was at the back of his neck, holding him steady, pulling him closer as mouths brushed together, as soft as everything Jeongguk did when handling Yoongi’s fragile body, fragile mind.

“Always, my love,” Jeongguk whispered, pressing a slow kiss to Yoongi’s lips, breaths hot against skin. “My darling, always.”
Three*

Chapter Notes

Oh just a note that if you spot a spelling error I won't take offence if it is pointed out, I would actually appreciate it!

It was pretty much a given that Yoongi had been given a green pass when it came to school. His suspicions were confirmed when Seokjin and Namjoon had called him to a lounge after dinner, Jeongguk helping him to walk on his damaged feet, and told Yoongi that he didn't need to pursue his education for the rest of the year. It meant he wouldn’t get anything out of the whole experience, not one single qualification, not one benefit handed to him.

It wasn’t that he was complaining, realistically had he have been taking the exams, he probably wouldn't have done very well, not able to remember the multiple English words bouncing around classrooms every lesson. What annoyed him was that it just made school seem like a complete waste of his time, the fact he had attended something for months and yet it worked towards nothing, but the freedom from it still made him grateful.

His thoughts revolving around school hadn't really changed throughout the year, and he still held a large bundle of hate and anxiety for the place, but the fact he was there made him want to do marginally. Now he forfeited it, there was no way he was ever going to get a highly academic job in the real world, already knowing his intelligence and skills lay elsewhere. Despite that, his determination around education had dwindled until it was barely present in a matter of days, thoughts of good grades simply specks of dust in his mind, floating around aimlessly as more important matters presented themselves.

In what felt like just a day, time passing with no structure, nothing to give away the date, people were having to leave. It was meant to be the other’s first day back at school, the first since the incident that they were being subjected to lessons and pointless work. Yoongi had been taken on a Thursday, that he did know, and he could imagine that everyone had been too preoccupied that Friday for any sort of education. This Monday, however, Seokjin and Namjoon had given their wakeup call to the inhabitants of the house at the normal time, dismally early in the morning.

Seokjin had tuned all the lights on, flinging the curtains open with enthusiasm, rigorously shaking Jeongguk in an attempt to make him conscious. The process also woke Yoongi as a side-effect, feeling a confused hum fall from his lips before he tried to cuddle closer to his boyfriend, Seokjin tutting at the sight. Jeongguk was always the hardest to wake, and Seokjin entrusted Yoongi with getting the younger out of bed before the time they needed to leave, sighing as he left to subject the others to the same treatment.
Over years, one sure method Yoongi had learned to wake Jeongguk up from slumber was to just drown him in kisses, and so he pressed his lips to every piece of skin he could reach, eventually managing to elicit a small mumble. It was cute, so cute and Yoongi almost considered the idea of ignoring Seokjin’s words, just letting sleep take him again as he pressed even closer to his boyfriend, warmth all over his body. He knew that wouldn’t end well, however, so didn’t relent until Jeongguk was fully coherent, pulling himself up from the heavenly mattress.

Just because Jeongguk had to get up, didn’t mean Yoongi had to do the same, so he watched as the younger stretched his arms above his head, groaning quietly as something in his spine popped. There were little marks on his arms from the way he had been laying, and his hair was ridiculously messy, the long strands pointing in all different directions. Despite how bedraggled the image was, Yoongi didn’t think he could ever see his boyfriend as anything other than perfect, a yawn fighting its way out his mouth.

The bed hindered his attempts to wake up, and he felt himself slipping again as Jeongguk pulled a shirt on, hiding a muscled torso from view, the baggy black shirt formless. Ripped jeans over legs, and the next thing Yoongi could process was the hand on his cheek, fingertips drawing patterns on the skin by his jaw. Looking up, Jeongguk had fixed his hair, and Yoongi loved the way he had tied it behind him in a small bunch, fringe just a few centimetres too short to be held in place by the band.

“I think it’s time to get up, love,” he whispered, voice matching the gentle light from the window.

Even though he could have stayed in bed all day, just buried under countless blankets, he nodded as he closed his eyes for a moment, hearing Jeongguk give a small chuckle. It was hands lifting the blankets away, making Yoongi groan before he was embraced by a different warmth, Jeongguk’s body like a furnace as he held the smaller to his chest. On instinct, he pressed his face into the shoulder next to him, hands under his thighs and lifting, leaving the bed behind.

Slow steps down the hallway and stairs carried Yoongi to the kitchen, his stinging feet placed just at the small of Jeongguk’s back, scabs still painful under his weight. It was lucky his boyfriend was so strong, especially when the other had become much clingier since the incident, barely letting Yoongi go when they were together. Jeongguk insisted on carrying Yoongi whenever he could, the elder’s feet probably not the only reason, him also holding the smaller close as much as possible, bodies so close it was almost hard to catch their breath.

That morning, Jeongguk had him in his lap at the table; half feeding himself and half feeding a still-sleepy Yoongi, careful to ensure toast crumbs weren’t dropping into the elder’s lap with every bite. Every once and a while, Yoongi tried to reach for his breakfast with a huff, but Jeongguk quickly halted his actions, seeming eager to feed him at every given opportunity. It was endearing,
adorable, and Yoongi’s heart was lurching at the small smiles the other was sending his way, the most beautiful sight he could imagine.

Everything else about this particular morning was quieter than normal, normal being before the whole kidnapping scenario, but the mood wasn’t sombre, more fatigued, subtle. Every person around the table just seemed tired, tired but content; happy to just let the world revolve around them for a while, let their own lives have a moment of peace. The need for normality was understandable, the stress of the event bound to take its toll on the whole family, and Yoongi knew that people would be back to their regular selves soon, some bouncing back faster than others.

Accepting the strawberry pressed to his lips, Yoongi shifted his attention to Namjoon’s voice as he spoke, the sound cutting through the comfortable silence like a dull knife through butter, slow and gentle and sure of an end, even if it took a while. Everyone paid attention to the head of the table, Tae shoving what looked like an entire whole egg in his mouth, Yoongi blinking and choosing to ignore his brother’s antics.

“I’ll drop you to school as I go to the office,” Namjoon murmured, taking a sip from the mug he held in his hand.

Yoongi could tell just from the elder’s eyes that he was only on his first cup of coffee, the look of *why am I here* reflected in his pupils. The caffeine hadn’t kicked in yet, and Yoongi cast a forlorn gaze towards his own empty mug, having drunk all of his coffee in minutes. If he wanted more, he was sure Jeongguk wouldn’t let him go himself, and the smaller was too comfortable to allow himself to move just yet.

“Jinnie is staying home today, so Yoongi, you can stay here,” he continued, nodding to Seokjin at the other end of the table, the eldest also inclining his head.

Yoongi looked to Seokjin, liking the idea of a day just spent in the house, but his attention was caught by Jeongguk’s arms tightening around his waist. It was a reaction to the words, pulling Yoongi closer, as close as possible, and it was weird to feel the younger’s muscles tense and relax under his body, small jerks of movement. Yoongi could see the agitation in an instant, Jeongguk not letting his arms release their grip, Yoongi feeling like a toy bear in a child’s hold.

“Are you leaving Yoongi here with Seokjin?” Jeongguk questioned quietly, and at the question Yoongi began to frown, not liking the younger’s tone of voice, the way he was asking.

It wasn’t disrespectful, per se, the younger wouldn’t dream of it, but it definitely had a sense of underlying doubt in it, almost distrustful. That wasn’t good, wasn’t something Yoongi had ever
heard come from his boyfriend when talking to their parents, not in the way it was shining through just then. Jeongguk was the last one to protest about things the elder couple said, even Yoongi disagreeing more, and the whole situation was implanting a seed of worry in his head.

“Is that an issue?” Namjoon asked, his own voice sounding more confused than annoyed, eyebrows rising in question.

Sharp eyes looked puzzled as they surveyed the youngest at the table, Yoongi feeling Namjoon’s gaze glide over the arms on his waist, the grip which was tightening even more around his middle like a snake. It made Yoongi feel like a sitting duck, stuck in the middle of this almost-confrontation, the whole make-up of the event so odd he couldn’t quite believe it was happening. Jeongguk didn’t deny their parents, it was just a given fact of his nature, but this was getting dangerously close to rebellion.

“Why can’t I stay with Yoongi?” Jeongguk pushed, the arms around the smaller’s body beginning to feel uncomfortably tight, the snakes poised to strike, venom dripping from a fanged mouth, acid burning holes through the tablecloth.

The interrogative wasn’t a suggestion, this whole conversation almost seeming to hide something Yoongi didn’t understand, Namjoon’s pointed looks in their direction. Everyone else was silent, the other teenagers at the table keeping their lips together, Taehyung still eating the toast he had on his plate, eyes darting back and forth. Yoongi didn’t like it, didn’t like how the air seemed to weigh more and more as time went on, making it harder to breathe.

“You have to go to school, Guk,” Seokjin reminded him softly, breaking the tense silence, Yoongi able to see the pain in his eyes at denying the request.

It wasn’t like their parents wanted to part them, being familiar with how antsy the youngest got when he was away from Yoongi, how he was always on the edge when the other was out of sight. Yoongi knew that if the root of the decision were up to them, all five of the teenagers would be home now, given a break after something so impactful, important. It wasn’t possible, not when they were trying to keep a low profile, the sudden absence of all the Kim children suspicious, especially if all of them stopped going to school at the same time.

Jeongguk knew this too, Yoongi knew he did, the need to avoid anything that would bring in too much attention when the world was already watching them, too many details needing to be kept strictly confidential. If the media found out that Yoongi had been taken, reporters would just dig and dig, unearthing something that could force Namjoon and Seokjin to act in a less-than-ideal way. There was no way of avoiding this, not when the majority of the news was watching.
“But I want,” Jeongguk started before pausing, loosening some of his hold around Yoongi’s body to the elder’s relief. “I need to keep him safe,” he murmured, brushing his nose into Yoongi’s neck, his breath making the smaller shiver.

That was what it boiled down to, wasn’t it? Jeongguk’s unrelenting need to keep him safe, the protective and possessive nature he held over Yoongi, over the person he saw as being the most vulnerable, the person he loved the most. The impulse had grown over the years, and Yoongi would admit he did nothing but fan the flames, his whole nature preening as soon as someone was looking after him, caring, keeping him in sight. It was sad, that Jeongguk couldn’t do what he wanted, keep Yoongi under his arm for the rest of their time together.

“I’m not a child,” Yoongi reminded him, not liking how the conversation revolved around him and yet seemed to act like he wasn’t there at all.

Despite the slightly sour taste in his mouth, Yoongi moved his hands to rest on Jeongguk’s arms, lightly rubbing circles into the tan skin, small swirls to try and calm him down. Really, he was well aware that Jeongguk only cared, was only acting this way because he had been scared, an emotion which felt so unfamiliar to their family, everyone but Yoongi. It was something the elder understood, but he also knew the younger needed to remember that Yoongi could do things for himself, wasn’t as helpless as he was painted to be.

“Jin is perfectly capable of making sure Yoongi is safe,” Namjoon interjected, Yoongi slightly annoyed that the older had completely disregarded his words, but it was fine, everything was okay.

Namjoon had also been stressed, probably frightened too, and it was something Yoongi had realised would happen; the others treating him more carefully, acting like he could disappear in seconds. It was the cost that came at the glimpse of mortality, the brush of vulnerability so foreign to people with so much power. In fact, Yoongi was surprised that he wasn’t being kept on bed rest, confined to his room when everyone was so worried for him, his health.

Slowly, Jeongguk lifted his head from its place near Yoongi’s neck, the weight removed from his shoulder. The elder was sure his boyfriend was looking back and forth at their parents, the movement of his neck turning a sensation he could feel against his hair. It felt odd, and Yoongi was about to ask what the matter was when his boyfriend spoke, words like glass cutting flesh.

“But wasn’t it with you two that he was taken in the first place?”

The words were cold, cutting, accusatory, freezing Yoongi in place. His mind was fuzzing, not quite understanding what his boyfriend just said, why the words sounded the way they did. This
was Jeongguk, someone that almost idolised the older pair, had admitted himself that if Namjoon wasn’t his adoptive father he would be Jeongguk’s celebrity crush. He was the one who had followed Seokjin around for weeks after he was taken in, sure he owed their parents something. It made no sense, this made no sense.

The atmosphere around the table had become just as chilled as Yoongi’s body, nobody speaking, just watching, waiting. Hoseok’s eyes were fixed on Jeongguk, while Jimin and Taehyung’s gazes were darting between different faces, perpectively watching reactions, one of Jimin’s hands creeping slowly towards his knife on the table as a survival instinct. Yoongi doubted a weapon would be necessary, their family too close to ever hurt one another, but the action was probably for comfort, something Yoongi could relate to.

“Jeon Jeongguk,” Namjoon spoke, voice as blunt and cold as the younger’s had been just a moment before, albeit with a bit more bite. “Do not ever insult our capabilities like that again,” he warned, eyes flashing.

Namjoon didn’t shout, didn’t let his voice rise any higher than a stern talk, a tone that demanded an audience. It made Yoongi feel relieved, especially when the events of the weekend still lingered in his mind, shouting the last thing he needed when he still felt exposed, vulnerable. Even when emotions were surging, his family was still considerate of his needs, so careful not to damage his mind more than Zack Goldcerd already had.

“Things happen,” Namjoon continued, voice softening as he looked over the youngest at the table. “We’ve dealt with things like this before, you know this. Now we’re better, we know more, it won’t happen again,” he swore, Yoongi feeling Jeongguk’s face return to the crook of his neck, breathing in a shaking breath.

Yoongi felt his heart lurch, the badly contained emotions in the way his chest rose in stuttering motions. The elder felt his boyfriend’s hands clench and unclench, knew Jeongguk was digging his nails into his palms, pain a distraction. Carefully, Yoongi took Jeongguk’s hands in his own, with his thumbs soothing the skin which had little crescent indented marks, the hands gripping on tightly and lacing their fingers together.

“I’m sorry, I just…” Jeongguk’s words broke off, and Yoongi squeezed his hands, not even letting Jeongguk think of letting go.

He couldn’t see the younger’s face, not with the way they were seated, but he could tell from his voice he was fighting back tears. Yoongi almost felt the same himself, there being no way he was comfortable with being away from his boyfriend so soon after he was taken from him, but Yoongi also knew he was safe with Seokjin. Jeongguk had every right to feel this way, but Yoongi knew he had to face the idea of leaving him alone for the day, the dreaded arrangement necessary under
Honestly, their family was probably expecting the outburst, some sort of explosion of emotion from Jeongguk on the first day he needed to leave Yoongi’s side. Everyone knew of the youngest’s protective impulses, his irresistible need to know Yoongi was okay, safe. It was always going to be hard, and it might be best it was happening now before they became too attached, too used to always having the other right at their side. That could cause problems if Jeongguk needed to leave for business, something happened to one of them again, effects felt so much worse.

This was most likely another reason their parents wanted Jeongguk to go to school with the others, so that the couple had some time away from one another, could function when they were apart. It was Seokjin who made the next noise, sighing deeply from his chest, empathetic eyes fixed on the younger couple in front of him. It put the heads of their family in a difficult position; whether or not they insist or let Jeongguk have his way, crossroads of a tricky situation.

“We know you’re worried,” Seokjin soothed, the smoothest voice he could muster coming from his lips. “We know, but you have to trust us. Have we ever made the same mistakes twice?” He pleaded, and Yoongi knew he wanted Jeongguk to agree instead of stay stubbornly in denial, forcing their parents to make the decision of what to do for him.

Jeongguk wasn’t unreasonable, wouldn’t flat-out refuse to do what the couple bid, but he was always annoyed when he didn’t have the choice to do something he ended up doing. It happened with schoolwork, the homework he needed to do for classes when he would much rather be playing video games, or cuddling with Yoongi. Sometimes, Jeongguk would sulk throughout a whole business meeting if he didn’t like it, although the common effect of that was that people were much more careful with words, the youngest intimidating when he didn’t smile.

“I’m sorry,” Jeongguk apologised again, voice small, and Yoongi knew his boyfriend had decided to agree to follow their parents’ decrees.

What Seokjin said was true, that the eldest pair had never made the same mistakes twice in their business, always checking and editing things that didn’t initially work out, all to pull it off perfectly. They probably already had numerous new ideas, plans, thoughts about how to deal with a situation alike to Yoongi’s own recent one, mitigation and adaption. Yoongi wouldn’t be surprised to hear of new changes soon, in security methods, in the common routine they had when meeting clients, allies, anybody.

Chair moving along wooden floorboards, Seokjin rose from his seat, crossing the room with relaxed steps to stand next to where Jeongguk was sitting with his head buried in Yoongi’s neck. Another sigh leaving plump lips, the eldest carefully brushed a hand through long, raven hair. It seemed to make Jeongguk relax; the youngest’s hands seeming to relax their tension in Yoongi’s
own grasp, his head fully resting against the other’s shoulder. It was a relief, that Jeongguk was calm, was listening to what was being said. It was always difficult for everyone when anybody fought in their family, and Yoongi wouldn’t be able to cope if he were to be caught in an argument between the couple and his boyfriend, especially when it revolved around him.

“It’s okay,” Seokjin hummed, continuing his calming movements. “We know you’re just concerned, it’s okay, we understand,” he said in a voice as soft as a cloud, holding no sort of resentment in his tone. “We are too.”

“But you have to go to school,” Namjoon murmured, voice just as soft as Seokjin’s, complimenting his lover perfectly. “We don’t care if you call Yoongi by the hour, but you have to go,” the tallest reasoned, also getting up from his chair.

Walking over to stand next to Seokjin, he lent one hand against the back of Jeongguk’s chair; the other coming forwards to running over the youngest’s back. It made the body behind him relax even more, Yoongi thankful for the lessening of tension, feeling so much better himself when his boyfriend wasn’t so agitated. Even if he was very sure of his own independent thoughts, Jeongguk was a big influence on his emotions, moods, and when the younger was feeling better it meant Yoongi was too.

Removing it from the backrest of the chair, Namjoon’s other hand carefully ghosted over where Jeongguk’s arms were wound around Yoongi’s middle, fingers darting between limbs to check the pressure. It amazed Yoongi how perceptive his parent was, and the shorter felt almost taken back with how much Namjoon noticed about the area around him, taking note of every detail. Yoongi was sure he had been hiding his discomfort from Jeongguk’s arms perfectly from the others, not displaying how tight Jeongguk had been holding onto his body.

Namjoon seemed to have noticed, however, and even came to check whilst offering Jeongguk comfort. By now, though, Jeongguk’s arms had softened their grip, Namjoon’s fingers retreating back to the rest of the chair, staying there until he gave a last pat on the back, wandering back to his seat. As he lowered his body into his place, he sent a glare at the empty mug in front of him, Yoongi relating to the need to consume gallons of coffee in the morning.

After a moment, Seokjin did the same, going back to his plate of food. The three other teenagers seated around the table just sent sympathetic smiles in Jeongguk’s direction, most likely knowing there was nothing they could say to make the younger feel better. Even before everything happened, he had never been happy with leaving Yoongi, not having the elder at his side, in his eye line. Sometimes he even refused to go on jobs with the others because he was worried the smaller would be alone, in trouble somehow. It was tough, Yoongi desperately didn’t want to be away from his boyfriend either, but it was probably for the best in this instance.
Taking his parents leaving as an opportunity to comfort his boyfriend himself, Yoongi was careful not to dig his knees into Jeongguk’s thighs as he twisted himself around. The movement caused Jeongguk’s arms to tighten only slightly, an extra grip to ensure Yoongi wouldn’t fall from the chair and end up on the floor. The elder traced Jeongguk’s features with his fingers, thumbs making small circles on the other’s jaw, as delicately as he possibly could.

Slowly leaning forward, he connected their lips in a short kiss, barely anything more than a brush of lips. He let a small smile grow over his face before Yoongi buried his head into Jeongguk’s neck, inhaling the smell of his fabric softener. It felt almost like he already missed the other, his chest already starting to ache as a cavity was created in the centre, destined to remain empty until Jeongguk was definitely back to his side, there to stay forever.

“You know I love you,” Yoongi murmured quietly, and he felt Jeongguk let out a shaking exhale, mouth close to Yoongi’s ear. “I promised I would always be yours, remember? And in a few years, I’ll sign the papers; let you give me that ring.”

He felt Jeongguk nod against his shoulder, but he was immediately distracted by Namjoon choking on his new, second cup of coffee he had managed to get, coughs loud as Seokjin hit him on the back. With slight annoyance, slight bemusement, Yoongi turned his head to look back at the man at the head of the table, and he couldn’t help but stare at Namjoon’s red face, eyes wide and watering. It was almost funny, if it wasn’t for the fact his gaze was fixed directly on Yoongi and Jeongguk.

“I’m, I’m sorry,” he stuttered after he got his breath back, yelping when Seokjin hit him on the back again. “I must have misheard something,” he said, almost to himself, and he cleared his throat, reaching for his coffee again.

Yoongi almost laughed, watching with amusement as Namjoon seemed to try to be convincing himself that what was just said was a misunderstanding, eyes fixed on blank space. The other faces at the table were nowhere near as entertaining, Seokjin with only a small smile, Hoseok quirking an eyebrow, Jimin and Taehyung not even looking their way, focusing on their breakfast.

“Nah,” Taehyung hummed, playing with his chopsticks. “If you’re talking about Yoongi saying he’ll marry Gukkie, you heard right,” he told their parents with nonchalance, picking at his egg on his plate, not noticing the wide eyes and open mouthed looks he was getting from one of the eldest individuals at the table.

After Taehyung had spoken, there was an odd silence for a few seconds, a small percentage of awkwardness in the air, more hesitant than anything. He almost rolled his eyes, resting his head on Jeongguk’s shoulder as he tried not to let laughs escape his lips, the younger seeming to be in the same predicament. The range of reactions were funny, and Yoongi was proud to say he imagined
each of the facial expressions in exact detail, knowing his family well enough to know how they would take the news.

“Not now, or soon,” Yoongi huffed, feeling Jeongguk laugh quietly against his skin, finally the giggles breaking out of his mouth. “You don’t need to worry about traditions like buying a house yet, or sending out invitations to every single person you know. It’s not an official engagement, it’s just that I know I’ll end up marrying Guk, so what’s the point of ignoring it?” he explained, shrugging his shoulders.

At that, Hoseok let out a small coo, and Yoongi felt his cheeks flush pink, Jeongguk’s hands trailing up and down his sides. Jimin and Taehyung looked just as adoring as Yoongi looked at their expressions, the younger wiggling his eyebrows at Jeongguk, Yoongi throwing a napkin in his direction. Seokjin was still smiling softly while Namjoon had his mouth hanging open, blinking slowly, like Yoongi had just told him he thought the Earth was flat.

“How are they getting engaged before you two?” Jimin wondered aloud, making Namjoon choke again, but this time only on the air in his lungs, spluttering at the question. “Why have you two waited so long, anyway?”

Yoongi had often mused the same question, never really having been given an answer. Just because same sex marriage was still illegal in Korea, he knew a factor that small wouldn’t stop his parents doing what they want, breaking the law on a daily basis. It also wasn’t that they didn’t love one another; Yoongi knew the couple adored each other with every fibre of their being, only ever having the smallest of arguments.

“There was never really a moment,” Seokjin voiced, tilting his head in thought at the question. “We’re always too busy, with you all, the company. We know we’re together for life, so it didn’t seem like a priority,” he explained, looking over at Namjoon. “But eventually, it would be nice to have a ceremony.”

It was sweet, the way Seokjin gazed with eyes overflowing with love, and Yoongi wondered if he looked at Jeongguk with just as much emotion, just as many stars in his pupils. There was no denying the unbreakable bond that the pair shared, something that they had forged well before Yoongi met them in the first place, so perfect for one another that it almost seemed like a hoax. It was like all the powers in the universe worked to make them complimentary to one another, an ultimate force of nature.

“Of course, dear,” Namjoon agreed with a small smile, taking Seokjin’s hand.
Yoongi wished with all his heart that he and Jeongguk would be just as strong as the other couple had been for so long, together through thick and thin, invincible side by side. Nobody could deny that they made each other stronger, amplified each other’s strengths, covered each other’s weaknesses. Their clear display of affection seemed to be the cue for Taehyung and Jimin to start to giggle quietly, and Seokjin throw a balled up napkin in their general direction, dramatically scowling.

“Hey! Stop it!” Seokjin scolded, reaching over the table to a small dish on the table and proceeding to throw a sugar cube at each of the teenagers from the ceramic pot.

Moving as quick as a flash, Jimin managed to catch his in his open mouth, licking his lips and smiling at the sweet taste, happily chewing on pure sugar. Taehyung wasn’t so lucky, being hit right in one of his open eyes, yelping before dramatically starting to cry. Hoseok sat next to the younger, comforting him with a bemused look on his face, a hand patting Taehyung sympathetically on the back.

“Jinnie, how could you?” Hoseok gasped, amusement on his lips, Yoongi not able to hold back laughter at his brother’s expression.

Eventually, the meal carried on, Taehyung just pouting in his seat with his mood pointed at Seokjin, the elder too engrossed in his food to notice. Yoongi let the last jolts of vocal amusement leave his body, taking a large sip of his water, letting himself bathe in the whole room’s atmosphere. Once the Jeongguk had finished eating almost four times the amount Yoongi had consumed, he pushed their chair away from the table, tucking his hands underneath Yoongi’s body to secure him in the younger’s grip.

Being excused from the table, Jeongguk proceeded to practically scoop the other into his arms, carrying the smaller back up the two flights of stairs to their bedroom, mindful of Yoongi’s tender feet. With ease, the younger carefully settled Yoongi back onto the bed, still vaguely warm from that morning, the smallest pockets of heat left in the duvet. Humming, Jeongguk wandered over to their wardrobe against one of the room’s walls, pulling the wooden door open to reveal a wall of fabric.

The majority of the clothes on display were dark, monochromatic, only splashes of colour in the wall of black and greys. Yoongi and Jeongguk similarly often liked to wear plain clothes which were dark in colour, a drastic difference to those worn by half their family, opposite sides of a spectrum. Taehyung had a thing for Gucci, the patterns and weird, unique designs practically a wet dream for the younger, while Hoseok liked Balenciaga, likes clothes much more colourfully eccentric; always looking amazing on him no matter how many odd accessories or patterns he was wearing.
Seokjin and Jimin were similar in fashion choices, going for a much sharper and intimidating sort of vibe with their clothing, which really fit into the stereotype of their work business. Designer clothing with embroidered golden details, crystals sewn onto fabric, velvet, cashmere, anything that would make people hesitate to talk to them in fear. Suits were never simple, always had added ruffles, or patterns, or anything to make them stand out, people parting like the red sea as they walked past.

Namjoon had a more similar style to Jeongguk and Yoongi, looking more than decent in designer clothing when needed to be, but would much rather wear the simple things found in cheap high street shops. The elder liked loose trousers and semi-casual shirts, muted earthy tones with subtle patterns, something he could just wear outside and not be noticed, be another body in a crowd. Of course, he looked amazing in expensive suits and formal attire as well, but it was sometimes too constricting for him, attracted too much attention.

As Jeongguk reached a hand into the wardrobe, Yoongi watched him reach for the shelf at the top, one that the elder struggled to reach by himself because of the height. Yoongi wasn’t short, but he wasn’t tall either, and the shelf was definitely something even Jeongguk struggled to feel the back of, thus making it impossible for the shorter to do much more than just brush his fingertips over the wooden plank. From the shelf Jeongguk produced a bag, white with a simple logo, ribbon holding the contents shut.

Setting it on the bed, Jeongguk carefully pulled at the bow, ribbon pulling apart and the bag falling open, tissue paper hiding what was inside. The tissue ruffled as Jeongguk reached his hand inside, and Yoongi watched as he produced a set of silk pyjamas, shining metallic in the light of the bedroom. There were little roses sewn into the fabric, thread so similar in colour to the silver that Yoongi almost missed them, adorning the collar, sleeves, dotted all over.

The clothes looked expensive, the silk gleaming as it moved in Jeongguk’s hands, and Yoongi knew he would have remembered them if he had been there when they were bought. Jeongguk must have chosen them himself, or at least with the help of the others, and Yoongi admired the softness under his fingertips as he reached forward, running his hands over a sleeve, fabric sliding across his skin like water.

“Will you wear them?” Jeongguk asked quietly, bringing a hand up to start caressing Yoongi’s neck, small circles making him shiver. “They would look beautiful on you, love” he hummed, fingers scratching lightly at Yoongi’s scalp, untangling his unbrushed hair.

Despite his boyfriend’s touches, Yoongi couldn’t stop looking at the clothes set out in front of him, the clothes that Jeongguk had bought for him, just him. The clothes that had been chosen for him to wear, chosen for him because Jeongguk thought he would look beautiful, picked out from everything else. It made him feel affection in his gut, the feeling of being wanted, that the younger thought something so pretty would look nice on him, would make Yoongi just as pretty as the
Still staring at molten metal fabric, Yoongi nodded almost like he was in a trance, eyes fixed on the silk as Jeongguk started to pull at the bottom of the elder’s t-shirt, the fabric folding to his hands and stretching over Yoongi’s head, pulling him from his thoughts. The air was cold around his body despite the house being heated, wrapping around his skin and making him shiver, but the chill melted away at the first glide of silk.

The fabric embraced his body, feeling almost like it was floating above the surface of his skin, shining when the light caught it at a certain angle. With gentle hands, Jeongguk slowly did up the silver buttons, and a thought briefly ran through Yoongi’s mind that the younger should be getting ready for school, probably had to leave soon, but it floated away like all the other thoughts in Yoongi’s head which weren’t focused on the way Jeongguk smoothed down the shirt, fingertips lingering on the waistband of Yoongi’s sweatpants.

The trousers were just as light, legs feeling surrounded by the purest of waters, flowing from side to side every time Yoongi moved. It made his mind feel a million miles away from the present, head fuzzy and unfocused, like life had suddenly turned into one massive blur, spinning around him. Barely noticing at first, he felt another weight being set on his shoulders, hands being gently guided by Jeongguk through another pair of sleeves. Looking down, Yoongi saw a satin robe now resting over his clothes, the piece styled almost like Hanbok, a rich purple with silver embroidery all over, roses and birds and long tree branches spanning the fabric.

“You look breathtaking,” Jeongguk murmured, breaking the silence Yoongi didn’t even realise surrounded the room, and the words sounded like they were on the verge of a moan.

The taller’s voice was as smooth as the fabric around him, even more captivating than expensive material, as deep as the hole Yoongi had somehow found his brain had fallen into. The praise was everything Yoongi needed and yet also nothing at all, something preening in his mind, warm and making his fingertips tingle at the ends. Something in his head was begging Jeongguk to touch him more, lusted for hands brushing over skin, over silk, waves of need from the back of his head.

Yoongi could only close his eyes as the emotions washed over him, head light, and he couldn’t help but lean completely into Jeongguk when he pulled Yoongi towards his body. The elder’s head was rested on the other’s abdomen, feeling toned muscles through the plain cotton shirt covering skin. It was a sensation so, so familiar, but also so, so different, everything being mixed until it was all just beginning and ending with Jeongguk.

With a jolt, he was pulled violently from the trance by Jimin opening the door quickly, the wood knocking against the wall and making Yoongi jump, Jeongguk’s hands tightening around his shoulders on instinct. The teenager’s figure in the doorway leaned forwards, demanding their
attention, a hand being pulled through dyed grey hair as he took a deep breath in.

“Guk, it’s like, ten minutes after we were meant to leave, c’mon,” Jimin urged, coming further into the room when nobody moved, poking at Jeongguk’s arm until the younger tried to swat him away.

“Okay, okay, I’m coming,” Jeongguk laughed, slipping his arms under Yoongi to pick him up, the elder huffing at the fact their time together was interrupted.

Sat on a couch in the hallway near to the front door, the goodbye almost made Yoongi cry, Jeongguk promising to call, to hurry back as soon as the day had ended. This would be the first time he would be without Jeongguk since the incident, the first time he wouldn’t have the younger as his security blanket, making sure everything was okay. The prospect of being without his boyfriend was daunting, especially when the situation was so familiar, Jeongguk at school, Yoongi left with their parents, exactly how everything had started. It made him nervous, anxious, probably the whole reason they needed to be parted, the need to return to normality.

Seokjin watched next to him through the open front door as the black car left the manor’s drive, a slow pace until it turned the corner, the metallic shine becoming lost behind the walls surrounding the grounds of the building. It was almost like a fort, their home, but this time it did nothing to help Yoongi feel safer.
“Yoongi? Can we borrow you for a second, honey?” Seokjin called, Yoongi opening his eyes to see where the voice was coming from.

It was after the first week the others were back at school after the incident, and Yoongi was emotionally exhausted from Jeongguk’s absence, curled up into a ball on his boyfriend’s lap as the younger attempted to solve a maths problem. He was biting the end of his pen so much that Yoongi expected it to break, his boyfriend’s lips to be dyed black by the ink in the plastic container, but he didn’t have the heart to tell him to stop.

Remembering someone had spoken, Yoongi looked up to see Seokjin and Namjoon in the doorway, both with soft expressions on their faces, eyes unreadable but small, comforting smiles on their lips. The couple were looking at the pair on the couch fondly, Namjoon sliding his hand into Seokjin’s, and Yoongi could almost feel the affection they had for their children in nothing more than their gaze, the way they watched Jeongguk’s free hand stroking through Yoongi’s hair.

It had become habit over the last days for Yoongi to become almost stuck to someone like he was held by industrial glue, clinging on like a child. The majority of the time it was Jeongguk, the younger happily sitting with his boyfriend on his lap as he did work, or watched TV, anything he could do when sitting down. If his boyfriend was nowhere to be found, Yoongi was prepared to accept another family member to substitute, a parent, a brother.

The worst time for Yoongi was within school hours, when all the teenagers were away from home, when his parents were working, leaving him practically alone. It was past the mid-point of the school year, meaning Jeongguk and the others would sometimes be held back at school by teachers worrying over exams, or for catch up lessons they might have missed. The school had no clue their lives didn’t revolve around school like the other people their age, even when the teachers knew they were most likely ensured a high paying job, they probably didn’t realise that they were already being groomed to lead.

America didn’t have as much experience with chaebol heirs as in Korea, and Yoongi had accepted that that was what he and the other teenagers were. In the States, it was often someone from the actual company who was selected to be a successor, while in Korea it was known to be a family transaction, fathers passing to sons, or daughters. Hoseok was already close to being named in a high position in the public company, their stance in leadership only so far known in the criminal side of things, recorded only as heirs to the media.

At their parents’ appearance, Jeongguk shifted in his place, as though he was about to stand from the couch they were lounging on. Before he had the chance, Seokjin came further into the room, putting his hand on the youngest’s shoulder to stop him. Yoongi was confused for a second until
the eldest gently lifted him up himself, cradling him in his arms, the shorter automatically wrapping his legs around Seokjin’s waist.

“You carry on with your work, Guk. We’ll only be a moment, then bring him right back,” Namjoon promised, flashing a small smile for comfort as Yoongi was carried to the door.

Looking back, Yoongi saw Jeongguk with a disheartened expression on his face, lips in a slight pout as he watched his boyfriend being taken out the room. Before they went out the room, Yoongi waves goodbye, huffing when Jeongguk just pulled a face, glaring back down at his maths homework. Namjoon shut the door behind them, following as Seokjin carried Yoongi along the hallway.

Jin didn’t show it often, but he was actually one of the strongest members of their family, often dragging others to do exercise routines with him early in the mornings, Jeongguk a common victim. Yoongi was well aware of the fact from the countless times the older carried him, handling him like he was a bag of feathers, not an eighteen year old boy, even if Yoongi was lighter than average. That didn’t stop the view, however, he’d seen Seokjin carry Taehyung like it was the easiest thing in the world, and Taehyung had almost grown taller than Jin himself in the recent months. It was no surprise to him that Jin was able to shift him to one arm, opening the door of the study with the other, entering the cluttered room.

Open curtains allowed the room to be bright even when the lights were off, and Seokjin began walking to the couch in the room between the two desks, a place Yoongi had taken many naps, spent many hours when his parents were the only ones in the house. It was soft, with many plush pillows, a fur blanket thrown over the back of the couch, one Yoongi knew he could wrap himself in a cocoon in and sleep as warm as he could be.

“We didn’t want to interrupt your time with Jeongguk, but there are a few things we need to discuss,” Namjoon explained as Seokjin sat down on the sofa, Namjoon beside them.

Still on his parent’s lap, Yoongi turned until he was sideways, facing Namjoon straight on with Seokjin’s face just above him, paying full attention. At the explanation he nodded, blinking his eyes to try and think more clearly when he had been sleeping so recently, his brain currently in a fuzzy muddle from being on his boyfriend’s lap for over a couple of hours.

With everything that had been happening, Yoongi had been expecting something like this, a decisions talk, ever since things had returned even remotely back to normal. It surprised him they had waited so long, but he had enjoyed the time he had to think of nothing important, allowing him to relax back into the environment. This was normal routine, whenever a big thing happened, a large blip in the family’s general lives.
Over Yoongi’s head, Yoongi could tell the couple exchanged glances, like an electric current just brushing his hair. After a moment, Namjoon stood and reached over to his desk, retrieving a piece of paper, from below a stack of files. The second the paper caught Yoongi’s eyes, he felt as though he stopped breathing, mind shattering to the smallest of particles.

His whole vision was filled with red ink, blood red, freshly spilt onto bright white snow. He could see red ink scribbled over the paper, a sight he thought he would never have to see again. Yoongi could feel his lungs trying to implode as his eyes were fixed on the sheet of white, not moving even when Seokjin placed a hand over his chest, tapping lightly as if he was trying to remind Yoongi to breathe.

As soon as his panic was noted, Namjoon quickly folded the offending item in half, and Yoongi felt some of the pressure in his chest disappear as the words were hidden. Despite that, he still hadn’t released his breath, Seokjin’s taps becoming firmer, another hand shaking Yoongi’s body gently from where it was resting on his shoulder and chest. It was the veiled desperation in the eldest’s actions that finally prompted Yoongi to take in a shuddering breath, rattling in his lungs.

He could hear Namjoon speaking, but he didn’t catch what was said, instead focusing on soothing his burning throat. This was something he thought he was leaving behind, not the panic, that was a permanent fixture in his life, but the panic because of a letter written on unblemished paper, penned in nothing other than red ink. He wished Jeongguk was here, but had to grip onto Seokjin as a substitute, trying to imagine it was his boyfriend’s arms around him, holding him close.

“Hey, hey, eyes on me, okay?” Namjoon caught his attention, placed his hand on Yoongi’s cheek, angling him to look right into the taller’s eyes, a worried gaze meeting his own. “This was found where Zack was staying, in the caravan you killed him near,” he spoke slowly, making sure Yoongi heard every word. “It’s half finished, and we wanted to know whether you wanted to read it,” he explained, and a tanned hand held out the folded sheet, only offering it if Yoongi chose to take the opportunity.

Yoongi didn’t move from where he was positioned, eyes looking fixedly at the paper, knowing what it would look like unfolded. Despite how daunting it had been just a moment ago, Yoongi felt strangely calm about the letter. His first thought before the explanation was that the letter had been sent to their home, their doorstep, that Zack was somehow alive, or someone had taken his place. Now Yoongi knew it was found amongst the dead man’s things, the paper seemed much less dangerous, the urge to throw up not appearing again at the back of his throat.

Namjoon seemed to notice Yoongi’s hesitation, his internal debate on what he was going to do, and moved to rest the paper on his thigh. In wait, the taller’s fingers mindlessly played with the corner of the page, something that made it seem far more human, less of a force of evil. Yoongi watched a
thumb press down too heavily, creating a permanent fold in the paper, and it seemed less scary, less murderous.

“You don’t need to look,” Namjoon said as he twisted the paper in his hand, flashes of red sometimes catching Yoongi’s eyes. “But we thought it might help to solidify some closure, and we knew you wanted to read them before, no matter the words.”

Yoongi’s eyes slowly dragged over the dreaded sheet, making a decision with the jury in his head. If he didn’t read it, he would be in the dark, would spend his time never knowing what was written on the paper, not unless his parents kept it for later. He doubted they’d do that, in habit or burning away anything they didn’t need that could be linked to something they had done, something incriminating. If he did read it, there isn’t anything that would happen to him, Zack Goldcerd gone. Taking a breath, he raised his hand to Namjoon’s, taking the letter in shaking fingers.

The paper seemed cold to the touch, like ice under his fingertips, and Yoongi knew that it was probably his imagination. Just the thought of what was written left a bitter taste in his mouth, a small pain behind his eyes, but this was his choice, his decision. Carefully, Yoongi traced his fingers over the indents in the back of the paper where Zack Goldcerd had pressed too hard with his pen, the words engraved in messy English, too messy to be identified by touch alone.

Taking a deep breath, Yoongi steeled his resolve, knowing he had to do this for personal satisfaction, to set his mind at ease now he had seen it. Unfolding the sheet of paper felt like trying to pull two industrial magnets apart with his bare hands, the effort leaving Yoongi breathless, limbs heavier than lead attached to his body. Perhaps the immediate panic was gone, but apprehension still remained, eating at Yoongi’s insides until the letter was completely open, spread out in his hands.

It took Yoongi a moment to be able to look down, look at what was written right in front of him. He almost knew what was written, and something about that made it worse, when Yoongi could predict a summary. If it was anything like the last letters he was sent, it would make his skin crawl, drips of freezing water trailing down his spine. As much as this would make him suffer, Yoongi was hoping for relief, a banner lifted to mark the end of the whole ordeal officially, doors closing.

My deepest desire, my only Yoongi,

Already the first words made Yoongi stop, eyes examining every detail of the sentence, noting every curve and mark of the pen. Zack must have been in a rush when writing, his normally scrawling handwriting even worse than it was before, words almost unrecognisable apart from Yoongi’s name. His name was the only thing he could read with ease, and it looked as though the teenager had taken hours to detail every single letter, illustrating additional curves and lines, swirls around the word. It was like it was the elegant writing on an invitation, or poster, so careful there
wasn’t a single fault.

It almost made Yoongi feel faint, the fabricated care Zack Goldcerd was deluded with, how he thought he loved someone when it was only obsession. It was terrifying, thinking that someone could go so far for such small reward; wage a war against one of the most powerful families in the world all for one of the teenagers, one of the heirs of the corporation. It made conflict seem so easy to prompt, a fake claim of love the only motivation, something that could so easily happen again, over and over in Yoongi’s lifetime when he had so much exposure to the worst of the worst, everyone that worked with their family.

_oh, how you do like to keep me on the edge, constantly chasing you, a cat after a mouse._

A cat after a mouse, a predator after prey, the strong after the weak. The words made Yoongi hold his breath again, vision narrowing, the red letters blurring in his mind as he reread and reread them, again and again. It was sick, how Zack Goldcerd had seen Yoongi’s desperate attempt at freedom as a game, nothing but a game to play as a child, a game that the other had been so sure he would win.

It wasn’t news to Yoongi that Zack Goldcerd was a messed up individual, something wrong in his head, someone who should have been spotted to be insane sooner than he was. A part of Yoongi regretted not asking for more action to be taken sooner, regretted not telling Jeongguk and letting his boyfriend eliminate anybody who was even the smallest threat, sure to kill him in an instant. The wishes were a thing of the past, nothing he could change, remaining as regrets for as long as his mind lingered on the events.

Yoongi was tempted to leave his delving into the letter at that, not letting anything else into his head to linger for a while, sure to make him on edge for at least a few days. After all, he could always ask Namjoon to tell him what was written, ask him to change the words and only give a summary. That would be so easy, and yet it wouldn’t set his mind at ease as much as reading the rest of the twisted words, whatever else Zack Goldcerd thought of him, thought to do to him.

_It wasn’t very polite of you to hurt me in the way you did, especially when I was the one to do so much for you, buy you pretty things, dress you to look like a doll._

Yoongi imagined that, him as nothing but a doll, positioned as his owner liked, never to speak, never to move. The thought of that sort of constriction, containment, made him feel wrong in his own skin, like there was a layer of hardening clay over his limbs. It made him feel light-headed, flushed, heat growing up his neck and sides in panic, only fading when he took a deep breath, moved each of his fingers individually to assure himself they were mobile.
The dark clothes looked amazing against your snow skin; your white hair makes me want to stain it red with flowing blood, the bright colour becoming dull as the liquid fades to copper.

The mention of the clothes served as nothing more than a reminder to Yoongi that Zack Goldcerd had undressed him, had been able to look over him in his most vulnerable position, unconscious as pale skin was uncovered and unprotected by the fabric he stripped off. The other could have done anything, anything to Yoongi while he was in that state, completely asleep and absent from the world, and just the thought of that scared him to the bone.

It scared him that Zack Goldcerd could have had his hands everywhere, that Yoongi didn’t know what he did, the extent of how far he had gotten. There were things he could rule out, of course, things Yoongi would have felt, would have realised had happened. It was a relief, that he hadn’t felt the pain in his back he could so easily recognise, the ache he had only ever had because of Jeongguk, Jeongguk and how much they loved one another. Zack Goldcerd hadn’t taken that away from him, failed to taint him in the worst way possible, take Yoongi’s last piece of sanity with him as he died.

Just wait until I get my hands on you, my love, my heart. I’ll make you scream so prettily, beg so sinfully, as though you are my pet, my pet that I can chose to do what I want with.

A thought in his mind dragged him to think of the prostitutes and concubines they saw in their world, the pretty men and women hanging off of people’s arms, controlled by their puppeteer with no chance of escape until they grew old, too old to be wanted, casted aside. The idea of being a pet, belonging to Zack Goldcerd and forced to do whatever he wanted, whenever, no choice in the matter at all made him feel sick, imagine being made to make a fool of himself in company, be on his knees and do nothing but listen.

Thinking of the young adults he saw made him uncomfortable, made him thankful Jeongguk treated him nothing like that, nothing like the way he was expected to treat a pretty lover. Had it been anyone else, Yoongi was sure he wouldn’t be so lucky, not outside of his family and yet still in the world of criminals. There were more people like Zack Goldcerd than like Jeongguk, he knew the harsh reality of it, was aware of his fortune in his position.

I’ll get you back, and soon, I’ll have the resources to destroy everything you love until it’s only me, only me you think of, only me that can bring you pleasure, pain, moaning and whimpering like a whore, my only...

The rest of the page was blank, and red ink was smudged over the last word, as through the paper had been moved quickly before the ink was fully dry, almost too similar to a blood splatter. It made Yoongi think back to the teenager’s movements he had watched through the window, how he had seemed so full of rage, a rage so rewarding. It was less rewarding now, the writing passing in and
out of his mind, making his thoughts short circuit and flash in and out of motion.

Had Zack Goldcerd succeeded, had he taken Yoongi for his own... Yoongi didn't even want to think of what he would have been forced to live like, how he would have been forced to act. Had that happened, had that been Yoongi's reality, he knew he wouldn't have survived. Without his family he would have found a way to stop his existence, his suffering, choosing to stop everything had the situation been that dire.

Before he could dwell any longer on the words, what he possibly would have done had Zack Goldcerd had his way, he felt the paper being eased out of his grip. There were wrinkles on the sheet of paper from where his hands had tightened, almost ripping the fragile material, visible strains in the paper. He felt warm arms around his body, two pairs of soft lips pressing against his forehead, and Yoongi was jolted back into his own body, feeling Seokjin move a soothing hand in circles on his back.

“Stay with us,” Namjoon hummed, pressing another kiss to Yoongi’s hair, slowly positioning two fingers under the smaller’s chin.

Tilting his fingers slightly up, the action made their eyes meet, brown irises exchanging stars. Namjoon’s gaze radiated warmth, comfort, home, and Yoongi couldn’t help but feel even more calmed by the elder, mind zoning into the present. He blinked once, twice, eyes finally concentrating fully on his parent’s face, the expression of nothing but openness which was directed at him.

“There’s our Yoongi,” he smiled, dimples showing on his cheeks, happy indentations in the skin.

It was a wonder, how this face in front of him could change so quickly, from this radiation of affection to stone cold firmness, no hint of a smile on his features, brow furrowed in thought. It was almost like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, the way he could morph between personas, show the right expression for the right occasion in an instant. Yoongi knew an element of it should frighten him, especially when the change happened in every member of his family, even Jeongguk, but by now it was the normal, it was safe.

“You’re so strong, so brave,” Seokjin cooed from above him, not halting the movement of his hand still on Yoongi’s back, and the younger was grateful.

The movement was like a link to the current world, grounding him in place, his parents around him, keeping him safe. Maybe it was the security he felt at that moment, maybe it was just their presence right next to him, maybe it was the years and years leading up to now, maybe everything
that had happened in such a short time. Whatever it was, it made tears flow from Yoongi’s eyes, falling rapidly down pale cheeks, words slipping out of his mouth faster than he could control.

Because the truth was, he hadn’t felt truly safe for the whole of his life, not in the way he wanted to. After the abuse he suffered, the hits, he thought he was going to get a break, a break from blood, conflict. Continuous missions, meetings, strategies, murders, fights, it was all taking a toll, and although he felt the safest that he ever had with his family, with Seokjin and Namjoon, with Jeongguk, it still wasn’t right. He still felt like he was being watched, like there were eyes following him wherever he went. It made him anxious, waiting for something to happen, and he just wanted it to end, all just go away.

The words slipped through his lips like water through a drain, and there was nothing Yoongi could do to stop the sentences tumbling up, out of his throat, choked and stuttered. He barely paid attention to what he was actually saying, just everything falling with no thought, hands clasping to his parents’ sides, looking for the comfort he craved, the relief from where he was stuck in cycle after cycle.

“Dad, dad, I don’t want, want to do this anymore,” Yoongi stuttered, choking on the sentence as it left his lips. “I want it to stop, I want it all to stop, I don’t want to do this anymore,” he cried, and with every word he sobbed more and more, unable to stop his body from jerking and shaking.

At the call, the word that applied to either of the men around him, Namjoon immediately moved forward from his seat a few inches away, gently guiding Yoongi’s head to rest on his stomach. The double embrace from both sides, both his parents made Yoongi melt, body turning to jelly, sagging in their hold. Beneath his face he could feel the fabric of Namjoon’s shirt begin to dampen, salty tears being absorbed almost as fast as they fell, but Yoongi didn’t bring himself to care about the discomfort.

He felt so at home in their arms, and he wished he could stay like this every day for the rest of his life, hoped that he would finally feel safe if he knew nothing more than the people surrounding him, hiding behind his parents, Jeongguk. There was nothing more he wanted than to just be safe, kept safe, nothing around him that could hurt him, make him feel like his heart was trying to burst out his chest.

“Baby, if you don’t want to be a part of the company, that’s okay, that’s okay,” Seokjin mumbled, quickly pressing repetitive kisses to his temple, his hair.

The words nearly made Yoongi sob even harder in relief, because no matter how many times his parents had said in the past that his foot in the door of the company was his choice, his decision, Yoongi was always worried they would be offended if he decided not to be a part of the organisation. The job ran in the family, led always by Namjoon’s father, grandfather, great-
grandfather, further, all starting with smuggling and working its way up, up, up to where it was now, an all out empire.

“It’s completely up to you, and if you wish to stop, we’re completely fine with it,” Namjoon agreed, trailing his fingers through Yoongi’s hair, spirals and waves fluttering over his scalp.

After a while, he found his tears slowing, trailing down his cheeks less as rivers and more as a trickling stream, and he couldn’t help but smile. Leaning back up straight, he knew his gums were on display for the elders to see, rejoicing in the relief, in the heavy weight that had been released from his chest, now flying away like helium balloons. Everything was because of who he was, the role he played, every bad thing happening because people met him, knew who he was.

It had been his semi-present role in the company that had caused him to be targeted, his presence at the meeting that had caused Zack Goldcerd to notice him, to cause his family pain, and he had promised himself it wouldn’t happen again. This was the way to make the suffering stop. There was nothing more he could think to do, all his other options crossed out, leaving this as the only way to make his life feel right again.

“Thank you, thank you, thank you,” he chanted, once again burying his head in Namjoon’s stomach, sobs decreasing in frequency as the smile refused to leave his lips.

His parents hushed him, didn’t do anything more until his breathing was almost normal again, not moving from his reclined position. Vaguely he heard Namjoon’s voice, only one side of a conversation, Seokjin quietly mentioning Jeongguk’s name as a whisper in his ear. It gave notice of the arrival of familiar footsteps, familiar hands lifting him from their parents’ laps, swaying until there was a mattress below his side, and the rest was silence.
The whole family had taken Yoongi’s news well, accepting his decision to keep his head out of business, stay in the shadows like he had in the first months of being brought into the family. It was as close to living a normal life as he could achieve, as close to being safe, feet out of shark infested water. All he ever wanted was a stable life, a life he could live and not worry about his safety, and if this was as close as he could get, then so be it.

When Yoongi thought about it, the others seemed to have taken it too well, like it was some of the best news they’d heard that week. It probably wasn’t as surprising as they were making it out to be, that Yoongi didn’t want to be a part of the criminal-side of the family business, or even the legal side of things. Their reaction was full of reassurance, assuring Yoongi they wouldn’t think less of him, still counted him as one of them even if he chose to be less involved, and it all worked to make him feel better about the whole thing.

Jeongguk seemed by far the most relieved by the situation, like a weight had been taken off his shoulders too, and something about it was bittersweet. The fact was, Yoongi knew that in the family’s activity, he was the liability. Even with training, even though he was capable of getting himself out of trouble, he still was the cause of problems in the first place. If he wasn’t present to get involved in problems, they wouldn’t happen, and his family wouldn’t have to worry about so many things that didn’t let them advance in business, only hinder things they were meant to be doing.

Despite trying to be subtle about it, Yoongi knew Jeongguk had wanted him to step down for a long time now, probably as long as they had been dating. There had been so many nights spent with Yoongi crying his eyes out while Jeongguk held him, trying to make him feel okay about where he had found himself. The younger always had been protective, ever since they had met and Jeongguk followed him like a puppy, quick to latch onto him, quick to fall in love.

It was something Yoongi secretly loved, that Jeongguk cared so much, would do anything to keep Yoongi from getting hurt, but he knew it was hard when the elder was in danger, when Yoongi knew Jeongguk felt helpless. The protectiveness probably stemmed from the youngest’s time spent living in the sides of streets, sleeping in the caverns of doorways, where you only managed to keep the things you protected closely, you fought for.

Jeongguk had told Yoongi about the months he had lived with no one, losing food and clothes if he didn’t take care of them, people grabbing what they could when the situation was dire enough. It was what most likely birthed the borderline-possessive steak the taller had, made him feel like he would lose the people he didn’t watch out for especially when they were as vulnerable as Yoongi.

He understood, Yoongi understood more than most how past experiences made you act, how
childhoods could mould you to a warped shape. He understood, so he didn’t get angry, would barely even think it. Realistically, Yoongi knew his family only meant the best for him, so he didn’t allow dejection to fill his head at the small celebration of his isolation from family work, instead allowing himself to be as happy as the others. It was his choice, his choice to be safe, and he treasured the free will he was given.

Over the next weeks, Yoongi found that the more time he spent out of school the more he relaxed, no more new faces crowding the corridors he tried to walk down, no more wandering eyes at lunch. It was nice, being able to finally just be in a place, not having to be stressed about work, or teachers, or who he was cursed to sit next to in a lesson. Another perk had been the heightened time with his parents, the only teenager left in the house able to spend a day watching his parents work, and yet doing nothing more himself.

The couple hadn’t mocked Yoongi for what he had said, calling them dad before the word could be stopped by his brain. In the situation, they had barely acknowledged it, but Yoongi had the sneaking suspicion that they were actually quite fond of it. It was probably a milestone, something that made them finally feel like they had a family together, with children and a pet cat and a house large enough for everyone to live together. Yoongi had never asked the couple what they had wanted, whether they ever dreamed about leaving their business together, about buying a large house in the countryside, watching their children grow in peace.

Maybe they dreamed of a small, quaint, semi-detached home, a small dining room table overflowing with people at every meal, everybody just living normally, doing as they pleased. It seemed like something too idealistic, impossible for the people they are, and it hurt to think that Namjoon and Seokjin would never be able to have a different life if they wished it. After all, it was Namjoon who had been the first to be forced to fit a role, not even given the choice by his father if he wanted to take on the company, never given the chance to back down when his parents were killed when he was only twenty.

Seokjin was the person Yoongi spent most of his time with in the day, the parent most commonly at home. Namjoon was often at their office building, probably still trying to tame the Goldcerd issue, or manage the impacts from the mysterious disappearance of every heir and leader of their family’s company, trying to negotiate the shares for their own taking. Yoongi was happy he was doing it out the house at the headquarters and not in the home’s study, no chance of him hearing anything he didn’t want to.

Throughout the time they had spent together, Yoongi had learned Seokjin made good company, teaching Yoongi how to cook, cheering him up with bad jokes, able to talk to him like a teenager and not at all condescendingly. With Seokjin, he either performed his role as oldest seamlessly, or he acted like a sugar-high five year old, with no in between. It made him easier to talk to, better company, especially when Yoongi was down.
They were the only two people in the house now, Namjoon at a minor business meeting, teenagers in school. Both of them were in one of the bathrooms, Yoongi sitting on a stool by the edge of a large, white bathtub, a towel draped over his shoulders. Seokjin was massaging dye into his hair, dye he had bought so long ago with Taehyung, finally being used. The sensation was relaxing, and Yoongi had his eyes closed as he bathed in the attention, hearing Seokjin laughing quietly in the background at his own jokes he was loudly exclaiming every few minutes about hair products.

It was normally Jimin who helped Yoongi with dying and cutting his hair, the younger happy to lend him a favour, often in exchange for Yoongi letting him choose what he would wear the next time they went out. Not only was Jimin easy to ask, but he was good at it too, always able to make Yoongi’s dead hair look healthier and alive, even after all the bleach he used every couple of months. The elder was well aware of the fact that he would probably need to dye it back to its natural colour soon, but for now he’d enjoy the colour he had chosen with Taehyung’s input.

“You know, we’re going to match,” Seokjin mused, fingers dancing over Yoongi’s fringe, slicking the hair back with dye to expose his pale forehead.

It made Yoongi hum, head nodding slowly on his shoulders, eyes still shut and brain relaxed. He could almost fall asleep like this, nails scratching at his scalp, dye tingling on his skin. They had bleached his roots just moments before, killing any new hair Yoongi had grown over the last few stress filled months, but he was just thankful he hadn’t starting balding yet.

“And it’s my favourite colour too, you’ll look so pretty,” Seokjin continued, and the smile was almost audible in his voice, making Yoongi huff.

Opening his eyes, Yoongi blinked a couple of times, the bright bathroom light almost blinding him momentarily, spots in his vision. Once the static had dissipated, Yoongi surveyed his hair, although the dye always looked a different colour to the final product. He hoped it would look nice, hoped it wouldn’t make him look too pale, some colours making his skin practically ghostly.

“I think Jeongguk will like it,” Yoongi said, eyes still looking at his head in the mirror, examining Seokjin’s work.

He hadn’t discussed the change with the younger, had really redone his head on a whim after Seokjin had made a comment about his roots showing, but Jeongguk had known he bought the dye with Taehyung the same day he found Keopi. Jeongguk might not be as intelligent as Namjoon, but Yoongi was sure his boyfriend wasn’t oblivious enough to not realise it was what Yoongi intended to use on his own hair. It wasn’t like Jeongguk’s opinion was the only one that mattered, Yoongi pleased to say he kept a great deal of his independence, but it always made Yoongi happy when he did something the younger liked.
It was good to see his white hair disappear, fading into a cloud of colour, now darker than his skin. As much as Yoongi loved the colour his hair had been, Zack Goldcerd’s words were still echoing inside his mind, and every glance of the strands in a mirror made him think of the other’s hands, his foul, poisonous lips on his skin. Change was good, this change was good, it was what Yoongi needed, and so change was what he persuaded Seokjin to help him with on a Tuesday morning.

“I’m sure he’ll love it, he always does,” Seokjin promised, a grin on his lips as Yoongi looked up at his reflection, a small smile on his own face to match. “He has to; it’s the best colour in the world.”

Even if Seokjin was wrong about the best colour, there was one thing he was right about. There was not one thing Yoongi chose to do that Jeongguk didn’t love, anything he wore, made, everything rewarded with nothing but compliments. The praise was nice, made Yoongi feel like he could never do anything wrong, gave him the confidence he had lacked for the majority of his life.

“Uh huh,” Yoongi laughed, rolling his eyes despite knowing Seokjin was right about Jeongguk.

Jeongguk really hadn’t disappointed, as soon as the younger had seen Yoongi’s hair, he had grinned so widely Yoongi thought his mouth would split. Large, bunny teeth were completely in full view as he spun Yoongi in an embrace, littering kisses over his face as the elder complained. It was annoying how Jeongguk was strong enough to just swing him about, picking him up from the floor and throwing him over his shoulder, even if Yoongi kind of loved it. By now, the smaller’s feet were mainly healed, he could walk by himself, but Jeongguk still insisted on keeping Yoongi far away from solid ground.

“You look like the prettiest rose to ever bloom in a garden, love,” Jeongguk complimented breathlessly, making Yoongi huff dramatically.

Yoongi tried to hit him, not getting very far as Jeongguk held his arms to his sides, not letting him escape. Yoongi was trying to hide his embarrassment, stop the blush from climbing up his cheeks, something he would normally veil behind his hands which wasn’t exactly an option just then. Instead, he tried to mask the flush by shoving his face in Jeongguk’s neck, although he was fairly sure that the younger could feel the heat radiating off of his skin.

“Shut up,” Yoongi whined, kicking his legs and successfully hitting one of Jeongguk’s knees, the taller yelping and letting Yoongi be put down on the floor.
Hopping around for a second dramatically, Jeongguk finally stopped moving, instead moving to pull Yoongi to where he could kiss him properly. The brush of lips was short and sweet, completely chaste when the rest of their family was in the hallway with them, making the colour return to Yoongi’s cheeks and blush even harder, face probably matching the colour of the strands of his hair.

Breaking apart just a few inches, the way Jeongguk looked at him made Yoongi think he was going to melt into a puddle; the younger’s eyes barely visible as his cheeks bunched up so much from smiling. It was always nice to see Jeongguk look so happy; his arms still holding Yoongi in their hold. It had been a very stressful last few weeks, and it finally felt like they were moving forward, finally somewhere they could leave the past in the past. This was definitely the widest smile on Jeongguk’s face he had seen since the incident, and he took that as an achievement, a sign things were looking up.

“I think that to celebrate my beautiful boyfriend,” Jeongguk murmured, stars in his wide doe eyes. “We should have dinner.”

Yoongi paused at that, thought over the suggestion, tried not to look too excited at the prospect of going out with his boyfriend. It felt like so long since they had been out just as a couple, Yoongi thought the last time might have been for their second anniversary, but before that… it might have been their first anniversary. They spent hours of time together at home, but outside their bubble, they were always with the family, always surrounded by parents, brothers.

“You want to take me on a date, Guk?” Yoongi asked with a smile, raising an eyebrow.

A date would be perfect, would make Yoongi feel like almost everything was right again. Yoongi wanted it, wanted what other people his age had, the dates, the being able to go out to dinner without having to worry about whether something would happen, anything. He wanted to be able to smile as they held hands over a white table cloth, order drinks and eat a meal without people watching them, trying to find weaknesses. That was what happened with company dinners, no matter which side of business it was focused on, or when they were invited to a restraint opening, or a party.

There were always eyes, always cameras, spies, watching their every move, reaction. It became exhausting, even when it was their family’s normality, and that said something about the world they lived in, the lives they led. Jeongguk arranging a dinner meant he would probably ensure it to be private, somewhere they weren’t being watched by people with intention, only in passing.

“And what if I do?” Jeongguk answered, mouth tipped in a smirk in one corner.
“I’d say you should give me half an hour to get ready,” Yoongi said as he began to pull away, already walking in the direction of the staircase, hand falling from Jeongguk’s own.

To say he was excited was an understatement, a vast understatement. If he could be, Yoongi was sure he would be vibrating on the spot, running in endless circles to let out his pent up energy. He refused to embarrass himself by leaping up the stairs, and instead settled for trying to walk as normally as he physically could, only once catching a look of Jeongguk’s smiling face behind him, adorable wide eyes following Yoongi’s movements.

“Half an hour, got it,” the younger called behind him, before Yoongi heard him swear quietly. “Fuck, wait, I need to get ready too!”

A little over half an hour later, Yoongi walked out of the house through the front door, a guard holding the heavy wood to one side. He could already see Jeongguk stood at the side of a car, leaning across the side with ease, like it wasn’t worth almost more than Yoongi’s own self. It was one of the cars Namjoon and Seokjin kept for special occasions, a Rolls Royce Phantom, black and shiny like it had just been bought that evening. The engine was already running, a low hum as they waited for Yoongi to appear, headlights illuminating the hedges around the manor’s driveway.

It matched well with the three-piece black suit Jeongguk wore, hair hanging in styled strands with glistening black shoes. He looked like a prince, regale, every thread in place, not a speck of dust anywhere to be seen. Yoongi could imagine him spending over ten minutes in the mirror, wide eyes trying to fix every hair in place, tongue pressing into his cheek when something didn’t go right. A large bouquet of red roses was held in the younger’s left hand, surrounded in maroon tissue paper, gold patterns printed in shining paint. It almost made Yoongi flush in exactly the same colour, slowly walking down the stone steps to the gravel drive.

As the elder took another step forward, Jeongguk flashed him a smile, outstretches his right hand for Yoongi to take. The smaller had to stifle a laugh at his boyfriend’s dramatics, blushing as Jeongguk offered the flowers, smelling sweet and fragrant already in the still evening air. It was toeing the line of cliché, but if he was being honest with himself, Yoongi couldn’t bring himself to care, and Jeongguk was well aware of that fact.

“You look beautiful, love,” Jeongguk murmured, staring adoringly at Yoongi, the elder feeling like he was about to spontaneously combust from the inside out.

The warmth in his chest was journeying to the tips of his fingers, the tips of his toes, tingles crawling up his spine. He always knew Jeongguk was a romantic at heart, loved to do everything by the book, but this was on another level to his normal dramatics. It made his chest pound, painfully fond of the boy in front of him, the one he loved most in the world. Yoongi didn’t think he could feel as strongly for anyone else but Jeongguk, only ever Jeongguk.
The compliments were probably exaggerated, Yoongi only in plain black clothing apart from his silver patterned shirt, the majority of which was hidden under a black blazer. The younger’s fingers came to play with the bow looped around Yoongi’s collar, not a bow tie but a ribbon, Jimin’s idea when he hinted at Yoongi being a present. The elder didn’t have the energy to complain, especially when Jimin looked ready to wrestle him to the floor if he said no, agreeing probably in his better interest.

The taller gestured towards the car, the majority of the windows blacked out, through a clear windscreen Yoongi able to see one of their guards dressed exactly like a classic chauffeur. It was just perfect, so perfect Yoongi could almost laugh in glee; Jeongguk always knowing the ins and outs of Yoongi’s mind more than the elder did himself.

“Red roses? A little cliché, don’t you think?” Yoongi mumbled, not protesting as Jeongguk led him to the car door, opening it before Yoongi had the chance.

“You love it,” the younger grinned, Yoongi unable to disagree.

Sliding into the car, leather seats letting him get into the seat with more grace than he thought he would have, Yoongi admired the interior, white and black and shining. In a moment, Jeongguk was opening the other door, joining Yoongi inside with a flashing smile, immediately pressing the button to roll up the partition. The shaded glass separated them from the driver, rose up until it was fully sealed, and Yoongi felt something in his chest drop, them being close to alone.

On impulse, his hands were reaching out, pulling Jeongguk by the collar of his pitch black shirt, down until their lips were just millimetres apart. Yoongi felt a shaking exhale leave his mouth, calloused hands coming up to cup his jaw, so close, almost touching and yet a cleft of air was between them. Jeongguk’s fingers were moving the smallest of distances along his skin, little rotations and patterns across his jaw, cheeks, enough for Yoongi’s eyes to flutter shut, finally surging the rest of the distance forwards as his hands tightened around the younger’s collar.

The kiss was slow, soft, Yoongi feeling Jeongguk’s lips between his own, strawberry lipbalm on his tongue. The movement of the car around a corner made the elder press even further into his boyfriend’s chest, Jeongguk’s hands holding his head in place, and Yoongi’s head was flying miles above where they were, living permanently in the clouds. Almost delicately, Jeongguk pulled at Yoongi’s bottom lip with his teeth, biting down softly, a low moan falling from his lips.

Yoongi knew they couldn’t go much further than this, not when they were going somewhere, not when a driver was about a metre and a half in front of them. Jeongguk would be happy for them to turn up somewhere with swollen lips and dishevelled clothing, but Yoongi preferred to keep his
composure, look less like he had had his lips devoured just minutes before. With that thought, he forced himself to pull away, breaking the kiss and smoothing his hands from Jeongguk’s collar to his chest.

The younger pouted as soon as Yoongi leaned back, and his wide eyes made Yoongi sigh as he pecked one more kiss, grasping at the other’s hand. He didn’t feel too bad, especially when he knew Jeongguk would do much more to him later with no protest, Yoongi not depriving his boyfriend of too much. Looking at his own face reflected in the darkened window, he was thankful for the partition that separated them and the chauffer, knew he looked like a mess and needed to fix a few things before they left the safety of the car, adjust the hair Jeongguk had somehow messed with despite his hands barely moving.

“So where are we going?” Yoongi tried to ask as he neatened his fringe, glaring when Jeongguk looked far too proud of his work at making him appear slightly less put together than before.

“It’s a surprise,” the younger grinned, and Yoongi rolled his eyes at the unhelpful answer.

“Really?” He sighed, but he knew Jeongguk wouldn’t tell him anymore than that.

“Love, just let me treat you,” Jeongguk murmured, and Yoongi huffed, finally happy with how his hair was slightly more controlled.

It was almost ironic that Jeongguk was asking, asked whether he could treat Yoongi when that was what he seemed to live to do. Yoongi was tempted to retort that, but there would be no use, Jeongguk denying the existence of his constant affections, then proceeding to buy Yoongi the world. It was something he had gotten used to, getting nothing throughout his childhood, refusing things from Namjoon and Seokjin, Jeongguk the one to give gifts until Yoongi gave no complaint.

“I’m older, I should be treating you,” he grumbled quietly, only getting a smirk back from his boyfriend, one that made his heart pound even when he was trying to be annoyed.

Although it seemed unconventional, Yoongi had never been bothered by Jeongguk’s impulse to always care, his need to be the protector. When they first met, the younger had been so guarded, so careful around everyone but Yoongi, everyone but the smaller. It hadn’t taken Yoongi long to realise the younger was more of a protective puppy than a guard dog, latched onto the most vulnerable person they could see and dedicated to keep them from harm.
“But you’re my baby, just let me,” Jeongguk teased, bringing a finger to brush under Yoongi’s chin. “Please,” he smiled, but the elder knew there was no real option, Jeongguk doing as he pleased.

Another kiss, one with less vigour, a soft press of lips with no more intent than as just a kiss. Their hands remained interlinked between the seats as Yoongi admired the roses, Jeongguk finding the control to turn on the music, soft songs in Korean filtering through speakers. Every red petal was perfect, not one flaw to the naked eye, so beautiful in form, in nature. There wasn’t a single blemish, stain, tear, not one thing to pull away from their beauty, as picturesque as in a painting, sculpture, tapestry.

They ended up in a restaurant in the middle of the city, at the top of a five-star hotel, their table veiled behind tinted glass and a skyline view of the whole area. The staff evidently recognised who Jeongguk was, and didn’t question his order of a bottle of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti despite neither of them being able to legally order alcohol, serving it in spotless glasses with a bow. It tasted rich on Yoongi’s tongue, drops of pure gold, pearls of liquid sliding down his throat.

The food was just as grand, and they ended up sharing their deserts between them, everything made like an art. It was a perfect evening, and Yoongi couldn’t stop smiling on the way home, sharing small kisses with Jeongguk, not caring as the world flew by beside them. Climbing out the car, Yoongi reached to grasp the bunch of red roses, a sharp pain on his finger as he wrapped them around the stems.

A jewel of blood pooled on the tip of his skin, red as the roses it came from, bright against pale flesh. It was familiar, red ink on paper, a scarlet stain on a day meant to be spotless white.
It felt like the middle of the night when there was bustling outside the door of their bedroom, the sound of footsteps waking Yoongi up from his slumber. Blinking, Yoongi tried to see around where he was surrounded by warm, heavy bed sheets and blankets, cocooned in the softest textures. The purple quilt Taehyung had gotten him as a comfort gift when he first moved in with the family was carefully tucked under his chin, arranged like someone had just tucked it around him, not having had a chance to be dislodged by sleep.

With confusion in the sides of his mind, Yoongi pushed the blanket down his body to his waist, using his elbows to prop himself up on the pillows. It allowed him to look over to the rest of the bed, already feeling that Jeongguk’s warmth was gone from where he was normally pressed against Yoongi’s back. That was odd, the younger normally holding him close, like he was trying to protect him even when sleeping, and it just brought Yoongi’s confusion even more forward in his conscience.

He could faintly hear someone moving around in the bedroom, a shadowed figure quickly going over to the desk tucked away in the corner of the room. The youngest’s silhouette was unmistakable to Yoongi, even in the low light, all just monochromes and black. Tall, a narrow waist, everything that made Yoongi wish the younger was back in the bed instead of out, seeming fully dressed and in the middle of something.

As Yoongi watched, Jeongguk seemed to be shuffling through papers as quietly as he possibly could, opening draws with slow and steady movements even when he seemed to be trying to do it quickly. It made a sweet thought run through Yoongi’s head about how Jeongguk was making sure he wouldn’t disturb the elder’s sleep, but it quickly disappeared as Yoongi saw him grab what looked like an envelope, tucking it into the inside of the blazer. He was wearing a suit, a fact which was confirmed when Jeongguk’s white shirt glowed slightly from the dull light spilling around the edge of their curtains.

It was all just confusing, and Yoongi caught sight of the clock on the wall, squinting until the metal hands promised that the time was indeed the middle of the night, a little after two. Jeongguk should be in bed beside him, not fully dressed and looking like he was about to leave, quiet voices outside the door laying in wait for him to arrive.

“Guk?” Yoongi slurred, sitting up straighter to try and get a better view of his boyfriend, what he was doing.

As soon as he had spoken, Jeongguk seemed to startle, quickly turning from where he was facing the table and quickly striding over to the edge of the bed. With gentle hands, he lightly pushed Yoongi back down by the shoulders, making sure his head was safely lowered onto a cushion.
Without any questions, Yoongi immediately complied, letting the taller settle him into the bed again, gentle hands tucking the blanket under his chin like it was before he woke.

The younger leaned forwards, and a light kiss was pressed to Yoongi’s forehead, the brush of lips prompting him to close his eyes, feeling the fatigue settle into his bones. It was always calming to Yoongi’s mind, Jeongguk never failing to treat him so gently, and with it he felt himself start to drift into sleep again. Everything was almost blank before he remembered what had woken him in the first place, forcing his eyes open, sluggishly grabbing at Jeongguk’s wrist as he started to pull away.

“Where...” Yoongi started, but a yawn forced its way into his mouth, making him pause in his question. “Where are you going?”

Still treating Yoongi like he was made only of the most fragile glass, Jeongguk brushed the hand not held by Yoongi at the wrist through the elder’s hair, a small smile on his face. The action felt to contain immeasurable levels of affection, Jeongguk’s eyes twinkling. His features were illuminated by the dim rays of light coming from the edge of the window; the world still sleeping outside, stars and moon still gliding over the sky.

Yoongi didn’t think he could remember hearing anything about a task or a meeting that night, nothing from his parents, nothing from his brothers, nothing from Jeongguk. For a moment, it made him wonder whether by leaving their family’s company he had caused himself to be in an isolated bubble, disconnected from the others even when they promised nothing like that would change, kept in the dark. Did the others really not see the need to inform him of their actions now they didn’t involve him?

They had promised not to keep Yoongi out of the loop, and he especially expected Jeongguk to tell him if he was going anywhere, the younger knowing how his absence made Yoongi feel. There was a small spike of betrayal in his chest, but his mind was arguing a different side, was it for the best if it caused him less anxiety if he didn’t know? The lines of the right way to behave were blurred, so many possible errors of communication, even Yoongi not knowing whether secrecy was right or wrong. This was what he asked for, right?

“What…”

Hushing him quietly, Jeongguk pressed another kiss to Yoongi face, this time to his cheek, lips lingering in place. It was all just soft, and he could see right through the action that it was to try and keep his mind off of things, meant to serve as a distraction and stop Yoongi asking questions. As much as it was tempting to listen to and follow, Yoongi wanted to know why his boyfriend wasn’t in their bed with him, keeping him warm, instead looking to be leaving him in the middle of the night.
“I’m just going with the others to do something, love,” Jeongguk murmured. “Don’t worry about it,” he assured him, but it did the opposite to Yoongi’s mind.

The elder couldn’t at all help but notice the vagueness of his boyfriend’s words, the way the other seemed to be artfully dodging the topic. While maybe keeping Yoongi in the dark would lessen his anxiety, he would expect a straight answer if he asked, wanted to know what Jeongguk was abandoning him to do at this time. The not knowing was now almost working against his head, making him wonder whether it was a meeting, a fight, whether Jeongguk was more likely to return unscathed as opposed to bleeding.

But now probably wasn’t the best time to start to try and negotiate what he wanted, not when he knew Jeongguk was meant to be in a rush. The elder had probably already delayed him by minutes, time precious in their line of work, and he knew he didn’t have much time left before Jeongguk would be forced to leave by constraint. Now wasn’t the time, and Yoongi should just ask the questions most concerning him in the present, save his other worries for later.

“Who’s staying here?” He decided to ask, knowing that that was his main preoccupying thought.

His mind was still blurring, eyes fluttering shut every second or so, trying desperately to stay in the present when all his brain wanted was sleep. Answers were important, and Yoongi wanted to remember them, remember what his boyfriend told him. It was always unpleasant to wake up and not know where Jeongguk was, whether he had left or Yoongi had forgotten Jeongguk had kissed him goodbye when in a state half way to sleep. Paranoia ran deep, and Jeongguk missing from his usual place at his side was always a tick in the back of his mind, something that worried him until he was otherwise informed.

“There are guards all around the house and the grounds,” Jeongguk whispered in answer, words making Yoongi frown. “We should be back by morning, so just stay here, sleep. We’ll be back before you know it,” he promised, but somehow it disagreed with Yoongi’s mind.

He resisted the need for his eyelids to close, trying with all his might to keep eye contact with his boyfriend in front of him, but it was getting harder and harder. These days Yoongi had become sleepier than he ever had been, probably because of trauma, but it was finally allowing him to sleep full nights, dream when his head hit the pillow. He knew Jeongguk was finding the absence of sleeping pills a relief, worries of dependency being calmed, memories of clattering empty pill bottles buried.

Yoongi was fighting it now, though, needed to hear this conversation, especially if it confirmed he would be left alone. The occasion Jeongguk was so urgently needing to go to must be of the utmost
importance if he was happy leaving Yoongi as the only family member in the house, only weeks ago uncomfortable with having the elder away from his side longer than a minute. If it was as important as it seemed, Yoongi was annoyed he wasn’t told, even as just a passing comment.

“Nobody’s staying?” He questioned, brow furrowed in confusion, concern.

At that Jeongguk sighed, breath deep from his lips as he pressed more kisses to the top of Yoongi’s forehead, his cheeks, his nose and mouth, soothing hands over his jaw and neck. The soft movements tickled the hairs at the back of Yoongi’s head, making him feel even more exhausted as Jeongguk overwhelmed all his senses, filling Yoongi with nothing but his presence, his affection. It was all just everything, and it almost made Yoongi forget why he was meant to be feeling worried, the matter flitting in and out of his head.

“This is an important meeting that everyone needs to attend,” Jeongguk explained, pulling back from their close proximity to stand up with straight posture at the edge of the bed, linking their fingers together. “Namjoon and Seokjin decided you should stay here with the guards to watch you, and I agree with them, love,” he said, and something in his expression made Yoongi feel minimally better about the arrangement.

It was a hard pill to swallow, the thought that he was going to be alone. Despite Yoongi being pretty sure of the fact that every single guard allowed in the house was tested to be loyal and trustworthy over and over, it was still nerve wracking being away from his family after everything that had happened. The comfort he was given was that Jeongguk has said it would be okay, and Jeongguk was the person Yoongi trusted most in life, more than he trusted himself. If Jeongguk was so sure, then Yoongi would allow himself to be sure as well, borrowing the confidence Jeongguk had in the millions.

Taking a breath, Yoongi finally nodded, agreeing to the arrangement Jeongguk was proposing. He was too tired to think about it further, eyes already sliding shut as soon as his mind registered that the conversation was coming to an end, limbs heavy under warm blankets. Any other time, he would be too nervous to sleep when Jeongguk was leaving, but the exhaustion at the forefront of his mind was making the slide into sleep so much easier than what he was used to.

“I love you,” Yoongi managed to say, the last thing he said before fatigue took over his bones, letting his weighted eyelids fall shut.

It was weird how he normally struggled so much to slip into sleep, and yet now he could fully register the whole process, his brain tunnelling into an empty darkness, every thought becoming blurred and warped. It was like a layer of fine fluff was completely over everything he could see, feel, sense, able to be peeled back only slightly before it latched onto its surroundings, tendrils ensuring it stayed in place.
"I love you too," floated Jeongguk’s voice through the fog, a hand that Yoongi barely noticed to be on his head gently stroking his hair once more before even the younger’s presence faded to nothing, all just smoke in front of his eyes.

Sleep was an odd process, changing constantly, like it worked on a schedule to hinder Yoongi’s life. It seemed as though his mind made the effort to make rest as restless as possible when he was most vulnerable, felt most exposed, body tense and ready for something he wasn’t even sure was going to happen. The result was nightmares, differing from his normal terrors in the way Yoongi failed to remember what happened behind his closed eyes, and yet he was sure it was scary, sure it would make him break down in panic.

Sometimes, he could assume with certainty what they had been about, what exactly he had managed to conjure in the forefront of his brain. As time went on, the guarantee he had guessed right became more and more questionable, so many things added on worth having nightmares about, so many situations, memories, all piling together to make an array of delights on a menu, some more expensive than others. All made his breath quicken, hands shake, all made him feel so bitter about the world, but he never remembered why he was panicking when he woke, what had happened to him while he was under the influence of dreams.

Every time he felt so uneasy, Jeongguk never failed to help him, hold him, whisper assurances of where he was, the date, that he was safe, untouchable. When the younger wasn’t there, someone else in the family was sure to respond to a call, a plead, trying to match his boyfriend’s methods of comfort with only slightly lessened intimacy, knowing Yoongi needed affection, grounding. It was a worry when the whole family went out, leaving Yoongi when he was sleeping, not knowing the state he would be in when he came to his senses.

This time, luck seemed to be on his side, trying to give him a break when everything recently had fallen to shit, their family still picking up pieces. There was a warm body in the bed when Yoongi finally woke up again, a pair of strong arms wound around his abdomen, holding him closely to a toned chest, thighs pressed together. Almost immediately, the small hitch in his breathing resolved itself, and Yoongi didn’t open his eyes, allowed himself to relish in the fact that Jeongguk was back right when he said he would be. The dull light in the room shining through his eyelids indicated that it was probably just past midday, their bedroom always lightest around noon.

A warm puff of air was blown against his neck, hairs standing on end, and a small smile crept over his face as he registered that the younger was awake, had been considerate enough to let Yoongi rest instead of immediately waking him on his arrival. It wasn’t much, but it was the little things that showcased Jeongguk’s affection, another pointed blow of air making Yoongi shiver. Lightly, the elder nudged an elbow into his boyfriend’s side, huffing in annoyance as Jeongguk just let out a small laugh.
Musterling a bout of energy from deep in his bones, Yoongi turned himself over on the mattress, coming out of his balled foetal position to wrap one of his legs around Jeongguk’s small waist, the other wriggling between the younger’s own limbs. Searching for more contact, Yoongi buried his head under the younger’s chin, feeling another small laugh vibrate from within the other’s tanned throat, hands rising to wrap back around Yoongi’s body.

Jeongguk must have still been wearing the suit Yoongi remembered him to be dressed in when he left, the stiff material feeling strange against the elder’s skin when the rest of his body was surrounded by the soft bedcovers, the taller’s blazer missing along with the gun Yoongi knew was normally positioned securely against his chest. Yoongi knew the weapon wouldn’t be too far away, he wouldn’t be surprised to find it close to the pair lying innocently on their bedside table, Jeongguk far too prepared to let it be out of reach. Yoongi was content as long as the gun wasn’t in the bed with them, recognising the younger’s need for the safety the loaded weapon brought.

“Still sleepy?” Jeongguk whispered to him, the words tickling over Yoongi’s hair, making him shiver.

Yoongi just hummed in response, burying his face deeper into the dip between Jeongguk’s shoulder and neck, nosing at the warm skin as the younger moved a hand to caress the smaller’s back. Honey fingers slowly trailed under the shirt Yoongi was wearing as if his skin would tear any second, clothes around the elder’s body definitely belonging to Jeongguk, the size giving away the original owner’s identity. These days when Yoongi was more permanently tired than before, dependant on a helping hand, Jeongguk picked Yoongi’s outfits out himself, dressing him in the younger’s own clothes, or clothes Jeongguk had bought or gifted especially for him in the past.

When Yoongi had first moved into their family, he had had nothing but the clothes on his back. Even after he had been with Namjoon and Seokjin for a while, Yoongi hadn’t owned many clothes, not really seeing the worth in such a materialistic possession, happy with wearing the same things every week. What he wore had mattered to his parents only in formal situations, more to Jimin and Taehyung but they never pushed, the first person to really insist being Jeongguk. Especially in recent times, his boyfriend made sure he was bathed in luxury, only wore the best of what they could get, what money could buy. Yoongi didn’t question it, because it didn’t bother him, mattered to him less than it seemed to matter to Jeongguk.

“How was the meeting?” Yoongi asked, voice slurring through the words, the sleep he had just woken from making his tone quieter, letters moulding together until it was probably unrecognisable with his dialect seeping through.

Despite that, Jeongguk always understood what he was saying, always knew everything Yoongi meant in his words, what he felt. It was almost like the elder was glass, transparent and delicate to the touch, a crystal ball Jeongguk could read with perfect precision. It came with years of practice, and Yoongi could understand the other even when he sounded so much like Busan the words
barely took shape, sounds all different to what Yoongi knew. It was rare their accents were so thick, only when so tired they could barely think of what they were saying, sometimes when they cried. Seoul had beaten the dialect from their voices, the business had taught them that the better you sounded the better the offers were, appearance everything in their line of work.

“It was good,” Jeongguk hummed quietly in response, pulling Yoongi closer and closer until it felt like they could merge together and become one being, one breathing thing.

“What did you have to discuss so urgently you had to leave?” The elder asked with a small pout, mouth pursed so naturally he almost didn’t realise he was pulling the expression until Jeongguk brought a finger up to caress his bottom lip.

Despite not being a part of the company anymore, out of his own choice, own request, Yoongi thought it was entirely valid that he was still curious about the happenings of his family’s empire. Even if he wasn’t a part of it, he still wanted to hear what his family was worried about, what his family had to deal with, allies, partners, antagonists. He didn’t think it was unjust, or irregular, inquisition part of human nature, but the way Jeongguk stared at him, not answering immediately made him doubt what he thought would be natural.

“Nothing,” Jeongguk finally said, lowering the fingertips brushing Yoongi’s lip. “Don’t you worry your pretty head about it,” he gently dismissed, leaning forward and pressing a soft kiss on the top of Yoongi’s head.

At the answer, or lack thereof, Yoongi felt himself frown, fingers tensing and gripping lightly onto the front of the younger’s shirt, fabric tight in his grasp. This was odd, tilted, unbalanced, Jeongguk never having denied him information about their business in the past, always happy to fill Yoongi in on almost completely everything, telling him every single thing that went on from the good to the bad. It felt weird to hear, like the words were of a different language Yoongi somehow understood and yet didn’t, the other’s sudden secrecy.

If this was what he had mistakenly requested for when leaving the company’s inner circle, Yoongi wasn’t sure he liked it as much as he thought he would. Not hearing about the things that would cause him trauma he understood, but the vagueness of even business conduct was a stranger to him, Namjoon and Seokjin completely open from the moment he had moved in, never hiding their activities, what exactly they did to earn their distant holiday houses, expensive cars and designer clothes. He didn’t like this, the approach Jeongguk was adopting.

“But I want to know; you said it was important,” Yoongi tried to push, leaning back as he tried to make eye contact with Jeongguk, show him sincerity in his words.
Even considering the determination Yoongi was putting behind his decision, Jeongguk avoided the other’s gaze like a professional, and Yoongi brought up the thought that he was. Instead of meeting eyes, the younger pulled the smaller closer to himself, running a hand through Yoongi’s pink hair, gently smoothing the strands disrupted by sleep. The motion would normally be calming, Yoongi knew his boyfriend was aware of what he was doing, but it wasn’t very effective when this mattered so much in Yoongi’s mind, needed the sign of unadulterated trust Jeongguk normally felt in him.

“I said it was nothing,” Jeongguk repeated, words making a ball of frustration wind itself up in Yoongi’s chest. “It’s not anything you need to concern yourself with, just some business stuff,” he dismissed again, voice not giving Yoongi any signs or information, emotions hidden behind the passive tone the younger had constructed.

This just felt so wrong, out of place, and every rejection of his question made something cement itself in Yoongi’s chest, a spring ready to be released and jump for miles. Jeongguk didn’t do this, this whole secrecy thing, told Yoongi everything and anything that was on his mind, they didn’t keep secrets. It was just wrong, what Yoongi feared would happen, a small precipice of distance slowly growing between their feet. He didn’t like it one bit, refused to be distanced when it felt so wrong.

“But-” Yoongi started to protest, before Jeongguk cut in, voice firmer than before.

“Love, it’s not your job to worry about it anymore,” the younger stated in a voice so unlike his own, cold, and he finally made eye contact with the other.

Something in Yoongi, down in the pit at the bottom of his fragile, stitched together heart, almost wished he hadn’t. Jeongguk’s eyes looked so guarded, like he was wearing a veil over his pupils, lines of guards marching up and down a fortress of stone. It was nerve wracking, and it made an uncomfortable shiver travel down Yoongi’s body, for the first time feeling unwelcome in his boyfriend’s eyes, like love wasn’t the only thing sent in his direction. All of this was wrong, so wrong, felt like Yoongi had somehow entered a mirror dimension where everything was out of place.

“But you can’t keep me in the dark like I’m an outcast,” Yoongi sighed, watching as the walls in Jeongguk’s eyes crumbled to ruins, strong emotions covering the windows to his soul. “I’m still your boyfriend over everything, we’re still family,” he said as a reminder, one he never thought he would have to give, watching with small relief as guilt travelled over the younger’s features. “You can’t hide things from me like this.”

There were the things that Yoongi was okay not knowing, things that would make him more anxious, more paranoid, the things that this arrangement was meant to filter. Despite that, he still
wanted to know what was happening, the general state of things, how the company was faring. He expected to be told when there were issues, when Jeongguk was stressed, when he needed motivation or a helping hand, anything Yoongi could do to make it better. This isolation was bad, made Yoongi feel discarded as soon as he wasn’t as involved as before, lost his use as soon as his limits were capped.

“I just want you to be safe; I don’t want you to worry about a thing,” Jeongguk explained with a sad expression, his eyes downcast, almost guilty, truly nothing more than a kicked puppy.

And Yoongi understood that, understood that Jeongguk just wanted to keep him safe, far out of the grasping hands of danger, not even dust able to touch him. As much as that was what Yoongi wanted, this wasn’t the way he desired it to be executed, wanted things to be filtered instead of completely censored out of existence. It was important to him that Jeongguk knew he wasn’t happy, had concerns over what he was seeing in his boyfriend’s actions, needed the younger to understand what Yoongi wanted instead of presuming in his own head what the conditions of his choice concerned.

“That doesn’t make it right,” he mumbled as he watched Jeongguk’s eyes blink slowly.

Yoongi couldn’t bring himself to be annoyed at his boyfriend, not when the younger looked so adorable, visibly regretted what he did to make Yoongi’s head tick. He could never hold a grudge, not against the person he loved most dearly in the world, large doe eyes and unconsciously pouted lips. Sighing, he reached a hand forwards, resting it on Jeongguk’s cheek, prompting him to raise his eyes and meet the elder’s gaze.

It was all because of best intentions, all because Jeongguk thought this was right, and Yoongi refused to let his mind hold that against him. An element of this was normal routine by now, Jeongguk trying to do anything to fulfil what he thought Yoongi wanted, anything to keep Yoongi safe. The younger just needed to know that the method he had employed as his approach on this occasion missed the mark, arrow flying high over the set out target.

“What should I do then?” Jeongguk asked, gaze finally coming to meet Yoongi’s, a glinting shine to the surface of his pupils.

“Anything other than making me a stranger,” Yoongi almost whispered, squeezing his eyes shut, feeling the corners sting as tears began to form.

He didn’t want to cry, but his head wasn’t letting him try to stop the emotions from latching onto his brain, festering inside his skull. After everything that had happened recently, this was the last
thing he needed, him being shut out behind a metal door just because he didn’t want to be in the centre of everything, part of the inner circle. There was a difference between not being involved in every single thing and not being informed of everything at all, completely left in the dark.

“I didn’t try to, I just…” Jeongguk trailed off, and instead of talking he moved his hands to Yoongi’s cheeks, thumbs slowly circling over skin.

“I know you didn’t, Guk,” Yoongi sighed, fluttering his eyes open, leaning further into Jeongguk’s touch.

Jeongguk, sweet, caring Jeongguk never meant any harm, not to him anyway. Maybe he meant harm in business meetings, he definitely meant harm when he landed bullets in people’s chests, but not to Yoongi, never to Yoongi. There wasn’t a thing Yoongi could hold against him, Jeongguk never meaning the mistakes he made, never meant to do anything wrong when it concerned family, the people he loved the most. The youngest never tried to do anything to get on the bad side of their household, avoided almost every possible chance of conflict and instead put his effort into negotiation.

“I’m sorry,” Jeongguk murmured quietly, leaning to press a kiss to Yoongi’s forehead, soft lips lightly brushing skin.

It was enough, the confirmation he had gotten his point across enough, already the pesky weight that had been on his shoulders rising into thin air. The matter passed, and the morning returned to what it was meant to be, Jeongguk quietly muttering about a foreign company that wanted to renegotiate profit distribution like they had the choice in the first place, Seokjin getting to his thinnest thread. Apparently, there had been some loud phone calls, and Jeongguk had had to watch as their parents became even more baffled that the CEO of the partnered organisation thought they could make demands.

It was enough, Yoongi was sure it was enough, even if the edges of the image depicting the morning were frayed around the edges, even if something felt not quite right.
Seven

There was a body outside the front door the next morning.

Yoongi had heard yelling from outside the bedroom door, but his mind was too sleep-muddled to understand the words, assuming it was Taehyung and Jimin having annoyed Hoseok or something of the sort. That was a normal routine, the duo managing to make the normally calm Hoseok chase them for some reason or another, like the other day when they had stolen his phone and began to text random people from school. So it didn’t really give him a reason to be suspicious, the distant yelling, because in a family like theirs it was to be expected at this point. They didn’t yell in front of Yoongi, it being something that reminded him of his father, of broken glass and punches to the ribs, but occasionally the whole family could hear Hoseok or Jin screaming. That sort of noise didn’t bother Yoongi, because it was far away and familiar enough to recognise.

What made Yoongi realise it may have been more serious than he thought was Jeongguk, who had been in the bed next to him. The yelling seeped through the wooden door again, and Jeongguk’s eyes widened. Yoongi watching puzzled and concerned as he quickly slid out of bed, redressing clothes over his bare body, tanned skin becoming hidden under a regular suit Jeongguk normally wore for family work.

The longer Yoongi focused on Jeongguk, the more the world came into focus, the shouting staring to sound like actual words, voices Yoongi found unfamiliar sounding through the house, guards running up and down the corridor in a hurry. The loud sounds were making Yoongi’s head ache, and were making him breathe faster, because unlike with Jimin and Taehyung, the people weren’t familiar, the words were too close, pushing down on Yoongi like a weight, making him choke.

“Jeongguk, hurry up! There’s a body outside!” Hoseok yelled from right outside the door, voice holding no familiar joy, no distinct cheerfulness.

This was the Hoseok that had his head fully focused on something; normally either dancing or business, and an element of it scared Yoongi somehow. It was almost like he had two distinct personas, and it was scary to try and think about which was the one that came naturally, especially for someone Yoongi always likes to think he knows well.

“I’m coming,” Jeongguk responded, although he didn’t shout, and Yoongi was grateful. The younger was rapidly shrugging on his blazer, picking up his guns from the bedside table near to where Yoongi was in the bed, the covers pulled up to his neck, bundled in his fists. “Love, I need you to stay here,” he said, tone as gentle as it could be while he was in a hurry. “Okay?” He asked, pressing a kiss onto Yoongi’s head before nearly running out the door, the voices increasing in volume as the opening allowed his boyfriend’s toned body through, muffling them as it shut.
It was weird, being alone. Despite the running, the yelling, it was oddly quiet in the bedroom, Jeongguk’s warmth still clinging onto the bed sheets where he had lain only a few minutes ago. It made a funny feeling bubble up in Yoongi’s chest, not panic, but some form of agitation, nervous ticks crawling down his spine. As Jeongguk’s heat dissipated into the air, Yoongi grew cold, shivering between the blankets that had betrayed their purpose, letting the newly chilled atmosphere caress Yoongi’s naked skin.

He heeded Jeongguk’s words, but wanted to know what was happening, wanted to know why everyone seemed so panicked. Yoongi pulled the warm blankets aside, standing from the bed to reach for his robe hanging on the wardrobe. Sliding the silk on his skin to cover the pale white, he tied the front before he slowly walked to the door, walking down the hall to the window to see the front door. The curtains blocked most of the day’s light out, casting the hall in a constant state of twilight, the chandelier on the ceiling providing most of the needed brightness throughout the day.

Taking a deep breath, Yoongi reached for a corner of the curtain, hesitating. It wasn’t like he hadn’t seen a body before; he had created a fair few himself. The fact was, the last body he had seen was Zack’s, bleeding out onto the floor in front of a little scrapped caravan, a knife sticking out of his skin, painting his clothes red. It made him think of the scary satisfaction that it had brought him, and the happiness he felt over killing scared him about himself, made him fear his own actions. If he found it so easy to take life away, would that mean he would be able to stop? It worried him to think that the power to take someone’s life was so easy, when the creation of life was such a laborious task.

He pulled a section of the curtain aside, taking a breath before he looked out the glass, eyes finding the direct front of the house.

It wasn’t a scene that was easy to miss, a circle of armed men around a centre Yoongi couldn’t quite see, eyes still not fully focused from his sleep. He blinked, blurs coming into focus as he looked again, and the glass fogged us as he rushed an exhale, air escaping his lungs.

There was indeed a body, a recognisable enough shape, but the sight of it made Yoongi almost feel sick. There was what looked like a spear in the ground, its tip pointing to the sky, stained red with blood. There was a head about two meters up from the floor, severed at the neck, and Yoongi thankfully couldn’t see the face from the distance, but the smeared red all over the skin was enough to make Yoongi know this was a warning, a message. The head was about thirty centimetres higher than the start of the neck, the shoulders, the wooden length passing out of what looked to be the throat, arms hanging limply at the sides of the upper chest, another straight cut just under the ribs, close enough to show bone.

And Yoongi still couldn’t breathe, all air refusing to enter his throat as he surveyed the waist, the
hips, which were positioned another thirty centimetres below the chest, naked with red patterns all over the skin, what looked like chunks of flesh removed from the thighs and calves. The feet were separated from the ankles, lying on the floor like a pair of shoes at the front door, a pool of blood below the soles. It was all a message, it was a sick, sick message, and it reminded Yoongi too much of what had happened.

A shuddering breath left his mouth, spreading condensation onto the glass, and he stumbled backwards, arms flying until he gripped onto the wall. Yoongi couldn’t help it as he sunk to his knees, legs revealed out of the robe, nails digging into the surface as he tried to ground himself to something, anything. It was like the whole house had been abandoned, now not a sound in earshot apart from Yoongi’s own rushed breathing, head feeling light and spinning upon his shoulders, feeling like a carousel with no breaks to stop the continuous rotations. Coughs ripped themselves from his chest, making him curl into himself, gagging at the feeling of his throat trying to leave his own body.

It was painful, it was so, so painful, and Yoongi felt like he was dying as he tried to calm himself but nothing was working. His throat burned, hands shaking as he lost his grip, falling onto his side on the floor, unable to stay upright without the help of the solid support. He heard mewling, Keopi appearing from the hallway, but even her presence wasn’t helping Yoongi feel less like he was dying as per usual, her breaths on his face making the air feel even harder to breathe.

Green eyes were the last thing he could see before his eyes fell shut, body giving up on functioning, shutting down as his lack of oxygen made his brain spin faster and faster, the ground nowhere in sight. It was hell, this feeling of helplessness. It made Yoongi wish he was unconscious, but his mind refused to leave, choked breaths enough to keep him in agony.

Keopi’s weight rested next to his chest, her fur tickling the skin that had become exposed from the slipping robe, strangely solid in his delusional state. Perhaps it could be seen as mercy, that he couldn’t focus on anything other than his incompetent breathing, on the cat curled up beside his protruding ribs. A single mercy amongst the suffering that surrounded him.

“Yoongi?”

He heard his name called softly through the overwhelming fuzz, the spots of static dotting his vision as he tried to blink, eyelids too heavy to stay open for too long, as though they had weights attached to his eyelashes. Perhaps he heard his name called again, but it wasn’t enough to pierce through the numbness, a buzzing sound rising in volume between his ears, throbbing in time with his oxygen deprived heart.

A pair of hands appeared on his side, Yoongi opening his mouth to scream before he realised he couldn’t release the breath, choking instead and gagging as his chest revolted against him, tears
falling out of his eyes in steady streams. He felt himself being put upright, a pair of hands on his cheeks, familiar hands but not enough, hands of his family but not the ones he needed. A deep honey voice swam through his mind, and Taehyung’s face appeared in splodges in front of his eyes, but he needed Jeongguk, needed the only one who could make this right.

Taehyung’s fingers moved, one set to his shoulder, the other under his knees and the bottom of his robe, and he felt his body leave the floor. His coughing had subsided, and he was left only with his short, sharp breaths, a quiet meow cutting through the pain. Taehyung murmured a soft reassurance to Keopi from where she was lying on the floor, carefully pulling Yoongi to his chest before starting to walk, pace quick as he left the window behind, the corridor feeling longer than Yoongi knew it was.

A sudden pain ripped through Yoongi’s chest, sprawling out over his skin, and it made him stop breathing, body in shock from the electricity running over his nerves. He could hear Taehyung’s worried voice, frantic words, but none of them registered, his breathing starting again as broken as before, pain coming and going in random spasms. He felt the younger start to run, footsteps echoing in Yoongi’s mind until it was all he could hear, the thundering pace sending shots of pain to his head, squeezing his eyes shut to try and combat the feeling.

Nothing was working, and Yoongi felt another ripple of pain, a choked off scream all he could manage out of his chest, Taehyung’s shouts strangely silent as if his mind couldn’t deal with all the sights, sounds, feelings. Another pair of hands appeared on his body, but this time he recognised the fingers right away, the touch he needed lifting him from Taehyung, embracing him tightly to a chest.

“Yoongi?” He heard Jeongguk breathe, and the voice echoed around his mind, the sound crashing into his skull repeatedly until it was all he could hear at all. It was painful, it was so, so, painful, agony dripping down his neck, like hot wax from a candle. “Hey, hey, Yoongi, I need you to relax for me, all right, love?” echoed Jeongguk’s voice again, but there was no new pain, only the throbbing of his pulse between his ears.

And he wanted to respond, but he couldn’t, not with his whole skull revolting against his body, his heart beating as loud as the industrial jets that sometimes passed over the house, making Yoongi’s chest lurch against his skin. It was so uncomfortable, and he just wished he could fall unconscious, but nothing seemed to be working, head hanging onto the last thread his sanity could provide.

“Yoongi, I need you to listen to me,” he heard, and it almost seemed like Jeongguk was begging, the sound a strange thing to hear over his staggering breaths when Jeongguk never begged for anything, sometimes whined at the others, but never begged.

Yoongi was jolted by the feeling of lips against his own, making him hold his breath, air unable to
pass out of his body. It made his heart jump, and his lungs seemed to scream quieter, blood not pumping as fast as before as his mind settled. He gasped an inhale of air as Jeongguk’s lips left his own, but it wasn’t as rushed, it was almost like he had run a marathon instead of his lungs refusing to work. Finally, he felt his brain settle, felt his thoughts become clearer and clearer, vision returning in puzzle pieces until the image of Jeongguk was formed in front of him, and that almost broke his heart, made a sob escape his throat.

There were tears in the younger’s eyes, his doe eyes which Yoongi loved to pieces, his eyes which were now filled with despair. Brown was shining in the light of what Yoongi recognised as one of the lounges, his back against one of the seats, Jeongguk kneeling on the floor in front of him.

Another sob ripped through Yoongi’s chest, and it made Jeongguk’s eyes widen, in a flash the smaller was pulled against his chest, strong arms wrapping around his back and shoulders, holding him as he shook. He couldn’t stop the sobs from leaving his mouth, salty tears pouring from his eyes and falling into Jeongguk’s blazer, causing the black fabric to darken even further.

“Oh, Yoongi,” he heard his boyfriend murmur, starting to rock back and forth, the elder hiccupping through sobs, which had reduced in force from the start.

A soft melody started near to Yoongi’s ear, Jeongguk’s crystal voice singing quietly what sounded like a lullaby, the tune making Yoongi feel heavier and heavier. He didn’t want to fall asleep, didn’t want the fatigue that came with waking up. He wanted to stay here in Jeongguk’s arms, in the present, he wanted to feel okay.

“Guk,” Yoongi choked, hands gripping onto his shirt, probably causing creases in the fabric.

It was the only word his mouth could move to form, the only thing that could slip out between the breaths and sobs, the only thing he could focus on. He pulled harder on the material, Jeongguk’s hands cradling his body over the thin robe, making his body relax and his muscles untense, the younger’s touch like a sedative to his mind.

“It’s okay, love, you’re okay,” Jeongguk’s voice soothed from beside him, not stopping his rocking movements, for which Yoongi was grateful.

It made his mind stop bubbling, the swirls of pain calming until they were almost dissipated completely, everything trying to order itself again in his brain. It was like a school library after all the students had taken their exams, so unorganised and hectic that it would take days to fix, but by the start of the next year every book was in alphabetical order, gleaming on endless wooden shelves.
“I thought, for a minute, I wouldn’t be able to calm you,” Jeongguk confessed, hoarse voice cutting through the rhythmic sobs and hiccups. It made Yoongi pull in a breath, the younger sounding so sad, so concerned, and it was all because of him. “You were choking, and coughing, and breathing so quickly and I couldn’t... I felt useless, and I worry every time that I won’t be able to help,” his voice broke off, last words short and sharp, and the words seemed almost frustrated, like Jeongguk was angry with himself. It made Yoongi’s heart shatter into fragments, splintering into sharp pieces of glass.

“I’m terrified of the idea that I’ll try, and try, but I’ll just have to watch you suffer, watch you pass out from a lack of oxygen, and I’ll know I did nothing, nothing,” and a sob of Jeongguk’s own sounded quietly from his throat, Yoongi trying to pull the younger closer, straddling his waist to wrap his thighs around his body, Jeongguk pulling him onto his lap.

He shifted until he was the one against the back of the couch, and they stayed in silence for a while, only breathing breaking the atmosphere around them. There were so many words unspoken, so many things Yoongi wanted to see, but he knew Jeongguk knew, knew it was the same for him. Both of them weren’t the best with spoken words, Yoongi better with lyrics, Jeongguk better with actions, but it worked.

Intentionally heavy footsteps sounded from the door, Yoongi not moving but Jeongguk’s head snapped up, surveying the person in the doorway. From his tense muscles, Yoongi concluded it was a worker, not a member of their family, Jeongguk’s body on guard as the person halted in the entrance of the room, footsteps muffled by the soft carpet. A man’s voice awkwardly cleared his throat, and Yoongi felt Jeongguk nod, a jerk of his head giving away his tense stance.

“Mr Kim asked me to get you, and say that he wanted everyone in the main dining room,” the unfamiliar voice sounded, Jeongguk nodded again, the man’s shoes turning around and his soles tapping on the floor until he was far away enough for the sound to completely fade.

Jeongguk let a sigh escape his lips, the air warm against Yoongi’s neck, and he stood, still holding Yoongi to his chest, hands moving to his thighs. Carefully, he moved Yoongi’s robe until it was covering as much skin as possible, pale, marked thighs becoming hidden from public view. Perhaps it wasn’t the best idea for Yoongi to only be wearing the thin silken robe, the parting proving to be too unpredictable at hiding Yoongi’s chest and legs, but there was no time for Jeongguk to get him something else to wear.

The house was big enough for the journey to the large, public dining room to take a moment, Yoongi knowing Jeongguk knew the route like the back of his hand. There were two dining rooms in the grand building, one smaller, more private, less luxurious. That was the one they used most often, when they were just as a family, eating meals or occasionally when the others did homework. It was nice, made Yoongi feel like they were a normal family. The other room was almost the complete opposite to the first. It was much larger, with diamond chandeliers, silken
table cloths and expensive dark wooden furniture, paintings and valuable possessions on display all over the room, patterns on the high ceiling. It was used for meetings, celebrations, when grandeur and wealth had to be showcased to visitors, to workers, or when Yoongi wanted to play the antique grand piano in the corner of the room. It was one of Yoongi’s favourite things in the world, but right now he didn't have the energy to care for it.

It was the second dining room they had been summoned to, the first never having workers inside for formal meetings, especially one that Yoongi knew was this serious. The heavy door was already open; the sound of voices drifting to where Jeongguk was right by the door gave away the sheer volume of people present in the space. It made Yoongi try and shrink away, Jeongguk holding him firmly as he entered the doorway, walking confidently over to the seat reserved for him.

When Yoongi looked, he saw the table surrounded by people, the family at the furthest head of the table, Namjoon and Seokjin at the very end, bracketed by Hoseok and Jimin, Taehyung next Jimin and another employee Yoongi recognised to be the head of some sort of technology division. There was an empty chair next to Hoseok, which Jeongguk strode over to holding Yoongi with one arm as he pulled the seat out.

There was normally a vacant chair next to Jeongguk, which stayed empty, Yoongi not attending meetings often enough for the seat to have its owner present. However, the chair was now filled, an unknown woman sitting straight next to Jeongguk. It almost cemented the decision Yoongi had made, labelled him as someone no longer with authoritative power in the room. He didn’t know how he felt about that, the semi-isolation he had been subjected to, by his own independent will.

Jeongguk sat in his space, positioning Yoongi on his lap so that he faced Hoseok at the side, legs over one of Jeongguk’s thighs. His robe almost slipped, revealing more pale leg, but Jeongguk quickly caught it, placing a hand over the opening on Yoongi’s upper thigh, seeming almost possessive in the busy room. He didn’t remove his hold once he tucked the robe to one side, and it made Yoongi feel safe, protected.

“Today’s topic of discussion is the threat which was displayed this morning,” Namjoon started, the room falling dead silent as he spoke, the high up employees around the table knowing better than to speak. Yoongi was always fascinated by the power his parents held, the way they could control a room with a single gesture, or word. “The perpetrators responsible are unknown, but we have possible suspects singled out.”

“This is a list of groups we don’t have a current alliance with, and a list of groups which were initially against working with us, we expect everyone to investigate their sector’s relevant information, and try and find a link somewhere,” Seokjin declared, and he was met by silence, Yoongi not surprised at the lack of voices.
It didn’t seem so, but Seokjin was probably worse to disrespect when compared to Namjoon. It was the way he wouldn’t kill you, but would make you suffer, bankrupt and isolated and unable to reach out for help. Namjoon’s pistol was mercy compared to Seokjin’s fun.

Yoongi shifted in Jeongguk’s lap, his head trying to find a sufficient enough place on the younger’s shoulder to sleep on, but the suit was uncomfortable against his skin. He muffled a low whine that threatened to slip out of his mouth, but he was pretty sure Jeongguk still heard, a hand coming up to Yoongi’s hair, fingers lightly threading through the strands, probably trying to soothe him. Yoongi was too tired to care that Jeongguk was babying him in front of every single important person in the company, too exhausted to think of what could be said, rumours able to be spread. It wasn’t like their relationship was a secret, anyway.

He wanted to shift again, but the idea of attracting more attention to himself made him feel sick, eyes all dragging over his body if he made too much of a distraction. It made him dizzy; skin heating up until it was uncomfortable, heart beating far too loud in his head. Relief flowed through him as Jeongguk shifted underneath him, carefully repositioning his body at a different angle, and it was perfect, more comfortable than any sort of five star hotel bed.

Voices continued as Yoongi zoned out, the conversation still coming into his ears but not registering in his brain, people he recognised and people he didn’t all filling Namjoon and Seokjin in on the situation, Hoseok, Jimin and Taehyung also sometimes having a say. Jeongguk was oddly silent, especially at a meeting of this importance, the normally introverted younger taking full responsibility and control in the work environment. Yoongi put it down to the stress from before, Yoongi’s condition probably not making the other feel as full of energy as he normally was.

“Sir, there was no foreign DNA or evidence on the body, all clothes and surfaces examined,” a woman reported, and Yoongi heard the shuffling of papers, the passing of sheets around the table. “The person evidently knew what they were doing.”

The room’s steady noise became pushed to the back of Yoongi’s mind, his eyes falling shut and his thoughts slowing, Jeongguk’s hand still brushing through his hair.
Yesterday (01.06.19) I saw BTS at Wembley and I died. We had floor seats and we were so close and it was just amazing except for a few things like the fansite near us which was caught and removed from the concert and the middle aged woman holding a massive 'MARRY ME JK' sign which even spelt his name wrong in hangul. But overall, it was amazing, even if every single member was mocking our accent (Tae saying innit is now the highlight of my life).

I need Namjoon to become the Prime Minister because then a) we would both live in London and b) I want to be able to make jokes about how Theresa May resigned in May and Namjoon became PM in June. That would be perfect.

Anyway, enjoy.

With everything that had happened in such a short amount of time, the entire morning like a twisted nightmare, Yoongi couldn’t bring himself to listen to much of what had been said at the meeting. He didn’t know how everyone else was so attentive, not when there was a threat to their lives left right at their doorstep, arranged like a gift for a murder of crows. It was times like this where Yoongi was grateful he was no longer expected to remember information from the gatherings, didn’t have to remember all the vital information he was sure people were providing, semantics of the event.

Instead, he spent the entirety of the meeting curled up on Jeongguk’s lap, restlessly sleeping and latching onto the comfort he needed, never letting go of the grip he had on Jeongguk’s shirt. There was no protest to his presence, his whole family knowing how much he needed the comfort, the other people in the meeting not having the authority to ask. Had Yoongi been parted from Jeongguk, he probably would have been so much worse, the effects of everything having an even larger toll on his body, his mind, his entire being.

Vaguely, Yoongi remembered words being said towards the end of the meeting which must have been to do with safety and security, remembering in his fogged mind that just that day when Jeongguk carried him past the front door, it had at least two more added locks, the doorframe reinforced. A loose thought in his head whispered that it appeared as though the entrance was being prepped for resisting some sort of invasion, the fort of a kingdom, and Yoongi wouldn’t be surprised if that was the case.

If somebody had been able to enter the house grounds, which was past multiple gates and monitored walls, cameras, a security check, then the older door wouldn’t be enough. An element of that was what terrified Yoongi, the fact that it had been so easy for someone to do this, to kill the guards on duty in silence and lay out their threat in perfect positioning, nobody in the house none
the wiser. It set up all sorts of what ifs, a good half of them relating to everything that had happened with Zack Goldeerd, the situation having been so much worse had he managed to pull off a home invasion.

After finally sleeping steadily for the night, Yoongi had been ready to spend the entire day in bed, Jeongguk at his side as his comfort and personal heater. It didn’t help his state of mind to realise he had woken up alone, it being one of the first times since the incident that Jeongguk or someone else hadn’t been in the room, or even in the bed with him. The past weeks had been strangely comforting always having someone nearby, it seeming overbearing and yet brought only security to Yoongi’s head, the reassurance he wasn’t alone again, couldn’t be taken.

It really wasn’t good waking up alone, not even a faint trace of body heat in the bed to show that someone had been there recently, not another living thing other than himself, even Keopi missing from where she would doze at the end of the bed. It was something that made his already high anxiety levels spike, Yoongi confused and worried as to where everybody was, quickly pulling himself up with unsteady limbs to stumble across the floor. He wasn’t panicking, but there was definitely a veiled threat behind his ribcage, throat squeezing uncomfortably as he took a deep breath.

Jeongguk had changed his clothes from the robe to actual items, a large black hoodie which belonged to said boyfriend and a pair of grey sweatpants Yoongi was pretty sure belonged to Jimin, the school’s cheerleading logo printed onto the side in bold lines. The change was something Yoongi was thankful for as he clumsily opened the door, almost tripping over his own feet in haste. He wanted to find Jeongguk, at least wanted to know where he was, small comfort in being told his location.

Looking up, he almost froze when he noticed that there were two bodyguards standing outside the bedroom door, both looking armed to the teeth, multiple guns and weapons visible over their suits, terribly hidden under blazers. Their backs were stood as straight as possible, looking around the space attentively, and Yoongi figured out quickly that they were there to watch him, keep him safe in substitute.

He imagined the reason the guards weren’t stood inside the actual room was because Jeongguk would be furious if anybody they didn’t consider family entered their bedroom while Yoongi was the only one inside, especially while he was sleeping. The younger’s borderline possessive and caring tendencies hadn’t let anyone even be the possibility of a threat after Zack, eliminating risk, setting new rules Namjoon and Seokjin were happy to endorse. The men at the door probably served the purpose to ensure nobody went into the room and nobody unusual came out somehow, an alarm able to be raised the second something out of the ordinary happened.

Ignoring the guards at that moment, Yoongi thought to ask whether they knew where Jeongguk was until he realised his throat was too tight to possible talk, any sound only coming out as a
squeak. In light of that, he tried to slow down the pace he was walking at, tried to seem completely neutral as to not prompt someone to talk to him. That would just trigger a severe downwards spiral, although maybe that wouldn’t be too bad if it summoned Jeongguk to his side, conjured him from thin air.

There were unfamiliar people in each room of the house he looked into as he stumbled down the corridor, trying not to trip on the stairs as he checked every room, eventually his skittish feet bringing him to the kitchen. All the windows all looked as though they were being replaced, the new glass being inputted twice as thick as the panes before, solid, probably bulletproof. Namjoon and Seokjin seemed to be taking no risks, leaving no vulnerabilities in the house, new locks on the inside doors too, Yoongi grateful for the upgrades.

If he didn’t understand the paranoia his parents felt, then he would probably call them mad, but he had been plagued with anxiety long enough to know that nothing was overkill. It looked like they were building a war bunker, a fort, equipped to defend and fight anybody daring enough to approach its walls. In some way, that comparison was true, the home the place they would find themselves in the event of a fight, ambush, no safety precautions too much in the event of an attack.

There was once again not one member of his family in the kitchen when Yoongi peered through the door, only workers securing locks on the thick glass, guards watching their every move. Nobody looked up to meet his eyes as he frowned, scanning the room, trying to push panic down and possibly think of where everyone had gone. Like clockwork, almost every morning his family gathered in the kitchen, the coffee lifeline some of them depended on being situated in that room, as well as tea, food.

Those things were normally his family’s main priorities, but the room was deserted of familiar faces, alien to not have his loud brothers in the room stealing things from the cabinets, Namjoon trying desperately to read papers he had forgotten to go over for a coming up meeting that day, Seokjin lightly hitting the teenagers with his spatula when he caught them taking sugary snacks, Yoongi laughing from his spot on the counter. It was all wrong, and it made him have to take a second to hunch over, hanging onto the doorframe as he begged his lungs to breathe before he attracted attention.

Someone seemed to be answering his wishes for once, the weight on his chest retreating for a moment, allowing Yoongi to turn around and enter the hallway again. He barely thought of anything as he walked down the wooden floorboards, quickly looking into every room he could find on the ground floor, pausing as he came to the large doors of the formal dining room. That was barely the name their family used for it, what it had come to be most used for its rechristened title; the meeting room.

As soon as he noticed his family’s absence, there had been a nagging suspicion in his mind that
there was a gathering he didn’t know about going on, his household never this quiet anywhere in
the home. He also knew Jeongguk wouldn’t leave him if there wasn’t good reason, wouldn’t have
deserted Yoongi in their bed the day after one of his worst panic attacks for a while. This made
everything more complicated, Yoongi realising he could disrupt something important if he asked
for Jeongguk, but the need in his mind was telling him to find his boyfriend.

A team of six guards were lined up by the grand wooden doors of the room, each holding a gun in
their hand already, at least three more pistols visible on their bodies, the giveaway lines on their
black blazers revealing the concealed items. Yoongi recognised none of them, four men and two
women, only one of them looking remotely Korean, the rest probably the best bodyguards
Namjoon and Seokjin could employ across the globe. They all had the exact same facial
expression; all had faces like stone, carved from rock to be looking straight ahead into the corridor,
none even trying to meet Yoongi’s eyes.

With a small huff, Yoongi meekly approached the Korean looking man, waiting for the eye contact
that never came. It was like they were robots, programmed only to look forward for danger, not to
live if it wasn’t to fulfil their purpose. An element of it freaked Yoongi out, the scene looking like
something almost out of a science fiction movie, brainwashed servants waiting for commands. He
already found it difficult to talk to people he didn’t know, these disconnected beings making his
efforts even harder, anxiety in every swallow of saliva.

After a moment of nothing, the desperation for his boyfriend forced Yoongi to take matters into his
own two hands, fingers shaking as they bared the weight of his actions. In a final effort to grasp
someone’s attention, Yoongi began to reach forwards to tap the shoulder of the man who gave
most promise of speaking his language. As soon as his hand got within centimetres of the blazer’s
fabric, the man jerked back as if he had been shocked, distancing himself with a few steps from
where Yoongi was stood. It made Yoongi jump, barely breathing as he retracted his fingers
quickly, staring warily at the guard before him, who at least was now making eye contact with
him, brown eyes emotionless as they met Yoongi’s own.

“I’m sorry, sir, but we have been forbidden to touch you,” he said, thankfully speaking in Korean,
although not without a slight American tilt to his words. “Mr Kim also said we weren’t to speak to
you without being spoken to first, my apologies if we seemed to intend disrespect.”

As much as the man’s actions had sparked the panic to almost set fire in his brain, it finally
explained to Yoongi the blank responses all morning, the jerking movement that almost sent his
heart out of his throat. The words themselves were a surprise, however, especially when there had
never been distrust within their household staff before. Seokjin and Namjoon were never that strict
about everyone’s conduct around Yoongi, always happy for him to make conversation with the
bodyguards if he pleased on rare occasion, once even asking a girl who worked for them back in
Korea to help him do his makeup before a meeting and his family had been otherwise busy.
There had never before been such a large divide between their family and employees, of course there being authoritative distance in their hierarchy, but nothing more than that, everything unspoken. To Yoongi, it seemed like a slight overreaction to the situation, until he really thought. Would one of their bodyguards be able to betray them like this? Would one be willing to conspire and leave a dead body on their doorstep, threaten their whole family?

“Mr Kim? Which Mr Kim do you mean?” Yoongi asked, trying to ignore what his mind was wondering and instead focusing on the matter at hand, his voice not managing to stop the puzzlement of his words seeping through into his tone.

“Jeongguk Kim, sir,” was the answer he received, and Yoongi found his mind to not feel as surprised at the answer as he would have if anybody else’s name had been given.

Once the guard was satisfied he had responded to Yoongi’s question, he reverted back to the state the teenager had found him in, diverted eyes and motionless posture, gaze once again fixed on the end of the hallway. An element of it did make panic crawl up his throat, nothing being helpful in his search for his boyfriend’s comfort, everything in the morning making Yoongi regret waking up before Jeongguk returned and brought him the reassurance he desperately searched for. This wasn’t helpful, didn’t aid Yoongi, just made him feel even more out of place, alien in his own home.

At least the answer to who was responsible for everyone’s conduct was given, it being Jeongguk’s commands that shifted reality, made something ugly claw its way through his gut. Now he heard the name, it wasn’t that surprising to him as the truth, this seeming like exactly the type of thing a worried Jeongguk would do, trying to eliminate any sort of risk that could affect Yoongi. The elder wouldn’t be surprised if he was told that his boyfriend threatened bodily harm if people didn’t do as he asked, followed every rule in complete form.

An element of that was just Jeongguk, his possessive tendencies on full show, the need he had to protect Yoongi at all times, from all things. Really, what had surprised him was the name given, the way the two halves of the name sounded both familiar and yet strange when together, matching puzzle pieces with a printing error of the picture. It wasn’t that Jeongguk hadn’t used ‘Kim’ before, he used it at school for legality, and sometimes in foreign business meetings with the aim of displaying status, but it was that their own personal guards weren’t using his original ‘Jeon’.

Normally within their family, Jeongguk was one of the only members to use his original surname, didn’t change it in common speech. Taehyung was already a Kim by birth, the change entirely unnecessary, and Jimin liked to match with the younger, so both used Kim on a daily basis. Yoongi not even realising Jimin’s surname was actually Park until they were filling out a doctor’s form about half a year after the elder joined the family. Hoseok occasionally used Jung, but Yoongi had an almost-proven hunch that he preferred Kim because of the sense of family, of belonging, and Hoseok was also normally referred to as a Kim in most situations anyway, only official legal
documents different, like Jimin.

Yoongi himself liked Kim more than Min, but often used Min because it was what he was used to, change often not registering very well in his mind. Kim seemed more euphonious for him to hear because of his past, the Kim family being the ones who saved him, the Min household he was born into being the ones that made him suffer. Despite it being two years, the change of name was difficult for Yoongi to stick to, it sounding odd to say with his own tongue, even when the two names had the same general sound, practically rhyming.

Out of their family, Jeongguk was different, his situation differing from the rest. His family, despite kicking him into the streets for being gay, for wanting to study something they didn’t like, did love him, had never done anything wrong until their fatal move. Despite what happened, the younger rarely cursed at his parents, never seemed to truly hate them for what they did, still a heart that missed his mother, father, brother. Yoongi had always reasoned that that was why he often used Jeon when stating his name, the attachment, the memory.

Something about this was different, very different, and Yoongi didn’t know how he felt about the younger using their parents name out of choice, what the motivation was. It was fair if it was because the younger wanted to feel like more of a part of the family, wanted to feel connected, like he had a place in the insane situation they were in. What worried Yoongi was if the younger took the name for the legacy, nothing other than the fear it inspired, the worship from everyone in their circle of business.

Not that it was bad, Kim being a very noble name, a powerful name dependant on linage, and everyone knew Seokjin definitely had some sort of high class background; you’d have to be blind to miss it. It was the Kim name connected with Kim Namjoon and Kim Seokjin that was a name of power, brought command, control. If you were in the business they were, and you heard the name Kim, it was either because you were about to die or about to get luxury.

Mutter the name in a meeting, and you automatically get the whole room’s undivided attention, no matter whether it was in the criminal underground or large scale technological industry. The name Kim was feared, was worshipped, renowned, and Yoongi was terrified that that was Jeongguk’s only intention, that he wanted people to fear him, fear disobeying him, fear Yoongi. Yoongi had always been cautious, aware, terrified of power hungry people, people of that sort just reminding him of his childhood, his father, the pain.

“Are my family in a meeting?” He managed to ask, swallowing down any nerves and worries threatening to erupt.

It wouldn’t be ideal to show one of the guards his inner turmoil, how much his anxiety was threatening to burst, even when realistically he knew Jeongguk. The younger wasn’t power hungry,
wasn’t a mindlessly violent, selfish person. Whatever his reasoning for utilising the name, it must be fair, but Yoongi would feel better if the other was by his side to ask, to hold him like he was meant to be doing after such a day of trauma as the one before.

The man before him nodded once in answer with a fast jerk of his head, the whole thing looking robotic, mechanic, body having long moved back into place, posture perfect and body looking tensed, alert, waiting for a threat to come at any point. It really was unnerving, and Yoongi was almost ready to find a way into the room himself before the guard was speaking, actually looking him in the eyes.

“Yes sir, and we were ordered to not allow anybody inside, Mr Kim asking to be notified if you asked for him,” he recited like it was out of a teleprompter in front of his face, Yoongi almost wincing at the sheer formality of his words.

“Well, I’m here,” he shrugged uncomfortably, and almost jumped as he watched one of the guards place her gun she was holding in her holster from the edge of his vision, Yoongi turning to see as she firmly knocked one dark knuckle on the door, almost the same colour as the rich brown oak.

She entered after a second, voluminous frizzy dark hair disappearing behind the wooden barrier, and Yoongi felt his chest lurch as he was again cut off from where his boyfriend was. That was a new thing, that Yoongi wasn’t allowed to enter the meeting room without a message. Before his leave, even over the last few weeks, he used to slip through the door into the space without anyone but guests noticing, sitting next to Jeongguk or on his lap, not even listening most of the time.

Realistically, he knew it was because of the recent events, knew they would be discussing ways to extract information and solve the issue, his family not wanting Yoongi to hear the exact methods they were planning. That was fine, Yoongi would rather not think of all the murder that was bound to occur, but the situation was becoming annoying, the isolation, the separation. He needed Jeongguk, needed his presence to comfort him, calm the anxiety threatening to bubble over, but there was a wall keeping them apart, leaving Yoongi vulnerable to everything in the open.

If he focused, Yoongi could hear faint voices coming from inside the door, the wood not being fully sealed from when the woman entered, but it was closed enough for Yoongi not to see anything through a gap. He definitely heard Jeongguk speak, but it was in English, and Yoongi hadn’t heard the foreign language in weeks, his brain almost refusing to try to translate as his fatigue and anxiety festered. He barely heard the words anyway, and English was too difficult a puzzle to try and piece together when half the squares were missing.

After only about half a minute, Yoongi waiting patiently outside in the hallway’s unnerving silence, the door opened again, the woman appearing and pushing the wood closed behind her. It completely blocked out all the sounds from within the room, and it made Yoongi realise Jeongguk
wasn’t coming, that he would have to wait to see the person he needed the most. This wasn’t usual, not what he was used to, normally able to seek out his boyfriend’s comfort whenever he needed, this change of routine not something Yoongi could understand.

“Mr Kim apologises, and says this meeting isn’t suitable for your presence,” she filled him in, her Korean perfect, eyes trying to avoid contact as she spoke, the light reflecting off of her dark cheeks like metallic bronze.

Yoongi refused to let the shaking breath he felt in his throat give away his desperation, the fact that his suspicions were true making his chest ache. Jeongguk wasn’t coming, nobody was coming, and it made a part of him want to sob, the warmth he craved for shut out past a closed door. This was his fault; all his fault for making the decision to separate himself, that he was foolish enough to think for a second that everything would stay the same. Of course he would be isolated; of course he was going to become more of an outcast than he already was, more of a pretty trinket than a honoured member of the family. It hurt, like a kick to the ribs, and Yoongi tried to think of anything else other than the feeling of being cast aside.

“He asks that you wait for him in the third lounge, and says that the meeting will be over shortly, sir,” she bowed slightly, taking the gun back into her palm and moving back to her original place.

At least Jeongguk would see him after, told him where to go instead of giving a vague promise, the direction enough for Yoongi to latch onto. As much as the others had sworn their dynamic would stay the same, the subtle changes were enough to cause Yoongi to be upset, even when he knew his family didn’t mean it. They loved him, he knew they did, but you could also love a pretty necklace, or a detailed painting, anything that was deemed to have value, and he worried he was becoming a material item, something to love as you owned it.

“Is that all he said?” Yoongi asked quietly, hopefully, and he tried not to sound too sad, too dejected, didn’t want the bodyguards’ pity when this had been his doing, his decision.

“Yes sir,” she nodded, once, as robotic as the man had been.

Disappointment settled in his gut, the urge to cry making his eyes sting, but he refused to let them fall. Despite how he felt, he didn’t want to embarrass himself in front of this audience, the people who couldn’t even console him because they weren’t allowed to touch. He needed to pull himself together, at least for a little while, stitch his body back into a whole form, no missing pieces throwing him off balance. Crying now would make him feel worse, would make the anxiety in his chest really act up, and the more he could avoid the panic he felt in his lungs, the better.
“Okay, then, thank you for your help,” he directed to all of them with a polite manufactured smile, turning around and walking slowly down the corridor, in the general direction of the requested lounge.

The manor was old, built by the English when they colonised the area, and so just like dining rooms, they had multiple lounges in the house as well. At first, Yoongi hadn’t seen the point of the three different lounges, but the more he lived here the more he liked them, the privacy they could get without needing to retreat to a bedroom. It could get a bit claustrophobic in their old apartment in Korea, too many people in a home built for four at most, Namjoon and Seokjin’s apartment large for them, small for the family.

The first lounge was the largest, the grandest, near to the front door and the most formal dining room, normally used with guests or for social situations, rarely set foot in by the others if it wasn’t necessary. An element of it Yoongi found daunting, with the way Seokjin and Hoseok ensured the room was spotless, the elder threatening to stab you for treading dirt into the cream coloured carpet. ‘It’s about making the right impressions,’ Seokjin would say before a social meeting, violently fluffing the feathered cushions.

Yoongi knew the elder was right, especially when it was them, people expected to be of such high standard. It wouldn’t do for one of the most powerful families across the globe to have a dirty carpet when guests were meant to be intimidated by their wealth, everything having to be perfect. The image was one they needed to maintain, one of many spanning the areas they worked in, having to be feared in criminal rings, worshipped in civil business, loved in the eyes of the public.

The needed maintenance of the room was what made the second lounge so helpful, it being the one most often used by their family on a day to day basis. It was situated on the ground floor like the first lounge, but it was smaller, more cosy and homely, and was often where they spent the evening, lounging about on the velvet couches, watching cheesy American TV shows. It had less wealth on show, more memories displayed in family pictures and homemade art as opposed to the expensive trinkets and paintings in the first room, more personal, closer to them instead of who they were meant to be.

Even though he had a strong emotional attachment to the second lounge, the one he associated with family, with rest, if he was being honest the third was Yoongi’s favourite. It was the only one on the next floor, away from the upper floor with the frequently used bedrooms, the constant commotion of business on the ground level, the perfect place for a pocket of calm. The room itself was on the side of the house near to Yoongi’s music studio and Taehyung’s art room, a hidden, private hideaway people don’t expect to find, a doorway at the end of the corridor.

The seclusion was probably about half the appeal, it being nice that it was out of the way of everything, more isolated than most rooms in their hectic home. It wasn’t as large, only had two smaller sofas inside, no TV or expensive decorations hanging from the walls. There was an array
of books, photos, and Yoongi loved how comfortable the room was, himself and Jeongguk probably used it the most for just spending time together, blessed by the absence of their brothers. Unlike Namjoon and Seokjin, their bedroom didn’t also feature a seating area, so it was nice to have this space to themselves outside their room, domestic and making Yoongi feel like his whole life didn’t revolve around crime.

As he walked along the hallway to the desired room, he tried to keep himself completely calm by focusing on the décor, the walls, paintings, and for a moment he paused to look at the newly implemented window just at the top of the stairs. Looking around, all the working people were gone from the area except the occasional guard patrolling, standing by the stairs. It allowed Yoongi to feel more comfortable, and reaching out a finger, he touched the cold pane of the window.

Almost immediately he noticed that the glass was thick, thicker than Yoongi thought it was earlier, and was without a doubt, definitely bulletproof. There were intricate locks on the inside of each window, also cold to the touch, bumps and outlines under his fingertips. The metal pieces looked like they required a code to be opened, a six digit combination number wheel right at the bottom of the glass in gold. If Yoongi didn’t know better, how much it was needed, he would have laughed at the complicatedness, thought his parents were over thinking, but he stayed silent.

Coming away from the window, Yoongi carried on his journey, seeking out the familiarity of one of his favourite rooms of the house. There were no guards in sight as he entered the lounge, but the window was already replaced, Yoongi moving to look out of the translucent blinds into the front garden, watching workers and guards hurry about outside.

Outside, a van’s doors opened and Yoongi noticed that many more panes of glass were visible within the vehicle, reflecting the sunlight in glaring rays. He watched as another car rolled in through the driveway, a group of people already armed strolling towards the vehicle, a man getting out and handing a parcel to one woman, the logo on the side of the cardboard in the shape of a lock. Yoongi surveyed the box being checked by three different people, before it was taken closer to the house, the delivery driver leaving almost immediately after the parcel was deemed safe.

The chaotic mess of people was beginning to give Yoongi a headache, make his thoughts even more frantic as they bounced around his skull, only easing slightly as he backed away and averted his gaze. Deciding to sit on one of the sofas, he busied himself by dragging a fluffy faux-fur blanket from the back of the sofa cushions to wrap around his body, tucking the ends so tightly it was hard to feel where each side of the blanket was. It wasn’t cold in the room per sé, but the security of something around him was nice, reassuring, and it let Yoongi close his eyes, finally starting to relax. He wasn’t tired, but the world seemed too busy, his eyelids heavy from always looking, and yet never feeling like he was seeing anything, images flying around his head.

This was where he needed Jeongguk, needed the younger at his side just holding him, keeping him safe. This was one of the first times he wasn’t there, maybe the first time the younger hadn’t hung
around him like a protective puppy after one of his anxiety attacks, and it made Yoongi feel so much more vulnerable. His blanket cocoon could only do so much, and he still felt exposed to the world, like there were eyes watching him wherever he walked, following his every move with their beady gaze.

It made water well up over his pupils, tears burning and stinging as they stubbornly refused to fall for a second, hot as they carved his skin when they decided to leave. Everything was all too much, and Yoongi felt his whole body jolt in a shiver as a sob tried to force its way through his throat, it not being allowed to leave through his lips. He didn’t want to cry, not now, it was useless when his own mind was supplying the only comfort he was going to receive, a waste of water if he just let himself dissolve into hysterics.

It was easier said than done to try and calm himself down, deep breaths doing nothing but coming closer to letting the sobs emerge from his chest, waves of emotion rushing over all the nerves in his body. Clutching his hands to his chest, Yoongi closed his eyes, trying to imagine that the pressure of the pillows behind him were Jeongguk, pretend that there was a hand brushing through his hair, stroking his jaw, wiping the tears from his skin and telling him not to cry. It was a beautiful illusion, but it was nothing more than that, the harshness of reality falling to Yoongi’s shoulders like the weight of the sky.

In the amplification of his sadness, he almost missed the opening of the door; quiet footsteps which made him slowly open his eyes again, blinking through the blur of tears. With a small turn of his head, he was slightly surprised to be greeted with Jeongguk in the doorway, who looked equally as surprised to see the elder in tears on the couch. After a small pause, the younger was pulling off his black blazer, hanging it without care on the hook attached to the back of the door, immediately walking to the middle of the room. As he moved, Jeongguk removed weapons as he came closer and closer, guns and the occasional knife being messily placed on the table until he fell onto the sofa, hands coming to Yoongi’s chin.

“Did something happen?” The younger was immediately asking; checking over what he could see of Yoongi which wasn’t covered by the blanket, his focused gaze full of concern.

It made something in Yoongi’s chest break, and suddenly he felt like an idiot, reminded of his thoughts before that Jeongguk only saw him as an object, not as a human being. It was wrong, he knew it was, he knew at the time he conjured the thought in the first place that Jeongguk just loved him with all his heart, all his soul, was devote to Yoongi like he was a deity. It was foolish to think he meant nothing when he had had constant declarations of affection for years now, the younger never swaying in his promises.

“It’s nothing, Guk, don’t worry,” Yoongi tried to dismiss, bringing his own fingers up to fist clumsily at his eyes, wiping his own tears away.
His coordination wasn’t calibrated perfectly, and Jeongguk reached up with gentle hands to fasten his fingers around Yoongi’s wrists, bringing the elder’s arms down to wipe the tears himself. It made a rush of emotion run through Yoongi’s head, pounding through every nook and cranny of his brain in fondness, not a negative thought left about the boy in front of him, the person he loved most of all. Careful thumbs brushed dampness from his skin, wide doe eyes watching attentively as Yoongi swallowed.

“I always worry, love” Jeongguk murmured, so quietly, and it made what felt like an arrow pierce the elder’s heart, rendering him nothing but love-struck.

How could he possibly ever think he was just a decoration? Every single one of his boyfriend’s actions were only fuelled by the purest of intentions, the deepest of affections, and it almost made a small volume of guilt rise in his lungs before Yoongi quickly had it dismissed, refusing to let his emotions plummet again when Jeongguk already made him feel so much better than minutes earlier.

“It’s just that…” Yoongi began, averting his eyes from the other to the wall beside them. “You weren’t there,” he confessed, trying to blink the last of the tears from his vision, Jeongguk making a questioning noise at the words.

This was what everything had stemmed from, he knew, everything worse because Jeongguk hadn’t been pressed against him when he had woken, or even just somewhere in the room. Change wasn’t good, at least in Yoongi’s eyes, and not having Jeongguk for days after one of his episodes was a change, wasn’t what he was used to. He needed the comfort, needed the warm hands which held him so close, needed every thread of stability that Jeongguk could provide to him, every ounce of his comfort.

“When I woke up, you weren’t there,” he elaborated, and Jeongguk let out a small sound of understanding, making Yoongi bring his eyes back to the younger’s face.

“I’m sorry,” he breathed, expression open, earnest. “I wanted to stay but-”

Yoongi knew what Jeongguk was about to say, could probably predict almost the exact wording that could come from his boyfriend’s mouth. The company was important, of course he knew that, knew that many priorities and choices were built around work, the methods they had of earning wealth. Namjoon had been building the company up for years, transformed it into something more than simply criminal, branching into technology, industry, financial deals and investments.
“It’s not your fault, I’m being silly,” Yoongi said with a wet laugh, shaking his head side to side.

“You’re never silly,” Jeongguk promised, and it made something glow behind Yoongi’s ribs, his heart on fire with flames in beautiful reds and oranges and yellows.

Just Jeongguk, pure, angelic Jeongguk was all he needed to make the morning better, redeem the day in its entirety. The younger could almost reach out and flip a switch, with just a single finger making the metal click, a light flickering on where before it was just a gloomy darkness. It was almost magic, how the younger could just change Yoongi’s whole mindset, convert his emotions, make him change his mind on almost anything, not through manipulation but through pure affection.

“Can we just...” Yoongi started, huffing at what he was about to ask. “Can we just start the morning over again?”

Now he thought about everything, his problems seem so much smaller, so much less significant to the whole day, only making an obstacle in Yoongi’s head. Now the mood was okay, his emotions placed back in their little box at the back of his skull, out of sight and thus out of mind. He just wanted to forget his foolishness, wanted to redo the morning and just spend it content, wrapped in furry blankets and Jeongguk’s arms, warm and safe. Nothing made him feel more secure than Jeongguk, not fancy locks or invincible windows or endless streams of guards, only Jeongguk capable of allowing his walls to drop and crumble to ruin.

“You’re sure you’re okay?” Jeongguk asked again, and it made all the lingering feelings of doubt and melancholy leave Yoongi’s system, nothing left but love.

“I’m perfect now you’re here,” the elder responded quietly, and the cute blush that grew over Jeongguk’s cheeks was reward from the cheesy words, rose pink making him giggle.

And it was the truth, already Yoongi’s whole body feeling lighter than before, no longer weighed down by worry, rejection. He was foolish to believe his head in the first place, especially when his own thoughts so often made him feel so terrible, parts of his mind he knew could never be trusted. Everything was okay, they could get back on track, salvage the day before it became labelled as one of Yoongi’s bad days, Jeongguk fussing over him every second, even if that wasn’t a fully felt complaint.

“Well, let’s start the morning again then,” Jeongguk smiled in return, leaning forwards to press a soft kiss to Yoongi’s forehead, a final dismissal of the matter.
Pulling back, Jeongguk seemed to be gifted with a burst of energy as he almost threw himself to the side, shuffling until his was laid on his back along the sofa, bringing his head down to rest it on Yoongi’s lap. It made the smaller laugh, Jeongguk’s bunny smile growing until it shone in the room’s light from the window, eyes bright and full of love as he looked into Yoongi’s own. Jeongguk never failed to make him feel better, make him feel like any sad situation was just a joy waiting to happen, dormant until the needed catalyst arose to balance the mood.

“Hey, love,” he giggled like they hadn’t just had a conversation where Yoongi was crying, turning to his side to playfully bury his head in Yoongi’s stomach.

It made a gummy smile appear on the elder’s face, an expression which he couldn’t control, growing and making his lips curl upwards to the ceiling. With affection in every move, Yoongi brushed his hands carefully through Jeongguk’s shaggy hair, laughing as his boyfriend melted at the touch. The younger’s hair was something he always loved, and watching it grow was a journey, from a shape roughly alike to a coconut to how long it was now, draped around his jaw.

“Hey to you, too,” Yoongi echoed back, his face still beaming as he leaned forward to kiss Jeongguk’s cheek, the younger moving his head so that their lips met instead, soft and sweet and perfect.

Yoongi was bursting with love, the threads of his seams coming apart as soon as the first cut was made, unravelling like an old teddy bear. Everything about it was careful, Jeongguk being so gentle as he reached forward, cupping Yoongi’s jaw so delicately in his hands, like he was handling a priceless piece of art. It wasn’t rushed, took every action as it came, no further intention behind the kiss and it made Yoongi flourish, flowers blooming in his chest, everything emerging in shades of pink and red.

“I’m sorry I couldn’t just let you inside this morning,” Jeongguk apologised after they broke apart, Yoongi leaning back into the sofa cushion behind him, still threading his fingers through raven hair. “It’s just that, we mentioned some things I know you wouldn’t like, and it’s my job to protect you, you know,” he hummed with a smile, and Yoongi laughed at the way he dramatically winked, shaking his head with fond annoyance.

“I know, I figured that was why,” Yoongi replied in understanding, letting the words disappear into the room’s air, forgiveness for the whole mess the morning had brought.

This was what he needed, and Yoongi refused to be the one to ruin the setting, content to just be savouring the feeling of Jeongguk against him, how soft his undyed hair felt under fingers. It would probably be cut soon, not short but just enough to remove all the split ends, Yoongi taking the
opportunity to admire the length while it was still as long as it was. Something in his head was
giving him the impulse to try and braid it, but the look Jeongguk was sending him took all thoughts
away, forced him to think only of how perfect Jeongguk seemed.

“You know, I need to tell you a secret,” Jeongguk said as he tried to smother a grin, muffling quiet
laughter.

There was nothing but joy in the way the younger tilted his head to the side, sent a crooked smile
up as his eyes never left Yoongi’s face. It was an error in the world’s system with the way
Jeongguk could look so childlike now, and yet looked nothing but murderous when he was
concentrating on business, doing a task for their parents or protecting his family. It was like there
were different minds within one body, one of their only similar qualities being their fierce
protectiveness, the love they held for Yoongi all the way in his stomach.

“Yeah?” Yoongi responded, playing along with whatever Jeongguk was doing, indulging his
behaviour.

It was nice to see his boyfriend like this, seeming happy, seeming free from all the responsibilities
he had. It didn’t happen often these days, the weight of the company slowly becoming harder and
harder to bear lightly, the paranoia blooming like toxic flowers. Jeongguk had been forced to grow
up too fast, and it warmed Yoongi’s heart to see the younger genuinely happy, seeming like a
normal teenager or a moment, without all the issues and problems they had to face.

“I think...” Jeongguk dragged the words out, Yoongi huffing and pushing his shoulder, the other’s
weight shifting precariously.

After what felt like a second’s pause, Jeongguk was dramatically flailing his arms as he almost fell
off of the couch, grasping hands reaching in a flash and grabbing onto Yoongi’s waist out of reflex.
The smaller didn’t expect the action, jumping as it made him yelp quietly out of surprise, a laugh
bursting out of his mouth as the younger seemed to hold on for his life. It was adorable, Jeongguk
pouting as he held Yoongi as tightly as a teddy bear, burying his nose into the elder’s stomach.

“What do you think?” Yoongi asked as he remembered what Jeongguk had said before he almost
fell, and it made the face against his abdomen rise, a beaming smile appearing behind fabric with
teeth on full display, Yoongi’s heart skipping a beat.

“I think,” Jeongguk began his voice coy and teasing as it dropped in volume. “I think I might love
you, just a tiny little bit,” the younger whispered, as if it was the most important statement in the
world.
Of course, it wasn’t much of a surprise, Jeongguk telling him multiple times a day how much he
loved him, how much affection he felt for Yoongi. It never failed to make the elder smile,
especially when his boyfriend seemed practically glowing to him, like an angel of the highest rank.
Jeongguk was his guardian angel, Yoongi swearing a halo hung about his head, sending beams and
rays of golden light all around the room. He was tempted to say that out loud, but he knew
Jeongguk would just call him cheesy, make fun of how sappy the words that were coming out of
his mouth were.

“And I love you a tiny little bit too,” Yoongi returned in a simple answer, feeling his smile
permanently decorating his face, only getting wider as Jeongguk started to giggle.

It sounded like thousands of miniature bells, all chiming to create the most perfect harmonies, and
Yoongi had to stare for a while at the boy below him, the person he loved most in the world.
Jeongguk met his stare with one of his own, and Yoongi knew, was willing to bet, that his heart
completely belonged to him too. Looking through his life, he felt so happy he found someone who
loved him as much as he loved them, accepted him in his entirety, every fault and feature and
characteristic.

As the giggles stopped, the room was hugged by a soft silence, affection buzzing in the air. Yoongi
kept his eyes fixed on Jeongguk, watched as he raised a hand, caressing one of Yoongi’s cheeks, as
gentle as one would be with the flower petals of a thin glass rose. The smile was still hanging onto
his lips, that painfully endearing smile with bunny teeth and soft pink lips, stars in his eyes. As
Yoongi stared, he slowly saw something shift; something in the younger’s features seeming to
harden Jeongguk’s expression, fingers still dancing along pale skin.

“I wanted to talk to you,” he started; tone different, more serious, not containing quite as much
warmth and affection. “About what happened, yesterday.”

That made Yoongi hesitate, Jeongguk not stopping his hand movements until he just rested his
hands on pale skin, cupping Yoongi’s jaw. Yesterday, he didn’t want to talk about everything that
happened yesterday, the sheer amount of anxiety he felt from something that should have been
normal by now. He didn’t want to remember the pain, the convulsions, the panic, sheer, unlimited
panic in every single nerve of his body. Despite that, he knew he couldn’t stop Jeongguk’s words,
not around something as serious as this.

“I need you to listen to me about things, okay?” The younger murmured, looking Yoongi straight
in the eye. “I told you not to go out the bedroom because I knew what would happen. You need to
listen, okay love?”
The words made Yoongi feel like he was some sort of child being scolded for something he did wrong, even if an element of the words rang true. Jeongguk had told him to stay in the bedroom, and Yoongi had chosen not to listen despite his boyfriend’s wishes, had had a panic attack somewhere he might not have been found before he passed out if Taehyung hadn’t been coming to check on him. Yoongi understood the gravity of the situation, understood that it probably scared Jeongguk as much as it scared him, the younger always caring far too much for his own good.

“Yoongi?” Jeongguk coaxed, waiting for an answer to his question, paying all his attention to the elder above him.

There was something about the ask that felt almost… constricting. He always listened to Jeongguk, but the direct ask seemed like a restriction, a limit being placed to what he could and couldn’t do. While Yoongi hated when the other constructed barriers around him, he did know it was because of past experiences, knew it was probably for his own good. Jeongguk didn’t make these impacting decisions on a whim, everything thought out and calculated, and if he thought Yoongi should listen to him, the elder couldn’t help but concur.

“Okay,” Yoongi whispered, and saw Jeongguk let out a smile, pulling him down to touch their foreheads, all tender and delicate.

“That’s all I ask,” he murmured, lips barely brushing against Yoongi’s own as he spoke, teasingly close. “That you listen to me.”

The words were breathed across his skin, and it made Yoongi shiver, mind completely gone from any sort of sense it contained in the first place. A hand on his neck, fingertips dragging down his chest, making the fabric of his hoodie expose a sliver of his collarbone. It made him feel a hot flush crawl up his back, mouth so dry it was hard to swallow, eyes unable to break away from his boyfriend’s face. It was superhuman the effect that Jeongguk had on him, on his everything, mind, body, just everything.

“Okay,” Yoongi agreed without second thought, Jeongguk huffing an amused breath at the lack of hesitation, the distracted tone of the elder’s voice.

“I don’t want you to get hurt,” Jeongguk reminded him, turning to move, weight on his knees so he could look down at Yoongi instead of up. “I never want you to get hurt,” he murmured, the hand that had fallen creeping under the hem of the elder’s hoodie.

It made him gasp, skin tingling at the touch, Jeongguk lightly tracing his nails and making his hairs rise on end. Everything was too much, all his senses overloaded, a tsunami of sensations and
feelings and just nothing but Jeongguk assaulting his every inch of body, hands everywhere at once. The room was becoming too heated, like there were fires all around them, glowing flames eating up the floor, the walls, the ceiling until nothing was left but rubble, ruin, the only sign of the house being the bodies intertwined with one another on the black, burnt floor.

“I know,” Yoongi managed to say, breaths shuddering as they entered his body, chest rattling. “I’m sorry.”

Hands crawling up, almost reaching his chest, the hoodie’s hem pulled up to bunch higher up on his waist, Yoongi only able to see how Jeongguk’s wrists disappeared underneath the fabric, hands invisible as they pulled the strings of his body. The younger shifted again, moving to place one of his thighs between Yoongi’s legs, a knee dangerously close to the smaller’s crotch. A part of it was constricting, but Yoongi couldn’t help but love it, couldn’t help but revel in the sensations of his boyfriend’s affection, a kiss being dropped to Yoongi’s cheekbone.

“And I’m sorry I wasn’t there this morning,” Jeongguk breathed, lips ghosting to hover right over his ear, the light exhales of air making him shiver. “Next time I’ll say no,” he promised, Yoongi letting out a small, breathless laugh.

“Namjoon and Seokjin won’t like that,” he huffed, trying to keep a hold of his mind, remain in the present before Jeongguk just made him forget the world, lose himself in the touches, the intimacy.

The idea of Jeongguk refusing to attend a meeting made another spike of heat dash into his core, that Yoongi was his highest priority, that he meant the most in the world. Their parents probably wouldn’t approve, not when Jeongguk wanted to remain as one of the highest members of the company and yet would choose not to be present for the meetings which were so important, instead staying in bed with Yoongi for a lazy morning. Yoongi shouldn’t approve of it, should tell his boyfriend to not even think about it, but the idea of Jeongguk leaving everything for him made him feel almost high, head so high in the clouds he could see the stars in the daylight.

“Namjoon and Seokjin love you to pieces,” Jeongguk reasoned, a smirk decorating his lips. “They’ll most likely agree,” he mused, and Yoongi shifted when he realised the younger had paused the movements of his wandering hands.

That was also probably true; Yoongi knew his parent would never force Jeongguk into anything, that their soft spot for Yoongi was big enough that they would do almost anything he pleased. It came with his label as the weakest, as the most fragile, the one that couldn’t cope with things quite like the others, needing help and support and hands to guide him. Namjoon and Seokjin would probably lax so many of their restrictions if Yoongi so much as muttered about needing Jeongguk by his side, would let the younger come and go as he pleased, even if it made arrangements harder to organise.
“Business is more important,” Yoongi tried to argue, a moan stuck in his throat as Jeongguk leaned down, digging teeth into the elder’s neck, just hard enough for the pressure to feel on the boarder of painful.

Euphoria flooded his veins, only became more intense as Jeongguk’s lips wandered all over his skin, fingers pulling down the collar of his hoodie to reach more flesh. It prompted Yoongi to reach up, winding his own hands in Jeongguk’s hair, pulling lightly at the strands like a cat kneading a blanket, repetitive tensing of his muscles to grip. It made the younger sigh, the end of the sound almost sounding like a groan, deep and feeling like a rumble from his chest.

“Not to me, love,” Jeongguk promised as he pulled away only slightly, hands moving back down Yoongi’s abdomen. “Nothing is as important to me as you,” he murmured, punctuating the last word with a shift of his knee, the elder resisting a stuttered moan that threatened to emerge from his throat.

With the distraction of the new pressure against his crotch, Yoongi almost missed how Jeongguk’s fingers had latched onto the hem of the hoodie, starting to pull up the fabric. It revealed inches of pale skin, Yoongi’s abdomen, his chest, the younger finally pulling the item of clothing over his head as gently as possible, sliding fabric from his skin to let the hoodie fall to the floor. The air was warm, and yet it made Yoongi shiver, all his body’s molecules vibrating in place with enough energy to power a country.

“Guk,” Yoongi gasped, not admitting to a single soul that the end of the word sounded more like a whine. “I’m not sure we’re meant to be getting naked in the lounge,” he complained, although there was barely any dissuasion behind the words.

Really, he wouldn’t want to stop this, not when it was making him feel more alive than he had all morning, heart beating so forcefully it nearly jumped out his chest. Lips across his collarbones, sucking marks he knew would last days, teeth nipping to pull at his skin, everything so sharp and real and right. It was a wonder he was still cohesive, Jeongguk’s hands brushing over his chest, so soft with his actions, contrasting so beautifully with the way his mouth was trying to devour his throat.

“Nobody comes in here,” Jeongguk reasoned, making Yoongi huff a laugh, the end of the noise sounding suspiciously like a moan.

“I’m pretty sure Namjoon and Seokjin have cameras in here,” the elder reminded his boyfriend, honey fingers brushing from his sternum down to Yoongi’s waistband.
With every touch, his resolve became weaker and weaker, almost a miracle when his disagreement with the situation was originally so small in the first place. Yoongi had practically given up as fingers dipped below elastic, teasingly brushing over smooth hips, skin prickling in the trail the contact left. Nothing made him feel as otherworldly as Jeongguk, nothing brought him the pleasure that the younger’s hands could bring, Jeongguk the conductor of all Yoongi’s body, treating him like an orchestra making the sweetest sounds.

“They can turn them off,” Jeongguk told him, and Yoongi could tell from his voice that his mind was dissolving too, falling to nothing but intimacy, words strained and breathless.

“Yeah, but it turns me off,” Yoongi complained, the younger huffing in amusement.

With a small jerk of his thigh, Jeongguk’s knee was pressing directly against Yoongi’s crotch, making fire trail all up his nerves. It made the smaller let out a loud moan, unable to resist the sound when the action had been so sudden, burning all his nerves and sending nothing but waves of pleasure to his mind, overtaking all rational thought. Another movement elicited the exact same response, Yoongi no longer even trying to quiet the sounds he was unashamed at making, Jeongguk knowing exactly where to press to send his head even higher in the sky.

“I think you like this just fine,” the younger smirked, and the smug tone of his voice helped lower Yoongi just a couple of inches closer to the ground.

With a smile of his own, Yoongi pushed Jeongguk’s hands away, pulling his own fingers from the younger’s hair and pressing for his boyfriend to sit almost in the place Yoongi had been occupying moments before. Slowly, teasingly, he dropped to his knees on the floor, face directly in line with Jeongguk’s crotch, his body seeming to be appreciating their actions just as much as Yoongi’s. Pale fingers came up to undo Jeongguk’s belt, and Yoongi just stared at the other’s half-lidded eyes as he pulled down the zipper of his trousers, licking pink lips in anticipation.
As it turns out, this will actually have more chapters than I thought it would as I accidently found myself writing a whole new subplot storyline somehow at chapter 20???

Enjoy!

After the most lacklustre argument Yoongi had ever taken part of, his concerns after all had been reasonable, proven the moment Hoseok had burst into the room with Jimin and Taehyung hot on his heels, all three of them pausing the minute they saw Yoongi and Jeongguk in a rather explicit position, what with Jeongguk’s dick half way how his throat. The moment the door slammed open, Yoongi had begun to choke, the youngest quickly pulling him up and covering his crotch with the hoodie he scooped from the floor, glaring in their siblings’ direction.

It made Yoongi have something he could hold over Jeongguk, but it also opened the door for endless teasing, Jimin miming a blowjob as much as he could by sticking his tongue in his cheek and rolling his eyes back, never failing to get a punch from either Yoongi or Jeongguk, most of the time the elder. Taehyung and Hoseok were just as insufferable, Taehyung just giggling and wiggling his eyebrows as Hoseok made lewd comments for the whole day, winking dramatically as soon as he saw either Yoongi or Jeongguk blushing wildly.

He was pretty sure Seokjin realised what had happened, the eldest pointedly passing a blind eye over the teenager’s behaviour, while Namjoon seemed to remain clueless, just looking confused as Hoseok mentioned that he was sure Yoongi could eat his whole banana very easily. By the time they were going to bed that evening, they made sure to lock their bedroom door behind them, Jeongguk even checking it three times to check there was no way of opening it from the outside, completely brother safe.

“I shouldn’t have let you trick me into doing that,” Yoongi finally groaned as he threw himself onto his back on the bed, closing his eyes as his hands came to rest on his stomach.

He felt the bed dip next to him, his body rolling slightly to the side as Jeongguk reclined on the mattress, bending his elbows and resting his head on his hands. Yoongi turned his head, met the gaze Jeongguk had already had fixed on him, letting his lips fall slightly into a pout. After all, the younger had almost tricked him in the lounge, made him so distracted he could barely think, barely consider what could happen if someone actually walked into the room.
“You weren’t exactly disapproving, love,” Jeongguk reminded him, making Yoongi swot at his arm, the muscled bicep that was resting just above Yoongi’s head on the mattress.

The hit did next to nothing, Jeongguk’s arms practically solid muscle, but the small yelp the younger let out was reward enough, Yoongi rolling his eyes at the other’s reaction. There was a ring of truth, but honestly Jeongguk should have known Yoongi’s head was in the clouds the moment his teeth were biting at his neck, leaving dark marks he could barely hide with a high-necked jumper, Taehyung tapping at his own honey throat with a grin over dinner.

“I said we should have gone to the bedroom,” Yoongi complained, going to hit Jeongguk again before his hand was caught in the younger’s, intertwining their fingers in a strong grip.

The motion seemed affectionate, and Yoongi almost didn’t protest until he realised he couldn’t take back his hand, Jeongguk holding on tightly. Pulling lightly, Yoongi grumbled as he finally just let his hand fall, not bothering to even try and level with Jeongguk on a matter of strength, the younger beating almost everyone in any sort of competition. It would just be better and require less energy for Yoongi to just stay in place, let Jeongguk arrange him as he pleased or just hold his hand.

“No very convincingly,” the younger shrugged, a sickeningly angelic smile all over his lips.

It was almost infuriating how Jeongguk could look so innocent, what with his large, doe eyes, his slightly pouted mouth, nose he scrunched up for dramatic effect. It was annoying that his boyfriend, someone he had seen kill, seen as serious and deadly as their parents, could possibly look so cute, so adorable, a pile of juxtaposing characteristics all coming together to make Jeongguk. If he was being honest with himself, Yoongi knew he would think the younger was the picture of innocence even if he was covered in blood, as long as he was smiling.

“I still said it,” Yoongi whined, trying to pull his hand free with no luck, cursing for one of the first times in their relationship the younger’s maintained strength.

A guilty pleasure, or not so guilty seeing as he had almost no shame about it, was watching Jeongguk when he exercised. There was something about watching the sweat drip down his forehead, hair a mess as he flexed muscles, whether it be lifting weights, sit ups, or anything of the like, it made warmth pool in Yoongi’s gut. What was even better was when Jeongguk got the elder to help him with something, carrying him as he did squats, having him on his back as he pressed himself up and down, thighs flexing as muscles supported two bodies instead of one.

“Somehow I have short-term memory loss,” Jeongguk deadpanned, grinning as once again Yoongi
struggled to escape from the hold, giving up again when Jeongguk tightened his grip even further.

Sometimes, Yoongi could feel panicked when he couldn’t move, but this was okay. He knew Jeongguk would release him as soon as he even got a hint of discomfort, and the sharp way the younger’s eyes followed him just proved how mindful of their position he was. Trying to adopt another tactic, Yoongi tried to kick at his boyfriend’s knees, Jeongguk yelping at the action, and in an instant they were somehow involved in a wrestling match of ankles, Yoongi managing to catch the younger’s calf between his thighs.

“The others will never let you forget this,” Yoongi teased, watching Jeongguk huff for a moment before he rolled his eyes.

“Well they won’t let you live it down either, love,” he reminded the elder, Yoongi laughing at the words, raising his eyebrows.

Catching him off guard, Jeongguk quickly pulled his leg free, that crooked smirk on his face again as he managed to hook his feet in a way to immobilise Yoongi’s legs, the elder barely having a hope in a play fight against the other. It made him huff, pouting up at his boyfriend who didn’t take the bait and just kept smiling, although his legs shifted to make sure Yoongi stayed in place. This was refreshing, and Yoongi couldn’t remember the last time they were this carefree, Jeongguk normally treating him like glass ready to crack rather than another human being.

“I wasn’t the one with my dick out,” Yoongi reminded him, Jeongguk not blushing how he wanted him to but instead smirking, a smug look on his face.

“But you looked to be rather enjoying said dick,” he retorted, Yoongi feeling his own face blush against his will.

Well, he wasn’t going to disagree with his boyfriend, but it still peeved Yoongi that it had been Jeongguk’s fault they were caught, the younger the one stubborn enough to not move to their bedroom. The younger could be so stubborn and difficult when he wanted to be, especially when he wanted to be around Yoongi, who basically let him get away with any sort of behaviour. The others had always said the elder was too soft to Jeongguk, when he first moved in Yoongi barely thought of disagreeing when the other asked to share a room, followed him around and tried to keep him to himself.

“I’m not sleeping with you for a week,” Yoongi stated, the smug expression falling from Jeongguk’s face to surprise, eyebrows shooting up his face.
“Wait what,” he asked quickly, shuffling on the bed to be hovering over Yoongi’s body, his knees in between the elder’s thighs.

It was a wonder what a teenage boy’s priorities were, and Jeongguk had wide eyes as he stared at Yoongi’s face. The way his long hair fell like curtains across his jaw and cheeks looked like a painting, and the elder almost forgot what he had said to elicit such a look from the other. His features were catching the light just perfectly, the studio lights of a modelling stage, illuminating Jeongguk to perfection, the scar on his cheek casting a small shadow across his skin.

“You heard me,” Yoongi smiled, trying to practically glow innocence at the look on his boyfriend’s face, although felt confusion as Jeongguk’s expression changed.

“That’s just cruel,” the younger told him, but a smile grew on his lips. “And impossible,” he said as he raised his eyebrows, Yoongi curious to the other’s words.

“Why?” Yoongi asked, but he almost lost the word the second Jeongguk rolled his hips, coincidently brushing directly over Yoongi’s crotch.

It sent a bolt of fire up his nerves, spine tingling and brain blanking for just a second. Jeongguk always played this game, used Yoongi’s body against him, and the elder was safe to say it always worked, his boyfriend always getting exactly what he wanted from the conversation when he moved the strings of Yoongi’s body like a puppeteer. The sly smirk he was wearing just told him Jeongguk knew exactly what he was doing, wasn’t so innocent as he seemed to fancy himself to be.

“Because you forget, love,” Jeongguk murmured, bringing his hand which was interlinked profusely with Yoongi’s to rest at the other’s neck, the movement almost loving, a total shift from how he was holding him earlier. “You need it as much as I do,” he teased, making the elder scowl at the words.

“I beg to differ,” Yoongi scoffed, although he lost his façade as soon as Jeongguk rolled his hips again, pressing heavenly heavily against Yoongi’s body.

A voice in Yoongi’s brain thanked any god that was listening for Jeongguk joining in Hoseok and Jimin’s dance exercises, because the boy sure knew how to move. Everything was fluid, and it made Yoongi’s whole body tingle, sparks of electricity travelling out from the bottom of his abdomen, all over like a balloon full of glitter had just exploded over his skin.
“You know I like it when you beg,” Jeongguk teased, making Yoongi splutter, choosing to pursue the heat running around his body rather than his pride.

“Shut up, you idiot,” the elder protested, trying to roll his own hips upward until he realised Jeongguk had him pinned to the bed, unable to move an inch.

Control was something Yoongi used to relish in life, his lack of the word from his childhood making him into someone who needed it, but with Jeongguk he felt like he could just let go. Stuck in place, he would have panicked had it been anyone else, but with Jeongguk he just felt lust in his veins, barely diluted by his blood. Everything in his mind was screaming for more, crying to be touched, and it made Yoongi’s whole body shiver, small jolts to his bones, his muscles.

“But I’m your idiot,” Jeongguk smirked as he finally, finally allowed his free hand to drag down Yoongi’s body, resting right over where he needed the contact the most.

The sensation was sin, Jeongguk’s palm pressing down and making small stars appear before his vision, whole galaxies as soon as his fingers pressed down even harder. Nothing could match the feeling, the younger always making Yoongi feel like he was ready to ascend to heaven, become an angel with tainted wings because he couldn’t leave his lover behind. He didn’t care whether he would be cast out of the afterlife’s gates, would always return to Jeongguk, his arms as soon as he got the opportunity, no force in the world coming even close to the love he felt towards the younger, the pure devotion.

“You’re my idiot,” Yoongi agreed with words like a sigh, letting his eyes flutter shut when Jeongguk finally made his nerves sing, praising the lock on their bedroom door.

Routine once again returned to normal, the other teenagers going to school to leave Yoongi at the manor with their parents, the majority of the day spent in the couple’s office as they placed phone call after phone call, napping with Keopi on the couch. No matter how paranoid his family was, Yoongi was normally free to do as he pleased, could decide if he wanted to do something on one of the days with his parents happy to let him. Although he often didn’t go out of the house by himself, too anxious of everything that could happen when away from everyone he trusted; he did sometimes like to do things alone.

It came with being an introvert, his mind often becoming exhausted of having to interact with others, almost everyone but Jeongguk. The youngest was an introvert like Yoongi, slightly more towards the extroverted side of the label but an introvert all the same, and both valued the silence they could grasp in a day, the reason they didn’t mind just being next to each other in the same room, no talking necessary. Seokjin understood, him really being on the boarder of the trait, and
often allowed Yoongi to be alone for a while if he needed it, explore the world around him without feeling constricting.

It wasn’t that Yoongi preferred being alone, but it was that he found human interaction anxiety ridden, so many things he could do wrong around people, so many things he could do to cause a mess. Strangers were the unknown, and the unknown was bad, could hurt him and make him suffer, no pity for him at the receiving end of their actions. His family was safe, but even then Yoongi worried he might do something wrong, might say the wrong thing and make someone hold a grudge, something he couldn’t stand.

Jeongguk was really the only safety he had, the younger always knowing what he meant even when his words were unclear, even if he expressed things like emotions weirdly to the rest of the world. With the younger gone, stuck in school with the others, Yoongi had planned to be alone today. There was a small music shop he knew of, had visited once or twice with Jeongguk since they moved here, only a short walk from the house, easily reached within a quarter of an hour. He wanted to go today, when the home seemed too full of strangers in the form of guards, staff, his parents busy working, sorting out plans and changes. It was the perfect time to be alone for a bit, to relax in his own skin, in a normal environment away from the manor that harboured such tense energy these days.

With his mind set, Yoongi had spent the day readying himself to go out, showering and washing his hair, dressing in more than just one of Jeongguk’s baggy t-shirts and sweatpants. He had gotten his shoes on; simple black trainers to match his simple black outfit, not wanting to draw attention to himself, when Seokjin walked past the front door from the lounge, seeming on the way to the kitchen. He paused, then backtracked to where Yoongi was about to shrug on a coat to battle the winter weather outside, the wind getting colder and colder in the past weeks. The eldest’s eyes were unreadable, face expressionless, and Yoongi could see his hesitation before he decided to speak.

“Yoongi?” He asked, voice light and airy, sounding like he was trying to keep the situation casual when he really thought it should be anything but. “Where are you going?”

There was something in the question that didn’t just sound like curiosity to Yoongi, an undertone of uncertainty. It sounded like Seokjin was trying to express something different with his words, and Yoongi was getting the strange feeling he was doing something wrong, even when he knew he had done nothing more but get ready to leave. The other’s face gave away nothing of what he was thinking, all the years of playing cards and gambling in casinos as a cover really allowing Seokjin to develop an impressive poker face, all hard edges and sharp angles.

“I wanted to go to the music shop, the one I told you about,” Yoongi explained with confusion in his voice, and he tried to not seem nervous as he spoke, not having a single reason to be.
It was foolish, that he was anxious about every little thing, that he couldn’t look Seokjin in the eye when he felt like he had managed to do something to displease the man, someone he loved most in the world. It was a frustrating habit, and Yoongi just fixed his eyes on the floor, following the patterns of the wood as they lead to Seokjin’s black socks. The elder didn’t like them to wear shoes in the house, but had to allow the guards to wear their boots, his rules changing that they had to clean the soles until they were spotless before they tread on his carpets.

“Alone?” Seokjin pressed, and it made Yoongi feel even more like he was doing something wrong, which didn’t make sense since he wasn’t a prisoner, could get fresh air when he wanted.

In the years he had been under the couple’s care, they had rarely stopped him from doing things like this, just wanting to leave the house to spend some time with his own mind without suffocating buildings, all the patterns on the wallpaper blurring together into one big mess of red and gold and cream. Something that confused Yoongi even more was that his parents often encouraged him to go outside, to experience the world, this conversation seeming to disagree with all the wishes they used to hold for their most timid child.

“Yeah, I wanted to go alone,” he admitted, and frowned to himself when he heard his own voice shaking slightly, because this was stupid.

He wasn’t doing anything wrong, he shouldn’t be afraid of explaining himself to one of his parents, a member of his family, but deep inside his head he was terrified. He always wanted to please the elder two, ever since he came under their care until now, wanted them to be happy with who he was, to be proud. The idea that he disappointed one of them made his heart grow heavy, weighed down by the specific tone of voice Seokjin was using to talk, everything in his subconscious screaming that they were going to make him leave.

It was a farfetched thought, the couple loving him as their child, a member of their family for which they had loyalty that stretched on for miles. It was an effect of his childhood, of never feeling like he was wanted, a small part of him that had never changed, always whispering that he would be dropped at the tip of a hat, kicked aside like an old toy. It was why he hadn’t emerged from the shell he built himself until almost half a year had passed since he had met the older couple, something in his head remaining cautious of everything, anything.

“Yoongi…” Seokjin pulled the word out slowly over his tongue, the volume low and syllables soft. “You understand, that with all the things that are happening, that you can’t just go alone,” he said, and his tone this time was even softer, like he was explaining house rules to a toddler, barely able to walk and look after himself.
It made a small bubble of anger rise from his stomach, fighting its way up Yoongi’s throat, red hot and ready to burst. Building up a barrier, he swallowed down the sensation, forbade it from wandering further away from his gut than his chest, not allowed to reach his brain. Anger would be no use in this situation, especially with Seokjin who would just simply manage to calm him in seconds. The feeling would get him nowhere, would only make matters worse, labelling him not only as a child but as one with emotional turbulence.

“But-” Yoongi began to softly protest, although didn’t get the chance to finish his words before Seokjin interrupted, walking forward to put his hands on Yoongi’s shoulders.

The touch made him feel more at peace already, more relaxed as they stood practically in the middle of the hallway, dainty fingers resting against him with barely any weight. It was calming, the contact, and Yoongi leaned forwards further into the other’s hold, earning him a soft smile. Any anger was gone, replaced only with warmth, slight disappointment that he wasn’t allowed to do what he wanted but mainly warmth, an emotion he linked directly to his family.

If Seokjin hadn’t become a leader of one of the world’s most prominent criminal organisations, then Yoongi liked to think he would have had a job with people. Despite the eldest being an introvert, he knew exactly what to do in almost every social situation, making everyone around him be almost manipulated into feeling how he wanted them to, even when there was no malicious meaning behind the effect. When a meeting was too tense, he broke it with speech, or actions. When someone was feeling down, then he told bad jokes with comforting words until the person was laughing with joy. Interviews had ice broken by his dramatics and mannerisms, reporters were politely dismissed without feeling like he was being rude.

Seokjin was amazingly empathetic, and Yoongi was so grateful for him, had been grateful from the moment they had met, the soft words the elder had fed him to persuade him to step down from the ledge of the building he had planned to fall from. Everything about him screamed family, comfort, home, and Yoongi felt regret that his mind fed him such poisonous things about not being wanted when one of his parents was always so loving, so kind.

“It’s just that we worry about you.” Seokjin murmured, caressing his fingers over Yoongi’s hoodie, the light movements feeling good along the tense muscles. “And you need to either take a family member or guard with you,” he reasoned, moving his fingers to rest against Yoongi’s neck.

At the words, he felt another spike of annoyance grow in his chest, only contained by the comfort of the prolonged contact. It was unfair, unfair because this wouldn’t have happened in this situation had he been Jeongguk, or Hoseok, or the other two teenagers. It was unfair because he was the only one that was thought to be made of glass, the only one people were concerned about in every movement, decision, the one that couldn’t even go outside alone without someone else there to protect them.
It was unfair, because Yoongi should be able to do as he pleased, he left the company, he could defend himself enough to survive, but he was always seen as the weak one. All of this came because he didn’t kill with a gun, didn’t have dense muscles like the others, or have good mental health that allowed him to live to the fullest. It was unfair, and it almost made red hot tears bleed into his eyes, the water blurring his vision. He wouldn’t let them fall this time, not when it branded him, made him seem even smaller, fragile.

“But the others can go out alone,” he complained, frowning up at the elder, and he felt Seokjin’s hands move from against his neck back to his shoulders, fingers moving in small circles.

Perhaps he was pushing too much, being too opposing and inconsiderate, but this time he felt as though it was justified. All he wanted was a moment to himself outside, a moment to breathe. Was that too much to ask? He didn’t want guards hanging about him, didn’t want to distract Namjoon and Seokjin from their work just because he wanted to go somewhere, the others gone for hours at school. Just a taste of the freedom he knew he possessed would be enough to sate his mind, and yet even that was being refused.

“The others aren’t you,” Seokjin finally burst out, dropping his hands from Yoongi’s shoulders to his sides, taking a deep breath once the words were out.

His voice had been raised just the slightest amount, the sentence echoing around Yoongi’s mind like a rubber ball, bouncing along his skull. It was what he expected to hear, and yet at the same time he had never expected Seokjin to actually say the words, draw the line that separated Yoongi from the rest of the family. It was like a crack that had grown in the ground, now uncovered from its piles of leaves and dirt, distinct and visible.

“What…” Yoongi breathed, lips parted as he stared at the eldest, the way Seokjin met his gaze with equal heartbreak.

It did feel like a small segment of Yoongi’s heart was chipped away like marble, marring the beauty of a priceless statue, its worth dropping just as much with every fracture. The feeling wasn’t betrayal, how could it be when he had always known that that was the truth, but an element of it hurt, an arrow through the chest. Seokjin had said it almost so bluntly that it left waves of the words travelling over his skin, parts of his mind unable to quite accept them, their meaning.

“I mean that…” Seokjin paused, seeming to consider his words carefully, lips pursed.
It prompted Yoongi to come to the conclusion that he already knew he wouldn’t like what the eldest was about to say to him, something his parents viewed as fact. If he was asked to, Yoongi could probably guess the vague direction this was going, the reasoning behind Seokjin’s words. After all, nothing that could be said was a surprise, everything now just being brought into the open, even if the truth was kicking and screaming and struggling as it was dragged to Yoongi’s feet.

“With the others, we know they’re more than capable of safely coping somewhere,” the eldest started, and Yoongi knew his thoughts were being proven correct. “They always have multiple weapons on them, and know with great certainty what to do in situations you haven’t been prepared for.”

After that came another pause, Seokjin raising his head higher, seeming like he was trying to make himself look more confident, sure of his words. Yoongi picked up on this habit of the elder only weeks after meeting him, how he held himself with perfect posture to seem like he was in complete control, knew exactly what he was doing, people normally believing Seokjin’s words if he held himself like he knew what he was talking about. Yoongi imagined that in this scenario, Seokjin was probably trying to give himself confidence for saying what he was about to say, and that made Yoongi know the eldest wasn’t done with his harsh truths.

“You don’t have the sort of experience the others do, and we don’t know what could happen with your anxiety, your frequent panic attacks, and if I’m being honest you can’t handle yourself like the others,” he said so bluntly it hit Yoongi like a punch to the stomach, all while Seokjin was looking him directly in the eyes.

It really felt like Seokjin had just struck him, the blow the words felt like sharp and hard and painful, Yoongi being able to imagine the sound it would make against his skin. The truth hurt, dug at his heart in a way only words said by his biological father had done before, and Yoongi knew why. It was another parent, all over again, telling him that he wasn’t enough. It was another person saying he didn’t fulfil what he was meant to, and it was like a slap to the face, skin throbbing even after the original impact, stained bright red.

The whole sensation left him reeling, trying to think of what he could possibly say, how he could possibly retort to make the situation better. He didn’t know how to respond, not when his mind had been rendered motionless, eyes barely blinking. It took a moment, for everything to settle into his chest, words finally being registered by his ears, mind. Yoongi almost wished it hadn’t, not when reality hit him with such an impact he almost stumbled, trying to sew his body back together with golden thread.

“Right,” Yoongi choked out, desperately trying to stop his jaw from trembling how it wanted to, trying to stop the hot tears from appearing in his eyes, all his best efforts seeming to fail.
“No, Yoongi, that’s not what I-”

Seokjin was reaching forwards again; hands outstretched, but before crooked fingertips could reach his shoulders Yoongi practically staggered backwards, out of the orbit Seokjin could touch. There was something crooked in his head, piercing into his skull in agony, cutting through his nerves and rendering him useless, just a body with no strings, no way to move, function. His bones had frozen to ice, stiff and brittle as Yoongi broke them to move, his ears almost able to hear the phantom snaps, feel the pain.

“You mean I can’t take care of myself,” Yoongi forced out of his lips, watching Seokjin’s wide eyes in front of him. “I know exactly what you mean,” he tried to say, but his voice was shaking, tone uneven.

It sounded like Yoongi felt, sad, pathetic, broken. Stripped of all pride, left raw and vulnerable for the world to pick on, pecking on his insides like vultures, all ravenous for a meal or something bloody. And maybe it was bad, that he felt some sort of sick glee in the way Seokjin seemed to panic, hands flying up to cup Yoongi’s face before he had a chance to move, making him look at the elder directly, nowhere to hide.

Seokjin’s eyes were flying with emotions, fear, hurt, regret, so many, far too many for Yoongi to be able to decipher one by one. Yoongi hated how it felt good, the revelation of Seokjin’s words, the understanding of how much they impacted him written all in the elder’s expression, the guilt almost euphoric to see. It was wrong, twisted, Yoongi hating himself as he felt better with the way his parent suffered, thumbs tracing gentle circles on the skin of his cheeks.

“Youngi, listen to me,” Seokjin commanded quietly, and the distraught, subdued tone made the younger meet his eyes, trying to convey his own hurt in a glance.

Something in his head was telling him not to give the elder a chance, to protect himself and apologise while he still had the chance, while he still loved him. Maybe that was Yoongi’s greatest fear, that he would be like a child’s kitten on Christmas day, admired and loved on the first day, then quickly becoming nothing more than a burden, a misplaced gift for a spoilt child who had wanted a puppy instead. It had been years since he was taken in, and Yoongi still worried his parents would tire, realise how much Yoongi weighed them down, burdened the family.

“It’s because we love you,” Seokjin promised firmly, making every word as powerful as possible, and it made Yoongi’s stomach roll in a full rotation.
As soon as he heard the words, he regretted the comparison he had fleetingly made of the elder to his biological father, hated his mind for making any sort of similarity out of the situation. Seokjin was nothing like his old abuser, Seokjin was the one who cared for him, helped him, loved him, and he was disgusted by the thought that snuck into his mind. They loved him, his whole family loved him, and he was doing nothing but bringing them down in his head, building up another wall after years and years of constructive demolition.

“What happened with Goldcerd…” Seokjin continued on, voice beginning to shake as much as Yoongi’s had, like the words were painful to speak. “It scared us. Namjoon and I, we can’t…”

There was another pause, longer than the ones before, and Yoongi hated that he could see it wasn’t because Seokjin needed to formulate his words, pick a way to say them. This pause was so that he could fight back the wetness in his eyes, the shivering on his hands which moved to Yoongi’s shoulders, it was so that he could put his composure back to perfect, so that he could slip on his mask of strength. It hurt Yoongi even more; that he was encouraged to let his emotions out while the eldest bottled them in, trapping everything for later.

“You know he wakes up,” Seokjin said so quietly Yoongi almost missed it, his normally energetic tone exhausted of everything, anything. “Namjoon, in the night.”

The elder’s tone was soft, was full of agony, words like bullets hitting the skin. Yoongi didn’t predict this, hadn’t been prepared to have whatever conversation this was. In a way, it was beautiful, watching Seokjin open a part of the birdcage in his chest, letting a little robin fly into the room, tweet as it landed on the ceiling’s chandelier, content to do nothing but fly. Spreading its wings, it disappeared into the house, probably to find an open window, its freedom. Strangely, Yoongi wasn’t jealous like he thought he should be, watching little brown wings leave while he stayed in place.

“Sometimes,” Seokjin continued, a deep breath in. “Sometimes he can’t fall back to sleep because he’s worried you were taken again, right from under our eyes. Every time, we have to check that the cameras outside picked up nobody entering or leaving in the night, that the front door is still locked.”

The eldest let out a humourless laugh, short and nothing like his normal burst of happiness. It was a laugh for when you found what you were saying too breaking, too truthful, that you couldn’t fight back the burst of sound, which echoed in a hollow chest. Lips falling shut, Seokjin slowly shook his head, eyes darting up towards the ceiling before once again meeting Yoongi’s own. This vulnerability was making the other seem so much more human, more human than he ever thought he had seen one of his parents, the sight surprisingly comforting, that they had the same emotions Yoongi faced.
“And Jeongguk,” Seokjin carried on, the name of his boyfriend making Yoongi feel the pang in his chest he felt whenever the other wasn’t by his side. “He’s so worried, he loves you so much,” he spoke as he glided his fingers in lines over Yoongi’s shoulders, comforting and grounding in the middle of the eldest’s plead. “And he’s training harder and harder, because he would be distraught if he couldn’t protect you. The others too.”

Yoongi already knew that, in the back of his head, had realised it from the bruises which littered Jeongguk’s skin more and more, signs of his repeated fights, trailing, beating opponent after opponent to become the best, to be able to look after Yoongi the way he felt he needed to. Yoongi knew from the way that there was always a gun on the bedside table now, always a knife in a leather cover under Jeongguk’s plush, red pillow on his side of the bed, one that the younger probably thought Yoongi didn’t know about. Paranoia was a heavy curse, the family staggering to walk with it hanging around their necks, pulling their legs together and making them fall, one by one.

“I know that you’re capable of taking care of yourself,” Seokjin comforted, putting emphasis on every word he spoke. “You’re smart, you’re strong, and you have amazing instincts,” he paused, still moving his fingers over fabric. “But if it was you against an army, I wouldn’t know what I would do if you…”

Seokjin broke off his words, looking down at the floor before looking Yoongi straight in the eye, unblinking and seeming so sure of the words he was speaking, like his life depended on the next uttered syllables. It made Yoongi realise just how much everything had affected everyone, the sheer scale of the factors that cascaded in his absence. Nothing in the world ever seemed to shake his parents, and yet here was Seokjin admitting to the fact that the impacts of everything was so much Yoongi didn’t even know the half of it, couldn’t even imagine everything that was going on.

He had had no clue about his parents not sleeping; Namjoon’s sheer paranoia in having to check every single thing that told him Yoongi was safe. It was probably worse when he had been in the elders’ care when everything started, the couple thinking he was completely secure in just a small visit to a bathroom, where he turned out to be taken from only metres away. For people who took things as seriously and severely as his parents, it was probably a shock to their systems, caused the same sort of doubt Yoongi felt about not being good enough.

“That’s why I need you to stay, or to take someone else,” Seokjin pleaded, his voice quiet but steady, no hesitance anywhere to be found in his tone, his features. “You might be the eldest of our children, but you’re our baby, and we wouldn’t know what we would do if something happened again.”

Then he was silent, staring, and Yoongi looked away from the continued eye contact, biting his lip as he thought over the words the eldest had just spoken. It made sense, it did, that Yoongi wouldn’t deny, but it almost made it even worse. They cared for him so much, despite him very well being
the weakest link in their billion dollar worth operation, a liability they were too attached to. It hurt to think of the pain Yoongi could cause if someone ever successfully exploited his soft metal in the midst of steel, bending and warping him until he snapped.

“Okay?” Seokjin hummed, and moved his hands down from Yoongi’s shoulders, pulling the younger into a hug.

It felt so warm, so safe, and Yoongi knew that despite his protests, he would always do what his parents wanted him to do in order to stay out of harm’s way. This was security, in his family’s arms, watched and looked after and cared for in the largest degree. He would sacrifice anything he had for his family, the people he loved the most, and if he needed to leave some things behind like his little trips and adventures, he was willing to, willing to do what they wanted as long as they were happy, felt as safe as he did around them.

“Okay,” Yoongi agreed in a quiet murmur, nodding his head against a broad chest, feeling Seokjin let out a breath of what seemed like relief. “I’ll go when Jeongguk’s home.”

And really, going with his boyfriend sounded like a nice arrangement, maybe a better alternative when he thought about it. Jeongguk was perfect company, always knew what Yoongi needed, whether it be silence, a hand to hold, anything that correlated with Yoongi’s mood. It would be nice to have the younger by his side, someone to talk to as he went, even someone just there for comfort. That worked well, and Yoongi could wait for Jeongguk to get home, the time wasn’t that long anyway.

“There we go, that’s a good idea,” Seokjin encouraged, and Yoongi could almost hear the elder’s smile in his voice, felt the way his muscles began to relax against his body once the other suggested the alternative solution. “We just love you so much, you know,” he murmured, squeezing Yoongi even tighter, swaying slightly from side to side on the spot, pressing a kiss on his head.

“I know,” Yoongi answered, and he did know, could see it in everything they did for him, the worries they held for him, the way they never failed to do anything to keep him safe. “I love you too,” he murmured, burying his head even further into Seokjin’s chest.

Taking his shoes and coat off, Seokjin invited him to join the elder couple in their study, but Yoongi declined. It wasn’t that he didn’t want to spend time with them, but he really did just want to be by himself for a while, joining Seokjin as he walked up the first flight of stairs but turning in the other direction, sending the eldest a final smile. With slow steps, Yoongi walked down the corridor, looking at the door at the very end of the hall to where the third lounge was but instead turning earlier, the entrance to his music room.
In his free time, he really had made the most of his opportunities to surround himself with music, and the room had become a retreat. This was the closest he could grasp to the freedom he yearned for, his little studio that was his own, that could seem so big when he wanted it to be. Everyone knew this was his space, even Jeongguk asking permission to whether he could enter or not, cautious of not disturbing the atmosphere Yoongi had developed.

Opening the door, he breathed in deeply, the room enough alike to fresh air to him compared to the outside, enough to settle the restlessness he had felt all morning. This was his world, one of the places he was most at peace, and walking to settle himself into his desk chair felt like a crab returning to its shell, the leather perfectly moulded to his body. Apart from Jeongguk’s arms, this was one of his homes, a place he was comfortable to stay forever, never leave as long as Jeongguk visited and brought lamb skewers and coffee. He could imagine it would eventually become taxing, but right now he could see himself staying for hours, not moving from his seat.

By far, Yoongi’s favourite thing in the room was the piano. It was old, not antique like the one in the dining room but just old; the wood stained and chipped in places. Despite that, it was perfectly in tune, Yoongi ensuring it always was, the keys looking just as well used but kept in the best condition, not a mark marring them. Before Jeongguk, piano had been his first love, the plastic keyboard at the first school he attended sparking the affection he held for the instrument. It was one of the only escapes he had had from the pain in his home, the pain he felt all over his thighs from the cuts he made that morning, the previous evening.

His piano was his haven, and he had been shocked to see one in his bedroom back in Korea not three months after he moved in, the exact same he had now. It was one he had seen in the window of a second-hand music shop, pausing before Seokjin had called for him, but not without Yoongi murmuring that he used to play the instrument when the elder asked. Namjoon had gone back the same day and purchased the piano he had been looking at, put it in his bedroom without saying a word, only smiling when Yoongi asked. It had meant a lot, and almost made Yoongi cry, the gesture too meaningful to explain.

Now, caressing the keys under his fingertips, Yoongi pressed down on a C chord, letting the notes resonate around the room. Everything was now on instinct, knew so many songs he could play from here, but decided to just play with the keys and see where he went, replaying what he thought sounded good. On his desk, there were piles and piles of lyrics he had written, some notebooks on his shelves from years before, Namjoon and Seokjin retrieving some of his things from his old house before it was sold, nobody left to stay.

Some were so old the spines of the notebooks were peeling back, pages falling out from damage, water stains from when his biological father had thrown them out in the rain, Yoongi blessed by someone when the sky stopped crying soon after. The following morning, he had managed to sneak out of the house, gather his belongings and hide them under his bed, hoping they wouldn’t be discovered. Finding out his parents had brought them to the apartment did actually make him cry,
the books so precious in his heart, every lyric on the page meaning something to him more than he could explain.

He didn’t realise how long he had spent in the studio, not until he heard a knock on the door, Jeongguk walking in and wrapping his arms around Yoongi’s shoulders when the elder told him to enter. His hands were cold, probably from the outside, and chilled lips gave a small kiss to his temple.

“Seokjin said something about a music shop.”
Ten*

Chapter Notes

The vocal line rapping ddaeng is a whole kink. That is all.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Everything had been too quiet recently, silence all around them, nothing appearing as an anomaly in their lives. Normally, even without threats of murder, the violence, targeting, there was still some sort of trade deals taking place, or some sort of scheme to do with the more ordinary side of things. In all honesty, Yoongi wasn’t completely sure what elements of the company were disclosed to the public, what was exactly common knowledge and what was concealed from outside view. Their main source of business was weaponry and drugs, with technology design as their mundane cover, but Yoongi wasn’t sure exactly what technology it was in question.

The family dabbled in everything, from casinos to assassinations, strip clubs to escorts, and really anything else you would expect the most powerful criminal empire to invest in. Of course, nothing was too morally unbalanced, any employees working for them there under their own validation, everything with consent, from bodyguards to pimps to prostitutes. Free will was a matter Namjoon and Seokjin took very seriously, never forcing anyone into anything unless they did something bad enough to warrant it.

Despite the sheer size of their empire, spanning all over the globe, six continents, nearly a hundred countries, everything had been far too quiet. Even Yoongi, who didn’t involve himself with business anymore, was aware of the fact everyone was on edge, waiting for something to happen. They had never found out who sent the threat of the body on their doorstep, and that made the paranoia worse, made it much more noticeable. All the components had been cleaned so well there wasn’t a single fingerprint they could find, no traces to anyone, anything.

The on-edge feeling was in the flicker of Namjoon’s eyes every time something around him moved, the ticking of Hoseok and Seokjin’s fingers when they had nothing to do, the restrained power and grace behind every one of Jimin’s movements like he was expecting someone to attack at any moment, Taehyung’s constant fiddling with his knives. Jeongguk always had one hand near to his closest gun, gripping the handle if anything startled him, if anything got too close.

It was unnerving, that everyone seemed just as anxious as Yoongi normally was, even people like Namjoon who was known for being calm, sorting facts and ignoring things he didn’t believe. Yoongi himself was more paranoid about everything he did than he was before; always checking window locks twice, doors thrice, sometimes asking Jeongguk to see whether the locks were sealed despite only checking himself just a minute before.
It was worse when Yoongi had no clue what to expect, the family barely knowing anything about what had happened, the things they did know deemed too distressing for Yoongi’s head. Jeongguk barely told him anything, wanting to keep him as innocent as he could to the situation, shielding him from information about what happened, what could potentially happen. It was changing Yoongi’s perception about things, that at the same time he couldn’t worry about something directly, but he had no clue if the threat was as bad as he thought it was.

It was quiet until a letter came, a black envelope with neat white lettering in cursive handwriting, the English words looking like calligraphy on the page. It was Hoseok that had gotten the letter from where it had been delivered to the gatekeepers, letters no longer coming directly to the front door, Yoongi also not allowed to open the mail delivered anymore. With all the paranoia, even when any sort of letters or parcels were received they had to be checked, the envelope in question screened for substances thrice. The letter was brought to the dinner table on a Thursday evening by guards once the checks were through, the envelope remaining unopened apart from a small cropped corner used to find anything suspicious on the inside.

As it became the focus of the family, some faces were apprehensive about what would be found under veiled paper, other faces unreadable. Yoongi had a feeling Seokjin and Namjoon knew what the letter contained, stemmed from the fact they didn’t seem concerned, worried, only slightly confused by its presence, and that made Yoongi relax just a bit more. It was the same with Hoseok, the normally sunny boy seeming wary of the paper, but not anxious, making Yoongi wonder about what it could possibly say that the three were so focused on.

Running through his mind, Yoongi was trying to think of what the message could possibly entail, preparing himself for whatever the topic. Business deals were normally through a second messenger, or a phone call, never a letter from what Yoongi knew. A funeral, maybe, of an associate they were close to, the aesthetic of the envelope matching that. He hoped nobody he liked had died, his introverted self having made a few friends with his parent’s associates, but it wasn’t the worst thing the message could hold.

It was Namjoon who was the one that took the envelope in his hold, neatly slitting the opening slip with a small knife he kept in his blazer pocket, sliding a piece of black paper out of the container. Placing the blade on the table, Namjoon slowly unfolded the paper once, twice, and Yoongi felt his heart miss a beat every time a layer was opened to reveal more white writing, seemingly by hand, the English too far away for he himself to read. It was different enough to the letters he had nightmares about for Yoongi to be able to watch, but even though there was something about it that was foreboding, screamed at him to leave.

With moving eyes, Namjoon read over the content of the letter, his face like stone as Yoongi watched his gaze drop lower and lower, until he seemed to reach the end. Looking up, his parents met eyes, almost like they were having a silent conversation, small quirks of brows and lips. It was interesting to watch, and Yoongi knew the others were doing the same as him, waiting as the oldest
members of their family seemed to be making decisions about whatever was written.

“It’s an invitation to a conference,” Namjoon informed them as he looked away from Seokjin, face like a statue as he looked at each of the teenager’s faces.

At the statement, Hoseok nodded his head, a single jerk which attracted Yoongi’s attention. It seemed like Namjoon’s words had solidified whatever thoughts the younger had been having, proved what he assumed it was to be true, and it made him curious. This must have happened before Yoongi became a part of the family, presumably before Jimin and Taehyung joined before him as well, Hoseok seeming to be the only one to recognise the situation. That was years ago, what could be happening now that happened so long ago?

“A conference?” Taehyung questioned with a tilt in his voice, eyebrows furrowed in confusion, and Yoongi was certain his own face matched the younger’s. “Like, a company conference?”

It was natural that Namjoon and Seokjin attended work conferences, what with their multibillion dollar work empire, but the invites never came in the form of a foreboding black letter, or made them act this serious. The couple normally casually discussed them over a meal, complaining if it was with people they didn’t like, gossiping if there were scandals surrounding whoever was the host. Yoongi hadn’t ever seen anything like this, not his parents looking so hesitant, wary.

“No, this is different,” Seokjin said slowly, thinking over his words. “It’s business business related. I didn’t realise it was time already, five years go quickly.”

His words were just met with more confusion by Yoongi, his mind racing over anything he remembered being told about a time five years ago, memory coming up blank. He had never heard of anything to do with a conference of criminals, of all things, especially one that happened over regular intervals if the older couple’s faces were anything to go by, their comment on the time frame. It would explain why Hoseok would know, the timing coincided to the year Hoseok was taken in, but before Jimin and Taehyung had been found by Namjoon when they stole his wallet.

Basing off of that point, Yoongi could never remember Hoseok saying anything about something even remotely alike to this, which seemed uncharacteristic for someone who liked to share his life with the people around him. His best friend didn’t keep many things to himself, liked to live life with open doors and heart, his experiences and childhood prompting him to share as much as he could while he was still able. After all, there was always a looming threat of death over their family’s heads, and it made people like Hoseok be the best he could make himself, always trying to live fully in case it the chance was taken away.
There wasn’t much Yoongi didn’t know about his brother, but this was definitely something he had never mentioned. It seemed like it wasn’t just Yoongi left in the dark, the youngest three just as curious as he was, Jeongguk’s face completely clueless, lips parted, eyes wide. In almost any other situation, Yoongi would have called him cute, maybe pressed a kiss to his cheek, intertwined their hands and squeezed his fingers, but he could tell it wouldn’t be appropriate just then.

“I’m still not understanding,” huffed Jimin, catching Yoongi’s attention.

His face matched his words, eyebrows frowning, lips quirked. It would have been funny if Yoongi hadn’t have been as confused as the younger, turning to look between his parents to try and find an explanation. It did make him feel better that he wasn’t alone in not knowing, that it wasn’t a thing only hidden from him like some things these days, his nominated isolation in action. That others were as clueless as he was made him feel better, Jimin and Taehyung having ways of finding out almost everything and they didn’t know.

“The conference—” Namjoon started, tapping the envelope on the table. “Well, it’s more like a gathering, is a meeting of the most influential individuals in the underground business sector,” Namjoon explained, eyes fluttering from person to person as he spoke. “The letters are sent from an anonymous source, the meeting always happening every five years or so, and it’s seen as a status statement if you’re invited, the only people present being the most powerful across the globe.”

“The location of the meeting changes every time,” Seokjin added, continuing from Namjoon’s pause. “As well as the exact date it happens, for security reasons. They send the letters on short notice,” he trailed off as he reached for the letter in his lover’s hand, Namjoon willingly handing it over.

“London, England, in eight days,” he stated as the paper changed hands, and Seokjin nodded, checking the date himself with a small dart of his eyes.

Placing the letter on the surface of the table, he reached into the inside of his blazer to take his phone out of his pocket, unlocking it. Yoongi couldn’t see what the other was doing, but he presumed it was something to do with sorting out the meeting. Namjoon was silent as he watched the eldest, everyone’s attention fixed on what he was doing, his family oddly silent for a private evening meal. Everyone listened to Seokjin sounding a small tut with his tongue, putting the phone down on the table, Yoongi able to see his calendar app open before he locked his phone.

“We’ll need to arrange flights,” Seokjin mused, humming in the back of his throat. “I’d say we should take the jet on Wednesday, tell the school there was a family emergency in Korea,” he proposed, reaching to take his phone back into his hand, a finger in a scrolling motion.
He then seemed to be typing something out on his screen, Namjoon murmuring in agreement to his suggestion. The words took a moment to register in Yoongi’s mind, the word ‘school’ echoing in his ears until he realised how odd they were in context, over and over like a record on loop. Did that mean the others were going too? Was he? He didn’t like to think of everyone leaving him alone to go to a foreign country, all the way overseas, hours and hours away from him.

“Wait,” Yoongi interjected, eyes widening in half-shock, half-apprehension. “They’re going too?”

He had thought this was just a Seokjin and Namjoon occasion, that the pair was planning what to do for themselves, not for some sort of pseudo family trip. The way that the elders were describing the meeting seemed daunting, and Yoongi had been happy to be able to not think about this one, lie in bed at home, evidently his presumptions misunderstanding the case. He didn’t know how he felt about it, not when it seemed to imply to involve so much interaction, so many powerful people, entangling some of Yoongi’s worst fears into a single ball of thread.

At the wording their parents used the other previously ignorant teenagers seemed just as shocked as Yoongi felt, Taehyung and Jimin trading a look between them while Jeongguk stared at the elder couple with a blank look on his face. Hoseok, however, was uncharacteristically quiet, eyes fixed on his empty plate as he fiddled with his chopsticks, the metal lightly tapping the expensive ceramic dish. At the question Yoongi asked, Namjoon and Seokjin seemed taken aback, the younger raising his eyebrows while he nodded, the elder just staring at the people around the table.

“You’re all coming,” Namjoon cleared up, and Yoongi caught the sight of Jeongguk frowning in the edge of his vision. “You are our heirs, it’s a sign of position,” he explained, as if it was something they should have known, and Yoongi saw Jeongguk shift facial expression from the crease in his brow to something harder, eyes solid as they stared at their parents.

It was odd for Yoongi to witness, the seeming misplaced emotions in context to the conversation. He would have imagined that Jeongguk would be happy to go to something so important, the younger valuing the company, sure of his path of working there with their parents. It made no sense for him to seem to have negative thoughts towards the arrangement, Yoongi imagining it to be a wonderful opportunity for him to learn, to witness how their parents behaved in such an arrangement. Despite his facial expression, Jeongguk stayed silent, and Yoongi decided to ask about it later, when there wasn’t anyone else in the room.

“Hoseok went last time,” Seokjin supplied, carrying on the conversation and bringing Yoongi’s attention away from Jeongguk, the words making Hoseok blink, pointedly looking away.

It seemed as if he was almost embarrassed, and the blush crawling up his cheeks proved to make
him look flushed, all red and pink like a tomato. Yoongi tried to make eye contact with his best friend, a literal human embodiment of sunshine, but as soon as dark eyes met Hoseok’s he once again averted his gaze, ears tinted pink under the chandelier’s light. It seemed as though the majority of the people at the table were behaving weirdly, and it did nothing but confuse Yoongi, not a single explanation being one he already knew, everything new information.

“Why weren’t we told about it?” Jimin questioned, an eyebrow quirked gracefully on his brow, a perfect arch rising on his forehead.

The fact Jimin didn’t know really did make Yoongi feel better, the younger normally finding ways to know everything about anything, Seokjin just shrugging nonchalantly at the ask. With his chopsticks, the eldest fed himself a lump of rice before shrugging again, and if Yoongi didn’t know Seokjin could bullshit an answer to any question from thin air in milliseconds then he was thinking of an excuse. Seokjin was always more honest when he had to think of what to say, no doubt whatever explanation he was about to give being the truth.

“It never came up,” the elder said simply, and this time he threw his hands up as he shrugged, an action which was annoyingly gracefully executed. “And anyway, last time there were a few… difficulties,” came the next words.

After he had spoken, Yoongi felt even more utterly bewildered when Hoseok loudly choked on his drink, coughing while Taehyung tried to hit him on the back. As the loud noises ceased, Hoseok caught his breath, blinking down at the table as he blushed bright pink. Once Taehyung confirmed the elder wasn’t dying, everybody seemed to wait for him to say something, but the other didn’t open his mouth. Hoseok’s silence was odd, but no more out of place than a number of things that morning, and so Yoongi just turned back to look around the table.

Almost on instinct, he let his eyes wander over to Jeongguk’s face, the expression still as hard and unreadable as before, like he had constructed tower walls high enough even Yoongi struggled to climb them. It wasn’t like the younger to be so quiet and guarded in this sort of situation, him normally being quick to provide his own opinion on something, ask questions until he found all the answers he normally burned for. It made Yoongi worry that the younger might have something bad to say about this, something that could make the room shift, and Yoongi had a gut feeling that was pulling and pulling, telling him it had something to do with him himself.

“What do you mean?” Jimin asked, distracting Yoongi from his boyfriend, the misplaced humour in his voice making the elder feel even more somehow detached from the world, like everything that was happening was an odd fever dream.

All the information was doing nothing but making his head hurt, too many words to process about things he had never known about, and it was making his brain tick. This was too much to inta...
over a meal, too much to think about, and Yoongi didn’t look forward to the migraine he was destined to have, Jeongguk probably deepening the frown on his face. If the younger wasn’t careful, he was going to get deep wrinkles across his forehead rather than smile lines when he aged, what with all the downturns of his eyebrows and lips.

“Someone tried to abduct Hobi for leverage,” Seokjin informed them as if the matter was nothing, Yoongi now beginning to understand the source of Hoseok’s visually-recognisable embarrassment.

Their parents had mentioned a few times that the younger was quite a hesitant person when it came to fights or meetings at the time he first moved in, so it must have been a scarring experience when a younger Hoseok had no clue what was happening, unsure of how to behave. Yoongi could almost imagine his best friend’s face, the open-mouthed fear he probably had, wide eyes confused and panicked as they looked around at the people trying to take him away. At least the experience probably made him even more determined to do well, to train and become better, but there was still something that was fucked-up thinking of a young boy as someone to use for bribery.

“It never happened of course,” Seokjin continued with a small wave of his hand. “It was a failed attempt, but we felt it would be better kept out of mouth.”

That at least would explain why Yoongi hadn’t heard about it, when he liked to think he knew almost everything when he was still involved in the inner workings of the company. He knew it was always a better idea than worse to keep news of kidnapping attempts under lock and key, Yoongi certain only a handful of people knew about his own, all on Namjoon and Seokjin’s terms. It was a security measure, people knowing that kidnapping a member of the Kim family was possible may prompt them to try it themselves, and that would potentially have disastrous effects on both sides of the event. People were sure to lose a little bit worse than just their lives on his parent’s command, their empires toppled to ruin.

“I was thirteen at the time, can I add,” Hoseok stated meekly, cheeks tinted even more shades of red than before.

With amusement, Yoongi watched Taehyung stifle a giggle before nudging Jimin at his side, who placed his own hands over his cheeks when he saw Hoseok’s blush stained skin. As soon as the elder noticed, they were both hit over the head lightly by Hoseok, although it didn’t stop their laughter. Yoongi couldn’t help but join in, entertained by the sight of his brothers play fighting, Jimin balling up a napkin to throw right at Hoseok’s head, the soft paper not doing much as it just bounced back to rest on the surface of the table. Taehyung reached to grab his glass, but Seokjin made a warning noise, stopping whatever plans the younger had with his water.

“Should Yoongi be going?”
It took a moment to process, and the world span to a halt once Yoongi realised what had been asked by Jeongguk’s voice, the words sending prickles through Yoongi’s skin. It felt like miniature needles all pressing down at the same exact time, pins puncturing holes in his fragile skin, drops of blood pooling like gemstones. Yoongi had to take a second to even think over the words, the sentence echoing through his head like it was being played on repeat through a speaker, volume set at the highest level. The question made an ugly redness bubble up through Yoongi’s chest, crawling and scratching along his throat until it was behind his eyes, blurring his vision.

In an instant, he whipped his head to face his boyfriend who didn’t even seem to speak to Yoongi himself in the first place, the younger facing Namjoon and Seokjin before he turned to Yoongi at his movement. The ugly red mass tried to claw its way through Yoongi’s mouth but he swallowed it whole, not letting anger get the better of him. He hated being angry, always hated himself for it after, regretted every word he said like fire, and Yoongi refused to let his head become heated. It was a point he lived by, avoided anger or wrath as much as he physically could, never let himself succumb to fury.

“Jeongguk, I’m not a child,” he said as a reminder he almost couldn’t believe he was needing to provide, raising his eyebrows at his boyfriend.

“I know,” Jeongguk frowned, still looking between Yoongi and their parents. “But-”

The words made the red grow slightly more in the elder’s chest, glowing like embers in a furnace, sparks beginning to fly. It took a lot to make Yoongi feel like this, but with everything that had been happening, the constant misinterpretation of what he wanted in this arrangement having fuelled a small flame for a while now. Jeongguk wasn’t listening to him, only wanted to keep him locked away like a princess in a tower, which wasn’t what Yoongi wanted, his independence and thought being stripped like they didn’t truly belong to him. He knew he was fully capable of caring for himself; he didn’t need Jeongguk to be his babysitter as well as his boyfriend.

Any sort of slowly developing rage vanished like blowing out a candle as Namjoon coughed, drawing everybody’s attention to where he was sat, pointedly looking at both Yoongi and Jeongguk. The stare made Yoongi feel slightly comforted, the shared focus seeming as if Namjoon was emphasising that this involved both of them, and it was a relief to Yoongi to know that the elder didn’t also just see him as a doll, as someone who needed help to do anything, that was fragile enough to be smashed by any little thing. To be fair to his boyfriend, Yoongi knew why Jeongguk would think of him as someone that breakable, him being a small, underweight, pale teenager, the youngest of their family one of the ones to see him at his true worst.

It was Jeongguk that had taken the responsibility just weeks after knowing Yoongi to care for him, to protect him, to provide support and pull him from harm. For as long as the elder had known his
boyfriend, even before they were dating, Jeongguk had been a pillar, for better or for worse. Yoongi couldn’t blame the other to worry, not when he was the one guiding him through his panic attacks, his days where he could barely bring himself to move. Jeongguk was always bound to perceive him as someone weaker, someone to protect, it was destined when he had become Yoongi’s backbone.

“It’s a status point; people will talk even more than they already do if Yoongi doesn’t attend,” Namjoon informed them softly, diffusing any anger in the room with comforting words.

It was one of his many talents, and it was one factor which made him such a good leader as well as parent. In their business, a calm exterior was key when doing anything at all, deals, negotiations, necessary murder. It helped Namjoon excel, Seokjin’s composure just as well managed, placing them at the top of the hierarchy of the business. It helped here as well, both Jeongguk and Yoongi unable to dismiss their parent’s reasoning.

“Although Yoongi isn’t technically an heir anymore, people still know of him, and might presume things if he doesn’t show,” Namjoon reasoned, Jeongguk not disagreeing with one of the heads of their house. “Also, just in case anything… unpredictable happens,” he continued, Yoongi trying not to think of the span of things able to be defined as ‘unpredictable’, “I don’t want to leave anyone at home when we’re across the Atlantic Ocean.”

“We know it’s not the best situation,” Seokjin continued, although Yoongi couldn’t help but notice that his direction was facing Jeongguk more than Yoongi. “But he must attend with everyone else,” he stated, and Yoongi felt himself becoming defensive again at those words, it again sounding like he shouldn’t be going, shouldn’t be counted when it came to the family.

Yoongi wouldn’t mind not attending if it was entirely revolving around the company, but Namjoon had already stated that that wasn’t the case. This was a meeting for the family, and he knew that extended to him, probably would extend to any prostitutes or escorts all the other criminal leaders had in their possession, whoever they chose to bring. Yoongi refused to let himself be counted out of the event when he was still under the Kim name, refused to let himself be treated as less capable than the concubines the various men and women kept in their beds. He hated that it seemed like he was incapable of making his own decisions, he was some sort of trophy child, trophy boyfriend that couldn’t cope with independence, any sort of strain.

This time, the emotions appearing in his head weren’t able to be described as a red mass of crawling anger, any wrath having let his body as soon as it had arrived. Now, it was more of a dull sadness, the elongated shadow of not being good enough for his family, not good enough to be who he was meant to be. After all, Yoongi pondered, that was what it boiled down to, wasn’t it? The fact that nobody believed he could look after himself, attend something like a meeting without people watching over him left and right, needing an entourage, making him a liability. It was a dull ache in the back of his head near to his neck, the feeling of not being adequate enough for the
people he loved the most.

It wasn’t that Yoongi was completely against all the precaution, not when it could make him feel safer, out of the reach of all the people who were trying to harm him, but in this sort of situation it just made him feel belittled. When it was the main precaution on peoples’ minds without Yoongi pointing it out first himself, he felt like a child next to the rest of his family, everyone else counted out when protection was being considered. That it was Jeongguk’s first thought above anything else made him feel like he was the problem, a setback to the other’s plans, and it made weight grow in his bones.

“I hate when you do this,” Yoongi choked out, the words sticky in his throat. “How you talk like I’m not here,” he found himself almost crying, his emotions making him feel so much worse about everything.

His mind had definitely become more volatile in the wake of everything that was happening, moods swinging in a way even he couldn’t predict, for the first time Jeongguk probably being caught off guard. The younger could always read him, whatever he was feeling, but if Yoongi could barely keep his whereabouts of what emotions were running through his head, he couldn’t see how his boyfriend could. With tears stinging his eyes, Yoongi cursed at how he could barely even have a conversation with their family without crying, especially when he was trying to prove his capabilities. Had he deluded himself with his own self esteem, was he truly as incapable as they all seemed to view him to be, when he couldn’t even fake a state of passiveness.

It seemed that it was the muffled sob that Yoongi tried to catch unsuccessfully before it left his lips that snapped everyone out of the conversation, Jeongguk moving immediately to pay all his attention to Yoongi. Gentle hands rose to wipe away any wetness, hushing him softly with small, soothing sounds, cradling his face like it was porcelain. When Yoongi’s eyes caught the rest of his family, he could see that the others looked concerned, Jimin and Taehyung gazing with heartbroken eyes as Yoongi covered another sob with his palm, Hoseok looking worried and annoyed at the others at the same time, a stern look aimed in Jeongguk’s direction.

“Yoongi, honey.” Seokjin cooed quietly, eyes fixed finally only on Yoongi’s face, not talking to him through someone else. “We don’t mean anything by it,” he promised, tilting his head. “We’re just worried after everything that’s happened, that’s all,” he tried to say, tried to tell him provide comfort.

A voice in the back of Yoongi’s head was telling him that he himself must be very simple if this was the sort of excuse that was making him feel okay again, but he ignored that point blank. It was true that he hadn’t really given his parents much reason to believe that he was completely capable, not with the way that they had taken him in broken, had healed so slowly from his trauma that there were still doubts surrounding his state of mind. Knowing his recent kidnapping had left them so affected, Yoongi really couldn’t blame them, not when their lifestyle was so dangerous.
With clumsy movements he rubbed his eyes, and Jeongguk moved his hands to Yoongi’s hips, lifting him onto his lap. Despite his feelings against being treated as an incapable weakness, he could find no complaint with the comfort he felt as Jeongguk held him like a child; barely able to care anymore when he needed the closeness so desperately. His whole self was like a collection of juxtapositions, nothing fitting in quite right, two puzzles with the same shapes and yet two drastically differing images. A calamity of an image, one which would just become more and more noticeably wrong as you examined it.

“Yoongi,” Jeongguk hummed, nosing at his head and pressing kisses to his hair, lightly hushing the elder every time he sniffed or hiccupped. “You’re the most precious thing in my life, love; I’m just scared you’ll get hurt,” he explained softly, Yoongi closing his eyes.

He understood, God he understood, and it made him feel selfish, selfish, selfish because the others had suffered just as much as he had over the recent situations, were subjected to Hell when Yoongi was taken, not knowing if he was alive or dead, what Zack had done to him. It was easy to imagine that the whole experience hadn’t scarred Jeongguk in some way, left him overly paranoid, overly protective, mind automatically wired to think over exactly how to keep Yoongi safe when they were anywhere unknown, deemed unsafe.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry,” the elder repeated like a broken record, wanting to say something, anything to defend himself, needing to claim at least a bit of agency.

He wanted to say what he wanted to say, needed to say, and he didn’t want this to end with him crying like it always did, an endless cycle where he achieved nothing at all. If he wanted change, Yoongi knew he needed to stand for it, needed to support himself on his own two feet. If he was to have any voice, he needed to speak, if he was to pursue what he wanted, he needed to push for it, keep his ground. He couldn’t just keep wishing if he was going to do nothing, couldn’t complain if he didn’t fight for something.

“But you do this every time, I’m my own person,” Yoongi managed to choke out, moving his head away from Jeongguk’s constant affection, staring the younger directly in the eyes.

He wanted to make a point, needed to make a point; he didn’t want it to be swept under the metaphoric rug like it always was. Yoongi knew this transition in roles was writing how he would live his life, was determining how the others saw him, saw what he should be doing. He refused to let his label be that of a trophy, an accessory, nothing other than a pretty thing at Jeongguk’s side, someone to be ogled and admired as a status point, no other value other than appearance.

“I know, I know, and I love you for it, I really do,” Jeongguk rushed, chasing Yoongi’s movement
by leaning forward to continue his kisses. “But I can’t help but worry,” he murmured, and the elder had a feeling he wasn’t being listened to, wasn’t being heard.

Yoongi could understand the concern, of course he could, but he could say he had the exact same worries himself about the younger. Every time he knew Jeongguk was somewhere potentially dangerous, doing something he could potentially die doing, he felt a knot build up in his throat. The lump usually wasn’t big enough to stop him breathing, usually disappeared as soon as the younger returned, but the constant discomfort and veiled panic he felt made him want to scream. It was unfair, that he was unreasonable to want to have Jeongguk at home and with him at all times, but it was acceptable when vice versa, nobody batting a single pair of eyes.

“I’m capable of looking after myself,” Yoongi stated after a small pause, and he didn’t let his tears make his voice waver, didn’t allow his words to shake as they were spoken.

The determination and sureness he was trying to channel in his declaration must have achieved something it set out to, because Jeongguk had froze in his place, his head stationary just above Yoongi’s instead of littering him with affection in the form of small kisses. The elder felt him inhale deeply, the breath perfectly controlled with muscles tensing, hands held around Yoongi’s body, unmoving. This was serious; this wasn’t the half-nonchalant atmosphere this type of conversation normally held, everything static.

As much as the situation unnerved Yoongi, he knew it needed to be done, bit down on his tongue when he was tempted to retract his words. He would keep being treated as a glass statue throughout his life unless he stopped this soon, stopped it now, and it was what he needed to do. As much as he loved the attention, he needed to live, needed to be able to survive in the world without people coming at his every word, without someone bearing over him like a guardian at all hours of the day.

“I know you are,” Jeongguk finally spoke, his own eyes coming to meet Yoongi’s, pupils hard, unreadable.

For a beat, Yoongi was apprehensive to hear underlying anger behind the words, a small undertone of something dangerous, abrasive. Considering everything, he knew Jeongguk probably held a form of fire in his chest at the situation, not Yoongi himself, but even the threat of wrath made him want to flee, breath held and hands lightly shaking. There were small warning alarms blaring in his head, but this was a conversation he initiated, he needed, and he couldn’t retreat when this seemed to be the closest he had come to finally being heard.

“I know,” Jeongguk repeated, a crease coming between his brows. “But I can’t just-”
He was going to disagree again; he was going to dismiss Yoongi like he had been since the incident, since he left the company, was going to shut down the conversation before it concluded. It made a desperation latch onto Yoongi’s mind, so tightly, digging claws in so deeply he barely thought of his next actions, only working on impulse, on what his mind was trying to convey, struggling to keep away from the ultimate ending where nothing changed.

“Guk-” Yoongi interrupted, the name louder than the words he had said earlier, one of his hands reaching to grasp at his boyfriend’s wrist.

“Just listen!” Jeongguk shouted, he shouted, voice echoing in and out of the elder’s ears, making Yoongi’s heart miss a beat, breath stuck in his throat.

The command was accompanied by a small shake, nothing violent in the slightest, but just the unhappy matrimony of the sensations was pulling Yoongi’s head back by his mind, skull cracking and exploding as something ugly reared its head. He had shouted, Jeongguk had shouted at him, and Yoongi could still hear it, the way his dialect had crept into his words, something he loved being infected by something as cancerous as the volume of his speech, leaving a pathway of ruin and destruction in Yoongi’s veins, nerves, over his skin, thousands of invisible bruises like a galaxy.

“Yoongi’s going, final,” Namjoon said, his voice painfully quiet compared to the amplified echoes Yoongi had ringing in his ears, still holding all the weight in the world, words making the room fall completely silent.

At their parent’s declaration, Jeongguk deflated underneath Yoongi’s body, but the elder couldn’t help but stay on edge, not able to move a muscle, not able to breathe. He wasn’t scared of Jeongguk, he wasn’t, but he couldn’t help the fear that rushed through his body like a poison, like a drug, making his limbs freeze, chest paralysed in place. It was a reflex, one built from years of torment, trauma, to be dead terrified of emotional volatility, always making this sort of situation bad with his family, but it was worse when it was Jeongguk.

Everything was worse when it was his protector that was making his anxiety jump out of his chest, everything worse when the person meant to be keeping him safe, calm, out of the reach of harm’s dirty hands was the one strangling him in a monster’s place. The younger was one of the only people Yoongi trusted enough when he couldn’t breathe to let help him, one of the only people who could calm him down in this state, but now it was all because of him that Yoongi was falling, down and down, lungs still not working, heart’s rhythm like a toddler on a plastic drum.

Shocking him back into his own head, the next thing he felt was two pairs of hands on his body, one lifting him, the other trying to keep him close. It felt like he was being pulled apart, and between the roaring thoughts of panic, he recognised one pair of fingers as Jeongguk’s, Jeongguk
who had just shouted at him, shouted at Yoongi, and it made him not even think before he exhaled in a scream. His throat burned, like he had just swallowed boiling water, scalding his insides, stomach disintegrating, blood becoming just as hot. Everything felt like fire and death, felt like there was nothing Yoongi could do to cool his blistering skin, and it made another scream erupt from deep inside his chest.

“Jeongguk, let go!” He could hear someone order, and he recognised the voice, took a moment to pin it as Hoseok, the other pair of hands finally having an owner.

Hoseok, his best friend Hoseok, the literal ray of sunshine in a world so dark and full of misery. Just those thoughts made Yoongi try to grasp towards the other, latch onto him instead of Jeongguk, let him take him away from this situation before he lost his mind. It made him thrash about, trying to get away, in the process slightly knocking his elbows and knees against the dining room table but his brain couldn’t care, only focusing on reaching safety.

As soon as his struggles became apparent Jeongguk let go of him, and Yoongi allowed himself to be quickly carried away, barely able to notice as he was taken through the doorway, along a hall to move into one of the lounges, hearing Hoseok’s heart beat as he found his head on the younger’s chest. Since he had left the original room, he didn’t think he repeated the screaming sound his body had projected from the back of his throat, and instead he was sobbing, crying until his chest hurt and head throbbed. It wasn’t a panic attack, not anymore, at least he didn’t think so, Yoongi not struggling to breathe as much as he was before, not being ignorant of his surroundings like he normally was.

He had been lucky, had been removed from what had made him feel this way before the scales had tipped to the point of no return, but the fact the stimulus was Jeongguk hurt him worse than anything else. It hurt, hurt more than the pain he felt in his throat as he coughed through his cries, the faint aches in his elbows and knees from where they had been hit, probably not hard enough to bruise but hard enough to make him wince for a few minutes. A deep sadness was washing over his body in waves, reminding him Jeongguk did this, it was Jeongguk’s fault, the person he loved most in the world making him suffer.

With movements soft and careful, Hoseok set him down gently onto a sofa, lightly brushing his fingers through Yoongi’s pink hair, seeming to be neating the strands. It was soothing, his best friend’s presence was always soothing, always made his heart feel slightly less abused in his ribcage, black and blue bruises covered in messy plasters and bandages. It was nice how Hoseok did nothing more than just be there, did nothing but provide comfort while sitting next to Yoongi on one of their ridiculously expensive sofas, fingers massaging his scalp, moving to cup his face once he had calmed down slightly.

“I don’t like to see you cry,” Hoseok murmured, removing Yoongi’s tears with his thumbs so gently it was as though he was stroking a petal. “You’re too pretty to be crying, huh,” he continued,
and it made a watery smile grow on Yoongi’s face, Hoseok grinning in achievement at the reaction.

Wide brown eyes and a heart shaped smile brought almost as much comfort as other features Yoongi had stuck in his head, *doe eyes, bunny smile,* and it made him try and move closer, resting his head on Hoseok’s shoulder. Almost immediately, he could smell shampoo, citrus lemon and lime a refreshing change, helping to keep his mind in the present instead of straying anywhere else, to what just happened, to the years of trauma that made shouting such a bad thing for his head. Yoongi let himself relax against his best friend, let his eyes fall shut, hands grasped in weak fists holding onto the younger’s shirt.

A knock at the doorway made Yoongi freeze, body tensing again like he had just been electrocuted, but he fell near-limp as soon as Hoseok continued the movements of his fingers in the strands of his hair, tired eyes fluttering open and a head turning only slightly to see Namjoon coming into the room slowly. Namjoon was safe, Namjoon hadn’t shouted, and so Yoongi was immediately lax in his presence, allowing him to run a hand across his back.

“Why don’t you guys spend some time in here, just while we sort some stuff, okay?” He suggested as he rested a hand on Yoongi’s shoulder, and Hoseok nodded enthusiastically, Yoongi feeling the movement in the way his body shifted back and forth.

“Oh! We can watch a movie,” the younger suggested, and Yoongi allowed a small smile to grace his face again, not noticing when Namjoon’s fingers slid from his shoulder to disappear, the tallest exiting the room in silence. “Or, even better,” Hoseok continued, the pitch of his voice rising as he had a new idea. “There’s this program, right, where people need to complete this obstacle course,” he started to ramble, Yoongi endeared by his best friend’s antics. “And at one point they need to try and bounce themselves across four massive red balls or they fall in water and have to swim,” he retold, moving one of his hands in a way to show a person bouncing and then falling into liquid, a small, quiet imitation of a scream making Yoongi giggle. “Jimin showed it to me and I couldn’t stop laughing, I swear.”

“That sounds great, Seok, let’s do that,” Yoongi agreed quietly, and smiled even wider at the laugh Hoseok let out, reaching enthusiastically to their left for the television remote on the arm of the couch.

“And just wait!” The younger exclaimed, making Yoongi raise his eyes to meet his brother’s, where there were sparks of energy dancing in his irises. “There’s this one bit where they need to get past a wall of robotic boxing gloves, and there’s a load of mud beneath them and most people get covered in, like I’m not even kidding, a full pool of liquid mud,” Hoseok continued to say animatedly, and Yoongi found himself with a permanent smile on his tear-stained face.
The program is Total Wipeout, and even though I'm filled with sarcastic British pride, the American one is wild.
Eleven*

Chapter Notes

I'm sorry it's so short, but the good news is that I'm only 3,148 words away from the story being 100k, so there's plenty to look forward to in future!

Enjoy!

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It was like Yoongi was missing half his strings, pulled in whatever direction the younger was facing, a puppet missing its controller, its maker. As much he desperately wanted to talk to Jeongguk, come crawling back to his feet and plead to be held, loved, Hoseok made sure to make him promise that the younger would be the first to break silence. Despite his urging need, Yoongi had reluctantly agreed with his best friend, but he was finding it increasingly hard to uphold his end of the deal. He couldn’t remember the last time he hadn’t spoken to Jeongguk at least once in a day when they had been in the same home; sometimes staying in his bedroom with the younger as the only one he would converse with.

His night had been nothing but restless, laid awake staring at anything he hoped would help him sleep, too tired to muster the strength to get up and take any of the sleeping pills in the draw he could see at the other side of the room. As much as he adored Hoseok with all his heart, he wasn’t Jeongguk, and Yoongi wouldn’t wake him to ask to get him the right amount of tablets, didn’t feel like he could when the other was sleeping so silently. Years of his boyfriend had made him unafraid to coax him out of sleep, knowing Jeongguk would pout and whine if he found out Yoongi hadn’t done as he asked, at this point the younger almost waking up himself on instinct when the elder couldn’t let his mind fall blank.

It was probably a bad thing that he had become so entirely addicted to the younger, so hooked that his body couldn’t even sleep as well when they were separated, so dependent that when he did finally fall asleep, he had unsettling dreams he couldn’t remember when he woke, leaving him feeling out of balance. Becoming conscious to an empty bed was still something Yoongi detested, just lying under the covers with his thoughts barely going anywhere. This sort of mood was something he was familiar with, the weight in his bones, the sinking feeling which mixed with the emptiness in his chest.

Years of depression had taught him the symptoms, but he had always had Jeongguk by his side, had never had to pull himself through a day without the younger right by his side, ready to catch him whenever he might fall, either in a metaphorical or literal sense. It made facing the day seem so much more daunting, especially when he could barely bring himself to look past the blankets piled over him, energy levels so low he could barely shift his neck to look at the light streaming through the gap of his curtains.

A small knock on his door, and Yoongi felt his spirits rising before it was Seokjin’s voice coming from outside, asking if the younger was okay with him coming inside the room. Yoongi answered with a quiet hum, one he was sure his parent would miss but he was proven wrong, the sound of the door handle twisting and the wooden panel swinging open, announcing his entrance. Footsteps approached his side of the bed, and he watched with sluggish eyes as a mug was placed in his view
on the bedside table, Seokjin sure to leave it on a coaster instead of the bare wood.

The man himself seemed to hesitate for a moment, before Yoongi was trying his hardest to move a hand, raising it shakily in the eldest’s direction. Almost immediately there were fingers wrapping around his own, cold compared to Yoongi’s temperature under the blanket, a weight lowering itself onto the mattress beside his body. Just the feeling of someone being in close proximity made him feel so much better, even when it wasn’t Jeongguk, even when exhaustion hung in his bones like tonnes and tonnes of chains, looped over his ribcage, keeping him stuck in place.

The hand that wasn’t holding Yoongi’s came up and he felt Seokjin’s fingers brush through his hair, soothing his head, making a small warmth bloom in the emptiness inside his chest. After yesterday, it was nice to feel comforted by someone who had upset him, Seokjin’s words still working to make him doubt himself in the back of his mind. Now he looked back, he knew I wasn’t meant in the way Yoongi had interpreted it, knew it sounded much worse to him because of circumstance and that it truly meant no harm, but at the time Yoongi hadn’t thought that much about it.

“I’m sorry,” Seokjin apologised, gently squeezing Yoongi’s hand. “I kept pushing even when I could see you were distressed,” he said quietly, and the guilt and regret was blatant in his voice.

For a moment, Yoongi felt bad, considering apologising himself before he realised the other needed this, his parent needed this to feel better about what happened. Seokjin was someone who normally had such a grasp on his emotions, and he needed to do this when he felt as though he had acted in a way he shouldn’t have, needed his apology and forgiveness. Yoongi saying he was sorry for something now when he had no need to be redeemed would make Seokjin feel even worse, and that wouldn’t help everything be forgotten.

“It’s just… you’re our baby, you know?” The elder murmured, the words like sugar. “You’re my little baby, even though you’re the eldest, and I only want what’s best for you, sweetie, I really do,” he explained, almost seemed to plead, and it made all traces of a grudge completely disappear.

In reality, Yoongi had already forgiven him the day before, had never really blamed the eldest for his words considering the situation, but despite that he vocalised an acceptance of Seokjin’s apology, watching with lazy eyes as relief grew over his features. Just a moment later, he found himself embraced in a tight hug, Seokjin’s arms wrapped around him like a sloth, slotting in behind him on the bed. A whisper of ‘I think it might be a bad day’ made his parent let out an understanding hum, Yoongi letting his eyes close as Seokjin’s arms started to move, gently tracing circles over his body.

By the time he managed to sit in bed to drink his cup of coffee, the liquid was lukewarm, but he didn’t complain as Seokjin dropped a kiss to his brow, murmuring about how he was downstairs and that Yoongi could call from his mobile on the bedside table if he needed anything. It was almost noon, and Yoongi knew it was because of school that there was still no Jeongguk in any form making an appearance, to apologise, to comfort. It was rare they fought, and when they did it was normally resolved within the same day, not left like this all out in the open.

Throughout the day he barely moved, didn’t leave the comfort of his bed until he needed the bathroom which was just through the wall, walking slowly with dragging feet to brush his teeth. His head was spinning as he washed his face, clumsily rubbing his skin with a towel, the rough fibres burning when he pressed too hard. Looking into the mirror, Yoongi tried to avoid the dark rings orbiting his eyes like Saturn, the way they looked swollen probably from a mixture of sleep and crying he had done yesterday, eyelids hurting when he blinked.

Without thought of doing anything else, he returned to his bed once he was done, curling into a ball
under the covers, imagining Jeongguk’s body was behind him, imagining strong arms were holding him close, pulling him against a firm chest. It was what finally allowed him to be lulled into a state alike to sleep, the image of his boyfriend so close to him, the safety and comfort he brought with his very presence. Yoongi wished he would dream of the younger, but every time he woke he couldn’t remember a thing, only the lead laced in the marrow of his bones.

Yoongi found himself still in his and Jeongguk’s bedroom when the younger came home with the others from school, burying his body further under blankets on the bed when he heard the sound of the front door opening. What gave them away was Jimin’s unmistakable laughter echoing all the way to the top floor from the hallway, like church bells as Taehyung’s lower register joined the chorus, Yoongi unable to hear any sign of Jeongguk’s voice. He wasn’t nervous, he wasn’t, but there was some sort of fleeting apprehension in his mind when he heard the door shut, waiting to see if his boyfriend would come to find him.

It hadn’t been longer than two minutes when he caught the sound of footsteps in the hallway outside, familiar footsteps which strode in the pattern they always do, teetering on the side of steady and strong rather than light and inconspicuous. It was a sure tell of exactly who was walking towards the room, the footsteps betraying their identity faster than any other factor when walls were blocking his view. It was a skill Yoongi didn’t even realise he had picked up until it was blatantly noticeable, probably able to choose Jeongguk out in a stampede.

Out of everyone, Jimin had the lightest steps, almost as though he was dancing along the ground as he walked, always touching the balls of his feet on the floor first. At the other end of the gradient was Namjoon, who was unsurprisingly the heaviest with his build and posture, the in between spectrum of family members falling into an easily identifiable order. Seokjin was light, Taehyung heavy, Hoseok light, and Jeongguk was almost completely in the middle, verging ever so slightly more on the scale of heavy rather than light, Yoongi clueless to his own position in the ranking.

The feet slowed their pace and stopped outside of the door, paused for a few seconds before there was a tentative knock, so quiet Yoongi almost missed it. It made his heart stutter, brain flashing completely blank for a moment, breaths pausing in their rhythm. He waited for Jeongguk to enter the room, waited for him to turn the handle and finally make an appearance, but there was no sound for a second, not a single noise. As Yoongi waited, his heart calmed, his breathing resumed, nothing changing until a quiet voice spoke from outside.

“Yoongi?” Jeongguk called, and his tone sounded so raw, so nervous and sad and a cocktail of emotions all at once, shining through in one single word. “Yoongi, are you in there?”

He thought about not answering, entertained the thought for a second before he realised what he was doing. This was Jeongguk. As in, the only person he had ever been in a relationship with, the only person he had kissed, the only person he had given himself to in his entirety, promised to love for the duration of his life. Yoongi was about to answer when Jeongguk spoke again, this time voice sounding more desperate, pleading. It was bordering on broken, rough around the edges of each of the syllables, worse than almost anything he had ever heard before with his own two ears.

“I don’t want to come in unless you give me permission, love,” Jeongguk told him from outside, and it made Yoongi melt from the inside out.

All of Yoongi’s thoughts surrounding the idea of staying quiet faded, every single one of them all at once went flying out the window. How could he even think it when Jeongguk was so considerate, all this just proving it a million times over, the situation singing nothing but his praise. After all, this was Jeongguk’s room too, and he was refusing to enter without Yoongi’s consent, probably wouldn’t even consider the idea to invade a space Yoongi had made it clear he felt secure
in. It erased a vast majority the grudge Yoongi was holding, most of his resolve ripped to shreds.

“Come in,” he finally quietly called from below the mountain of blankets he was buried under, Jeongguk somehow hearing him, the door slowly opening with a silent swing.

The younger entered the room before shutting the door again softly, and Yoongi waited for footsteps to approach the bed, pads of feet that never came. Despite now being in the room, Jeongguk stayed right by the entrance, didn’t move to come closer to the bed and Yoongi was glad for it, the option of space. He still felt a slight tremble in his hands, the elder trying to stop the shaking by gripping a blanket tightly in his fingers, resisting the apprehension trying to make his anxiety spike.

No matter the time passing since the incident, everything had still been a shock to Yoongi’s system, the way Jeongguk had behaved yesterday, his conduct around the situation. Not all of it was a change, the protectiveness wasn’t new, nor was the veiled idea Yoongi was incapable of caring for himself, but the shouting hadn’t been something he could predict, prepare himself for. That was the shock, what had upset him as much as he had been that previous evening, what he couldn’t quite recover from by himself.

Jeongguk knew it was one of his triggers, knew it made him scared, made him cry, made panic thrum through his veins. Yoongi knew it was a hard thing to control, shouting a natural thing, the body just raising its voice in distress, and so it was a difficult one to combat, prevent. Jeongguk shouting at him was one of the worst things he had ever heard in his life, worse than the shattering of glass bottles in his childhood home, worse than the gunshots echoing through walls on a business deal gone wrong. It would haunt Yoongi for the rest of his life, and there was nothing he could do to change that, nothing Jeongguk could do to change that other than making it right.

“I’m sorry,” Yoongi heard the younger murmur, and his voice made Yoongi want to run out from the covers and smother him in an embrace.

The very words sounded so sad, distraught, and it was one of the first times that Yoongi had heard such misery in the younger’s tone, not even after his kidnapping did Jeongguk sound this way, trying to keep his composure and be strong for the both of them. The younger was always trying to be a pillar, and so hearing him with such sadness was alien, especially when Yoongi wasn’t holding him close and just letting him cry into his shoulder. This whole situation felt so wrong, out of place, and Yoongi just wanted it to be fixed as soon as humanly possible.

“I’m so, so sorry,” Jeongguk almost whispered, his voice breaking on the last syllable, a choking, ugly thing.

The younger paused again, and despite the fact Yoongi wasn’t looking at him, he was certain Jeongguk was fighting back tears, using the time to compose himself. There were a couple deep breaths, a sniffle, before Jeongguk cleared his throat, letting out a few quiet coughs. It all just went straight to Yoongi’s chest, like he had breathed in a swarm of angry wasps, all stinging him inside his lungs. This was the worst pain, the effect Jeongguk had on him, the way he could feel so in pain when the other was upset, was hurting.

“I was a dick,” the younger admitted, and Yoongi could hear the tears in his voice, the way he stifled a small hiccup. “And I was controlling, and I shouted,” he continued, and at the end of the sentence a sob slipped through his lips, a noise like a stab to Yoongi’s heart. “I scared you and I was a terrible person, I know I was,” he said, the fact he was crying blatant in his tone.

“I’m scared, Yoongi,” Jeongguk whispered, and that statement was Yoongi’s breaking point.
He couldn’t do a single thing to halt the wetness pooling in the corners of his eyes, the salty water that dripped its way across his face, falling onto the pillow below him. It hurt, to hear Jeongguk like this, it hurt, more so than almost anything else in the world. Yoongi was used to dealing with pain, in his childhood it was all he had ever known, but this was the worst, this was the point where he felt so much of everything that his body just wanted to combust. Jeongguk must have not noticed the way Yoongi had started to shake, or maybe he just needed to finish his words, because he didn’t let himself pause for more than a second, powering through the emotions threatening to overtake him.

“I think that everything that has happened recently had affected me more than I thought,” the younger admitted, a wet laugh breaking up his sentence, more tears down Yoongi’s face. “Because I hate the thought of you going anywhere I’m not, I hate when I’m not there to stay by your side, keep you safe,” Jeongguk almost sobbed the last word out, the pitch of his voice rising higher and higher, fluctuating between words. “Last night, when you were with Hoseok, I barely slept. You weren’t by my side, and I know it was stupid because Hoseok is one of the most skilled people I know, but not having you there was… was…”

Jeongguk was openly crying, sobbing, heavy breaths and thick words, all piling onto what he was saying. Unable to ignore his need to comfort the other, seek comfort for himself, Yoongi shuffled in his blankets as he decided he couldn’t ignore the pain he felt from the younger’s tone. With a shaking arm, he reached out a hand; the only thing now not covered by the duvet, and instantly he heard Jeongguk scramble forward over the carpet flooring.

The younger dropped to his knees as he grasped the offered fingers, latching onto the contact and automatically pressing soft kisses to Yoongi’s pale knuckles. A pang in the elder’s chest throbbed like a hit to bear skin, the impact coming from how he had missed the other so much, the simple affection already making him feel more human, less broken. Jeongguk was just so gentle, only taking what he had been given, keeping Yoongi’s hand in his own like he needed to protect it from the world, resolved to never let go.

“I’m never going to shout at you again,” Jeongguk promised, breaths warm against the skin of Yoongi’s palm, making him shiver. “I never wanted to in the first place, but I’m scared.”

Yoongi felt a drop of liquid fall onto his hand, followed by a small stream of what felt like tears, pooling in the crevice of his palm before slowly trailing to the side along the creases of his skin. Eventually the small river reached the edge, dripping onto the floor in a slow rhythm, the liquid cold as it passed over his hand. With a small tilt of his hand, Yoongi moved to caress his fingers over what he felt to be his boyfriend’s cheek, head still half buried under his hiding place of his blanket castle.

“I’ve heard things about meetings like this, rumours about how things happen like shootouts and rapes and murders and I’d rather be dead than see you hurt,” Jeongguk swore, gripping Yoongi’s hand like a lifeline. “And I know you can take care of yourself, but I just—”

His next move was a split second decision, one he made without mulling over everything in his head for too long, leaning to silence Jeongguk with a kiss. He didn’t quite know exactly where he was in the bed; felt slightly suffocated now by all the layers surrounding him, but the softness of the younger’s lips against his was something he had craved since the day before. Yoongi couldn’t remember the last time he didn’t receive a morning kiss from the other, at least when they were both at home, and despite the situation Yoongi had wanted his boyfriend to at least say goodbye in the morning.

This kiss was gentle, Jeongguk moving to be carefully cradling the elder’s face in his hands, slow
movements guiding the other’s own lips. It was simple, and it was perfect, the warmth building in Yoongi’s chest like a candle in the dark, growing larger and larger the more it was fed. He still felt like he was glowing as Jeongguk broke their lips apart, shifting to press kisses all over Yoongi’s face, still so soft, still like he was worshipping glass, pressing his lips over Yoongi’s cheeks, eyelids, nose, forehead, until points of heat were everywhere, lips leaving a trail of molten gold.

At the affection, Yoongi couldn’t help his hands grasping at Jeongguk’s jumper, the one he had received from being on the school’s American football team, that the elder planned on stealing soon, the name ‘KIM’ embroidered prettily on the back. With a small tug Yoongi pulled at the fabric, and Jeongguk managed to get the message he was trying to convey, climbing onto the bed beside Yoongi while removing some of the blankets, letting his arms wrap around the elder in a tight embrace. The contact provided Yoongi with all the warmth the blankets had been supplying before, all without the suffocating weight, nothing but the comfort of strong hands making heat fly over his skin in bursts.

Before Yoongi had the chance to speak their lips met again, slow and soft and so, so gentle, everything that Jeongguk did to Yoongi was gentle, always gentle. The elder’s hands were cupping his boyfriend’s face; thumbing away the last of the tears resting against smooth cheeks, clearing away any evidence of any emotion that wasn’t love, wasn’t pure, unadulterated affection. Lips trailed to press against his neck, carefully making marks against pale skin, the hands caressing over his sides, stomach, thighs, all touches just like a breeze of the wind, brushing so lightly they were barely even there.

“I love you so much,” Jeongguk muttered against Yoongi’s collarbone, the words so familiar and yet still so special, so precious, making him gasp. “I will only ever love you, until my heart stops.”

The promise was something dangerous, something that could have consequences that make Yoongi die inside, but the declaration here, now, when everything had been so hectic and chaotic around them was everything he wanted to hear, the only comfort he sought. Jeongguk’s love was everything, was what allowed Yoongi to remain on the Earth, remain himself and bloom. The prettiest of roses were in his chest, petals opening to let their colours shine to the world, a meadow of nothing but life and colour.

It was Jeongguk who was first to move, shuffling back until they were no longer close enough that they could morph together, Yoongi able to look at his boyfriend’s face in its entirety. The stains beneath his eyes looked just as pronounced as the ones the elder knew to be painted on his own skin, like bruises making Jeongguk’s eyes look so much darker, so much more haunted, telling of his lack of sleep. Yoongi knew he himself felt exhausted, and Jeongguk must be so much worse having had to go to school the whole day, waking at an early time and having to listen through hours of lessons on things he didn’t need.

Interlocking their hands tightly, Yoongi watched as his boyfriend’s eyelids drooped, fluttering before he forced them open again, pupils narrowing in focus. His cheeks tensed, and it was obvious to Yoongi who knew his boyfriend back to front that he was muffling a yawn, not letting it pass through his lips. Jeongguk probably didn’t want him to know how tired he was, not when Yoongi partially blamed himself for the exhaustion, just as Jeongguk was to blame for his.

“You need to get changed,” the elder murmured, remembering how Jeongguk was still clad in jeans, an item of clothing he knew for a fact from past experience to be uncomfortable to sleep in.

With a dramatic groan, Jeongguk rolled over, burying his head in his pillow. Yoongi understood, shared his boyfriend’s reluctance to even move, feeling far too settled in the nest of a bed they were in to even think of venturing off of the mattress. Something in the back of his head was telling
him to just let Jeongguk be, just sleep as they were, but the rational voice was reminding him it would only result in the younger waking up early in the working because he was too warm and the thread of the jeans was sticking to him. His boyfriend was like a furnace and it was inevitable that he would be too hot by the end of the night.

“In a minute,” Jeongguk dismissed, Yoongi huffing at the words, leaning over to push the younger closer to the edge of the bed.

“Do it now, you’ll fall asleep,” he complained, sighing when Jeongguk still didn’t move, like a lump with his head cushioned on the pillow.

Yoongi tried a few more times to prompt the other to do what he needed to, but Jeongguk was by far not a willing party, grumbling whenever the elder pushed him. It almost reminded Yoongi of how Keopi mewed at him when he tried to wake her up when she slept on him, the cat protesting as soon as Yoongi needed to move his legs. The difference was, the elder found it easy to shift the cat, who generally just wandered further down the bed to sleep at the end, but Jeongguk was too heavy for him to simply move.

“You can wake me up,” Jeongguk whined, reaching one of his hands to try and swat at the elder’s direction, Yoongi catching his fingers and interlacing them with his own.

“We both know you would sleep through anything,” he scoffed, holding on tightly when Jeongguk tried to retract his hand, the younger giving up after just a few tugs.

It was true that not much could wake Jeongguk, especially if he was as tired as he seemed to be at that second. Once the younger was sleeping, it was like he was almost dead to the world, ears and eyes both shut with his brain refusing to load if it hadn’t reached its required amount of sleep. It made for a funny situation if he fell asleep while listening to Taehyung rambling about art, or while Namjoon tired to teach him maths before they moved and had to attend a real school.

“Not you, love,” Jeongguk promised, and Yoongi knew he wasn’t just saying things as a form of persuasion.

It was true that not much could wake Jeongguk, but Yoongi was by far the exception. It seemed as though the other’s mind and body were almost liked to the elder’s, knowing when he was distressed, upset, any sort of problem and Jeongguk was awake in a flash. It was odd, the way Yoongi was the only one who could wake his boyfriend without the attempt boiling down to him being shoved out of bed, or pinched with unapologetic hands, Jimin having given the youngest more small bruises than Yoongi could count.

“You’ll want to cuddle, and I don’t want jeans against my skin,” the elder pressed, and finally Jeongguk shifted, looking at Yoongi with a small pout.

“Fussy,” he grumbled as he reached his pushed the covers down to his hips, beginning to slowly undo his belt.

No matter how sleep deprived the younger was, Yoongi knew this pace was unrealistically slow, an obvious tease aimed at smaller in protest. It made a small bubble of laughter rise in Yoongi’s throat, which he ignored in favour of sending a kick in the direction of Jeongguk’s thigh, the impact light because of exhaustion but still rewarding him with a small noise of pain. With one of his hands, Jeongguk reached down to rub at where Yoongi had kicked, stopping him removing the rest of his belt to the elder’s chagrin.

“Stop being a brat and take off your trousers,” Yoongi whined, reaching over to remove the belt
himself, pulling the rest of the black leather from the loops centring Jeongguk’s waist.

With all his might, which amounted to barely anything considering how drained he felt, Yoongi threw the belt off of the bed, hearing it make contact with the floor, probably just lying in the centre of the room. With clumsy hands, he muffled a yawn that caught him off guard, lips parting as air forced its way in and out of his lungs. It made Jeongguk yawn too, although instead of his mouth Jeongguk brought a curled fist to cover his nose, a cute habit Yoongi didn’t want to point out in case the younger changed it.

“So glad you want me naked so quickly,” Jeongguk laughed, bringing his hand from his face to undo the button and fly over his crotch, starting to shimmy out of the item of clothing.

“I said trousers,” Yoongi huffed, burying his head in his pillow. “Keep everything else on you idiot,” he said quietly, feeling the bed rock a bit more before another thing was hitting the floor, a small bump against their wardrobe where he presumed Jeongguk had thrown the jeans.

“But I’m your idiot,” the younger reminded him, pulling the covers up again.

Before Yoongi had a chance to move closer to the other, there were strong arms encircling him, bringing him towards the younger with surprising strength for how exhausted Jeongguk seemed to be. Of course, Yoongi wasn’t about to complain, happy to let his head rest on the other’s chest, worming one of his legs between his boyfriend’s muscled thighs, the other thrown over his waist and curling to rest his foot against the end of the fabric of his underwear.

“Yeah, you’re my idiot,” Yoongi agreed, feeling Jeongguk exhale a small laugh against his hair.

For a moment, there was just silence. Despite Yoongi’s surroundings being relatively quiet the whole day, the sort of silence with Jeongguk by his side was different. The air was only punctuated by rhythmic, steady breaths, and if he concentrated he could hear the younger’s heart beating behind his ribs, a soothing baseline that Yoongi knew he had used so many times when he was composing songs. Nothing could best this, this feeling of ultimate contentment with his boyfriend at his side, someone who brought him nothing but peace.

“I’m sorry that I shouted,” Jeongguk murmured quietly, so quietly that had he been any closer to sleep than he already was, Yoongi knew he would have missed it.

“You already said that,” the elder hummed, letting his eyes flutter shut, one of Jeongguk’s hands drawing circles on the skin of his waist underneath his t-shirt.

It wasn’t a surprise to Yoongi that Jeongguk’s mind was still focused on what had happened, how he felt the need to apologise again and again. The younger really never meant any harm, at least not to his family, and Yoongi knew he would be feeling a deep regret for at least a few days, apologising endlessly. It was just what Jeongguk was like, always feeling things so seriously, needing to set something right to the largest degree before he even considered forgetting about the matter.

“I know,” Jeongguk murmured, and Yoongi could almost hear the other’s mind thinking. “But I want you to know that I mean it, love.”

To Yoongi, everything the other did was so endearing, and his reluctance to drop the subject was sending affectionate butterflies up from Yoongi’s stomach to his throat, so many words he wanted to say to show how much he loved the other. Despite the colourful wings tickling his insides, Yoongi knew Jeongguk wouldn’t want to hear it all at that second, needed this to be a structured conversation without the elder shifting the topic. Talking something through was often the best
way for Jeongguk to get reassurance, to learn, and if Yoongi waxed poetry about his feelings for the other then he wouldn’t feel set quite right just yet.

“I do, Gukkie, I always believe you,” Yoongi promised, eliciting a small sound of protest from his boyfriend’s throat.

“You shouldn’t,” the younger mumbled, making a small frown form on Yoongi’s brow.

“I do,” he huffed, resisting the urge to roll his eyes, instead thinking over Jeongguk’s words, his tone.

It was odd for Jeongguk to be so unsure of himself from something like this, even when Yoongi knew it would leave the younger feeling bad. His boyfriend’s normal confidence and determination to keep Yoongi safe often made him completely sure in his actions, wanting the elder to believe his every word, to listen and trust him more than anyone. This lack of self esteem was what Yoongi didn’t want happening, especially when Jeongguk’s confidence was half of what made him so perfect, perfect in their relationship, perfect for his job, the lifestyle they led.

“I think that we need to talk more,” Yoongi suggested, pulling away from the embrace he was in slightly to look up at his boyfriend’s wide, doe eyes, curious as they stared down at him.

“We talk all the time,” Jeongguk frowned, making Yoongi bring a thumb up to smooth out his skin, make his muscles relax.

“I mean,” the elder hummed, leaning up to press a small kiss to his boyfriend’s cheek. “I want you to tell me why you do things, not keep me in the dark the whole time.”

It was true what people said, that communication was key. A part of what had put them under strain so much in recent days was a lack of conversation around what they were feeling, what they were doing. Really, they had depended on silent meanings for too long, had thought one person was understanding them perfectly when actually there were misconceptions and inaccuracies in the messages received on either end of the relationship. Their wordlessness would still work, but for more complex matters Yoongi knew they actually needed to talk things through, shouldn’t just do what they thought was best and hope they were understood by the other.

“I hated today,” Jeongguk admitted, corners of his lips drooping down slightly, eyes breaking away from Yoongi’s gaze. “I never want us to be like that again,” he mumbled, and Yoongi felt the same, never wanted to be in a situation where his boyfriend was so close and yet so far, in the other room and yet he couldn’t kiss him.

It was like the worst test of temptation and restraint, one Yoongi knew he would never in his life want to repeat. Always having Jeongguk by his side didn’t allow him to experience perhaps what it was like to not have the younger, not to have his constant presence, the safety and comfort he brought. As much as he loved his family, Hoseok who had kept him company, he had hated not having Jeongguk, his Jeongguk, and would never get himself into that situation again, no matter what he had to do, even if he had to sleep in a bed with the younger in the middle of a fight, he would do it.

“Then I’ll talk to you, and you to me,” Yoongi reasoned, watching Jeongguk nod, the younger biting his lip between his teeth.

That was an expression Jeongguk had when he was thinking about something, mulling over words in his head before he spoke. He had two faces like that, one which was used in business, blank, calculated, not letting people see he was thinking until he spoke, hiding any hesitance and
weakness behind features of stone. The other was this, when he bit his lip between his teeth and actually looked his age, looked youthful, slightly shy in what he was about to say, an expression only used with family, where he felt he wasn’t being judged.

“What is it you really want?” Jeongguk asked, like the question burst from his mouth, waiting with wide eyes for Yoongi to answer.

“What do you mean?” Yoongi murmured, eyebrows quirked at the ask, slightly confused over the context of what was discussed.

Did his boyfriend mean in their relationship? That would be odd, especially when Yoongi knew Jeongguk loved him more than anything else, the elder sharing the same feelings. It wouldn’t be about them, not when he had already promised to marry the other, had been stuck to him like glue for over two years, falling hard and fast until they were inseparable and dating just a month after first meeting. If not their relationship, what would the question refer to?

“In this arrangement with the company, what is it that you want?” Jeongguk cleared up, and Yoongi felt his lips part in understanding, it now making sense.

The question was a good one, and he was slightly grateful that the younger had chosen to ask him now, when everything was starting to be laid out open on the metaphoric table. With a small hum, Yoongi began to think, tried to get his thoughts together. It was more difficult when what he thought he wanted wasn’t really working, the concealment of the company’s work and his family’s actions doing nothing to avoid producing anxiety in Yoongi’s body, instead doing the opposite, feeling isolated, alone. That was definitely not what he had in mind when he first made the request to his parents, didn’t want to be like a decoration with no use, no interaction.

“I want to be respected,” Yoongi decided to say, the words slow as he continued to think of how to speak all his thoughts. “I still want to be a part of the family,” he supplied, thankful for Jeongguk waiting for him to be finished. “Just… not as involved as everyone else.”

The more he thought over the words, the more he realised how they could be misinterpreted, all the misunderstanding that had centred around his wants and needs making sense when language could be so easily manipulated and changed. It was what the media did, after all, it was what happened all over the world, in politics, in casual conversation, it so easy to take words in one meaning when actually they applied in a much different way. It was why interviews were practiced and practiced, why Namjoon and Seokjin always planned public appearances and briefings, to stop all this uncharted meaning and wrong conclusions.

“But what do you mean by that?” Jeongguk pressed, and Yoongi was thankful that the younger thought the same as him, knew that words could have double meanings, could imply something they weren’t meant to.

“Tell me what’s happening,” Yoongi decided to say, nodding to his words as he thought. “But don’t make me see things that will make me suffer,” he added, that being the whole reason for this, to lessen panic, lessen the danger he was in, lessen the torment on his mind as well as his body if people tried to prey on him in his position of power. “Treat me as an equal, but equal in life, not in business,” he summarised, and he knew that was what he wanted, the perfect wording.

That was what he wanted, to still be equal but not in the work his family did, Yoongi not wanting to be on the inner circle pedestal like the others. He wanted to know generally what was happening, but not every detail, not enough to put him in the line of fire, in trouble. Both his mind and body was exhausted from the company, from everything that came with it, wanted to sit in the backseat of the action as a witness, not as an active participant.
“Tell me when I’m hurting you,” Jeongguk pleaded quietly, running his thumbs over Yoongi’s jaw, his lips, so gentle, barely a touch.

“I promise,” Yoongi answered, tilting his head to press a small kiss to one of Jeongguk’s palms. “And in return I want you to tell me why you keep things from me if you do,” he said as he felt the younger move a hand to the back of his head, coaxing Yoongi with small movements to bury his nose in the crook of his neck.

“I can do that, love, for you,” Jeongguk murmured, so quietly and so softly that Yoongi melted, was happy to burrow himself even further into the other’s hold, let himself drift off into sleep.

Sometimes, only sometimes, Yoongi felt as though he was awake in his dreams. It didn’t happen often, and mostly centred around his father, what he could have done differently and yet the end result was always the same. Lucid dreaming, Namjoon had told him when he asked a while ago, looking up from his papers to meet Yoongi’s gaze, when a person is aware they are in a situation, aware it’s in their head, aware they have control. Control was a word Yoongi wouldn’t choose to use, not when his dreams never gave him a chance to have it, not even an ounce. It was why he brushed off the elder when he tried to ask Why?, dismissing the matter for it never to appear again in conversation.

This was different. His father wasn’t here, and he wasn’t in his childhood home, or at least the house he grew up in, a place he never held in fond memory. Instead Yoongi was surrounded by dark walls, a flickering light hanging on a wire from the ceiling, a small, round wooden table with two stools along its circumference. The room itself was haunting, too familiar to be a coincidence to the container he had been kept in when abducted, out of the corner of his eye seeing a thick leather collar lying on the floor, the item disappearing from view when his vision darted to see it better.

Keeping his guard up, Yoongi took a tentative step forward, hearing what sounded like a door opening behind him as soon as he moved. Instantly, he spun his whole body around, breath held as he waited to see something move, and yet it was still just a dark wall, not a thing different from when he had first looked. Checking again that nothing had avoided his eyeline, Yoongi turned back to the table, where there was now a chess board set up in the centre, all the pieces perfectly even in their places.

White was the colour on Yoongi’s side, and he slowly stepped up to the table, gazing down at the pieces before reaching out a finger, pressing down lightly on the small sphere on the top of the king, the blunt shape pressure against his skin. The board was shining, the black and white looking like they were made of stone, cold to the touch, not a single mark or scratch on the surface. It was so different to the wooden chess set Namjoon had in the library, where Yoongi had learned how to play, as if the board in front of him held impact, value, a decider of something Yoongi couldn’t yet figure out.

“White makes first move.”

At the voice, the sickeningly familiar voice, Yoongi retracted his hand like the king had burned him, stumbling backwards as he looked into the face of a ghost, watery blue eyes dead as they followed his movement. Zack Goldcerd looked far worse in death than he had in life, gaunt, sullen, all colours dulled with blue veins making patterns over his skin, a maze of vessels and lines, endless. His appearance made Yoongi feel like his stomach was about to reject everything he had eaten within the last day, nerves frozen as he just stared at the figure his nightmare had conjured, sitting on the other side of the table.

Yoongi could see nothing but his face, his neck, the rest of him covered in a pitch black robe,
almost blending in with the rest of the room, fading into the darkness. Skeletal hands were laid on wood, fingers woven together, so thin they looked as though they would snap in two as soon as they bent a single degree, falling to pieces over the floor. Watching his tormentor, Yoongi didn’t move, couldn’t look away from the stare fixed on him, Zack not blinking once, his body left only with its skin, not its insides, its thoughts.

“You have to start,” the other spoke again, chapped, dry lips breaking as his mouth moved, a black liquid pooling between the seal.

Hesitating for just a second, Yoongi cautiously walked forward, pulling the chair out further away from the table to allow him to sit, hands matching how Zack Goldcerd’s were positioned. Here, the younger looked even less like he was alive, dark copper blood stains peeking out from the edge of his robe, skin beginning to peel back from the surface of his body. Somehow, despite how careful he was being, Yoongi didn’t feel the panic he would expect creep up his throat, mind unnaturally at ease considering where he was. Perhaps, under everything, he really did recognise this as a dream, but the image was realistic enough to fool Yoongi in the situation.

“White makes first move, Kim Yoongi,” he repeated, the way he said Yoongi’s name sending shivers down the smaller’s spine, but he still reached forward with a single hand, edging one of his pawns a single square further towards the other side of the board.

His fingers lingered for just a second, finally leaving the surface of the piece to return to the wood of the table, the pawn looking disturbingly alone pulling away from the perfect straight line of identical white replicas. There was a pause, before one of Zack Goldcerd’ hands was reaching over, black bruised fingernails matching with the pawn he chose to push, two squares forward, further towards Yoongi than the elder was to him. For a second as he let go, Yoongi imagined a flash of red left on the ebony piece, but a second glimpse vowed that as a lie, nothing but monotonous stone.

Again, Yoongi reached forward, moving a pawn slightly more to his left away from him by a square, the opposite side to where Zack had made his own move. His head was trying to think, trying to create a sort of plan to this, an approach to ensure victory, but his brain was oddly silent as he watched the younger move again, a pawn so close to Yoongi’s own it made him stare. Once again, red residue seeped onto the board, gone in a blink before Yoongi could process the sight. As he reached for another piece, Zack spoke, still with his watery gaze fixed on Yoongi’s face.

“Tell me, what do you play for?” He asked, and the question sent a chill down Yoongi’s spine, swallowing as he moved another pawn forward.

“What do you mean?” The elder said in return, eyes careful as they watched where skeleton hands would move next, darting between black and white.

Despite being sure he had avoided all the possible attacks from the other, Yoongi surveyed the board, seeing how one of his smallest pieces lay in the line of fire. Dread filled his gut, pooling like liquid in a gutter, mind racing as he realised how easily he had signed a death warrant for one of his pawns, how easily he had been able to place it at such exposure. The position didn’t go unnoticed by the younger opposite him, of course it wouldn’t, not when Yoongi’s piece was so easy to claim, so easy to take in cold blood.

“You play this game because I told you to, and for what?” Zack said as he shifted a piece, stone quietly making a noise as it invaded a square of white.

It was the first casualty, and Yoongi watched as his piece started to crumble, falling to a fine dust on the square of the board, an invisible force sweeping it off of the stone, out of sight. He was one
loss down, a chink was in his armour, and it made a small bubble of emotion rise up his throat, eyes searching for revenge. With careful fingers, he moved one of his bishops diagonally, taking the piece that had destroyed his own, watching black powder float away in a breeze of no air.

“You told me to play, I chose to comply,” Yoongi told the other, looking up again to meet his gaze, refusing to be the one to look away.

“No, you fool,” Zack just laughed, hollow, empty, lifeless. “You chose to submit,” he rasped, a creeping smile ripping his lips in even more places, a bead of black blood rolling down his chin. The words chosen made Yoongi’s heart jump, beating loudly in his ears, like a ringing bell signalling a fire, the end of all things. That same fire was ignited in Yoongi’s head, reaching all over his nerves, burning all over his body as he refused to break the link with blue eyes, blue eyes with nothing but blankness behind them, pupils empty of any sort of emotion, soul removed with no replacement. It was then that Yoongi released there was no shine from the black of his eyes, no light reflected at all, like there really was a void of space in the centre of Zack’s skull.

“No to you,” Yoongi spat, leaning forwards, showcasing that he wasn’t afraid, wasn’t going to do as the other said, let himself be taken so easily.

“Perhaps not to me,” Zack mused, returning to the game with a small movement of his finger, pushing a pawn forward. “But perhaps to the world,” he murmured as he tapped the piece twice, each moment of contact echoing in Yoongi’s head despite not making a sound.

Looking at the board, Yoongi moved a bishop, then his queen once Zack had once again moved a small pawn, making two more pieces dissolve without casualty on his end, only black stone crumbling into particles like sand. His pieces looked out of place surrounded by their dark enemy, but if offence was what Yoongi needed to do to win the game he wasn’t going to hesitate, resolve set on victory. His king lay untouched, standing on its square like a statue, guarded by a multitude of other pieces while its queen killed the opponent, the most destructive piece on the board.

“You depend too much on your pieces of power; it will make your empire fall,” Zack sighed as he moved another pawn, taking one of Yoongi’s smaller pieces at it moved diagonally to kill, dissolving to ash.

“You haven’t taken any from me,” Yoongi answered, frowning lightly at the words coming from the other’s mouth, checking again if any of his important pieces were in danger.

“Not yet,” Zack shrugged off, the robe falling away slightly at the neck to reveal bare collarbone, white looking yellow in the room’s light. “But fate is inevitable,” he said with a smile, teeth the same colour, a pale rotting cream.

More pieces were exchanged, Zack barely touching the back row of his pieces while Yoongi used the majority of his, eliminating all of the younger’s pawns but one. Taking the second to last small figure, Yoongi had taken his knight from its square, the first move the piece had made of the game. As he looked down, it was like the board morphed into one Yoongi didn’t recognise, squares all blurring together for a moment before he was sure it had changed, and yet neither he nor Zack had moved, not even a twitch of the fingers.

“I win,” the younger smiled, making Yoongi furrow his brow in confusion, looking down again at the board in front of him.

“My king can move,” he pointed out, not expecting the small laugh let out from Zack’s lips.
“I know your king can move, but you’ve forgotten something important,” he said, voice almost
gurgling in his throat as more of the black liquid trailed from his lips to his chin, dripping from his
jaw. “For you, it’s not your king that sentences you to ruin,” he smiled, a knowing look written all
over his face as the blue of his irises became stained black, followed by the white of his eyes. “I’m
taking your knight.”

A move of his final pawn, and the knight Yoongi had used to take Zack’s last piece made the small
figurine fall, not to particles this time but just to topple over, making the only sound in the room.
As Yoongi watched, the small stone seemed to grow in front of him, changing into something else,
a body on the floor. The face was familiar, even when it was covered in blood, even when dark
hair was half obstructing one side of features, Yoongi moving the strands to come directly in line
with Jeongguk’s lifeless eyes staring back at him.

Yoongi’s eyes jumped open, immediately focused on the light coming from the window across the
room, skin feeling breaths on the back of his neck. His own lungs heaved air into his chest, and a
grumble behind him alerted him to the fact that he had woken the younger behind him, hands
shifting to pull him closer to a warm body. It was true that Jeongguk was a heavy sleeper to
everything that wasn’t Yoongi, waking in an instant when it was the elder doing something, as
soon as there was something remotely wrong.

“What’s the matter?” Jeongguk muttered, the words already making him feel better, Yoongi
relaxing into the hold of his lifeline, the most precious person on Earth to him.

“I can’t remember.”
Twelve

Chapter Notes

Um... well Heartbeat had me in the feels. Did anyone notice how the CD Jeongguk played had Yoongi in hangul written on it? We love angsty boyfriends.

Also, total wordcount of this fic on Word is now over 112k, so be exited for lots and lots of content ;)))

Enjoy!

Time passed by quickly. Ever since the last meeting, everybody seemed to be treading more carefully with Yoongi, ensuring he didn’t feel like they were undermining him, painting him as a helpless damsel. Jeongguk had become his best asset, always speaking up when he thought Yoongi wanted to say something, always letting the elder make his own final decisions. It was nice, especially when Jeongguk looked so proud of Yoongi when he said something smart, suggested something helpful.

It was a slight shock to Yoongi’s system when he had to attend all the meetings again. Because this meeting had Yoongi involved, everyone thought it would be best if he was actually included in the planning rather than having to hear everything second hand from Jeongguk. It meant Jeongguk had to carry him early in the mornings to the meeting room, Yoongi fighting to keep his eyes open as Namjoon talked over schemes and details involved.

The meeting being so short notice was a menace, the whole company leadership team in a frenzy trying to plan everything perfectly. They needed outfits, a hotel, a flight, and even having a ridiculous amount of money couldn’t always speed up every process. Yoongi knew Jimin and Seokjin were designing what they were to wear, and he also knew it was some type of modified hanbok, but other than that he was clueless.

Days passed in a whirlwind, and soon enough it was the night before they were to leave, Jeongguk helping to pack their shared suitcase. Yoongi wasn’t putting in much input, knew he would just end up borrowing Jeongguk’s clothes at the moments they weren’t having to be formal, and said formal clothes were being transported to London in a separate case on their private jet.

It was only now just hitting Yoongi, where they were in the timeline of events. In just over twelve hours, he would be on a jet and flying across the Atlantic Ocean, set to land at London Heathrow airport. It was nerve wracking, and he was pretty sure the only reason he hadn’t tried to run away yet was because of Jeongguk’s constant support and attention.
“Everything will be okay,” Jeongguk had promised once they got into bed, Yoongi already head to toe in the younger’s clothes for comfort. “You’ll be okay; I won’t let you out of my sight.”

Yoongi had never been quite sure how they got away with everything at airports. He knew for a fact Jeongguk had at least two guns and a knife on him, the rest of his family no better. Yoongi himself had two knives, pretty silver ones Namjoon and Seokjin had gotten for him a year ago, but none of them seemed to set off the metal detectors. If he knew his parents, they probably had half the airport staff under their payroll, so that may be how they got through the whole of airport security with nothing more than a friendly smile at the end.

The whole time, he was holding Jeongguk’s hand as tightly as possible in his own; trying to hide in one of Jeongguk’s massive hoodies and the black mask he was wearing. An airport was one of Yoongi’s worst nightmares, the massive amount of people and actions making his head spin and eyes ache. He was thankful Jeongguk said nothing, thankful that his whole family just allowed him to hide behind them all the time. This sort of environment was insanely overwhelming, and Yoongi would do anything to be at home in bed right now.

As soon as they were through security they were able to find their gate and board the jet, all their luggage brought by workers to the hold. Despite having the money to do otherwise, Namjoon and Seokjin’s jet wasn’t particularly large. It had enough seating for about twelve people, and beds especially catered to their family, two double and three single. It was cosy, not too large and daunting, and Yoongi enjoyed being able to sleep through practically the whole 6 hour flight while Jeongguk watched movies and read manga next to him in their bed.

When they had first travelled to America to live there, they hadn’t taken the private jet on the way across, instead flying first class on a public airline due to their jet being used to constantly transport weaponry, and Namjoon theorised it was safer on a public flight with civilians than a private flight with unknown flight attendants and pilots. Yoongi found it much nicer on the private jet, able to sleep without worrying about unknown people, happy to just let himself relax.

Heathrow had a private exit where their car picked them up, driving them to Mayfair if Yoongi remembered Namjoon telling them correctly, stopping just outside of a large red brick building with what looked like hundreds of windows, different country’s flags hanging above the doorway. The entrance itself had more of a black and white colour scheme, the sign above the door reading ‘CLARIDGE’S’ in capital white letters.

Two men were stood either side of the door, in full suits with top hats, and Yoongi was in slight awe at the inside, how grand and elegant everything was, but he wasn’t surprised. Namjoon and Seokjin only liked the best for their family, and so the luxury was to be expected.

They were greeted when they entered by a man in another suit, his smile either genuine or so
practiced Yoongi couldn’t tell it was fake, his hands held behind his back and posture perfect.

“Mr Kims, it is an honour to have you here,” he declared, and shook both Namjoon and Seokjin’s hands, straight away leading them to a private lift further down the grand spacious hallway.

Everyone Yoongi saw was dressed in designer brands, and it almost made him self conscious in his hoodie and jeans until he remembered half of the people probably recognised his parents from the news, or at least recalled their names. Anyway, it seemed Jeongguk and himself were the only ones in unfit clothing, the others in designer brands from head to toe, Taehyung practically drowning in Gucci.

They continued on until they reached a first door, where the man introduced the ‘Brook Penthouse’, which was where Jimin, Taehyung and Hoseok were staying. Rooming was always a point they planned beforehand due to their large number, hotels never having a single suite capacity of seven. It was agreed that the sunshine line were to share one of the rooms to avoid someone third wheeling with either Namjoon and Seokjin or Yoongi and Jeongguk, and in all honesty it probably worked well, the trio known for being extremely loud if they wanted to be.

Before anybody entered the room Namjoon ordered guards to check every corner of the room for anything wrong, apologising and explaining the need for safety to the porter. It was useful to play the children card, people always understanding the need for safety when parents and children were involved, so minimal questions came up after Seokjin tearfully recounted how someone had tried to take Yoongi recently for money, Namjoon comforting him and others having to turn away to stop from laughing.

The room was deemed clear, so Jimin, Taehyung and Hoseok quickly disappeared inside, grinning and already talking about how they were going to play Just Dance until midnight, Namjoon having to shout after them to remember that they needed to rest for the meeting tomorrow. Honestly, Yoongi didn’t know why he even tried. The trio was going to do what they want, and would probably be sleeping the whole morning while they were meant to be getting ready.

Once the door shut the porter continued, showing them to another door in a different hallway, introducing this one as the ‘Grand Piano Suite’, making Yoongi’s ears zone in once he heard ‘piano’, security guards already entering the room to check for hazards, even radiation waves.

There were two bedrooms, two bathrooms and a living room, which in deed had a large dark grand piano situated in a corner. Once they were in the room it was the first thing Yoongi approached, stroking the ebony and ivory keys with his fingers, pressing down on the centre C to hear it was in perfect tune. It was too tempting not to play, and so as soon as it was only family left he let himself sit at the piano stool, thinking for a second before his hands began to dance on the keys.
It was familiar, and relaxing, and Yoongi had a hunch that he knew why Namjoon and Seokjin chose this room for the two couples to share, because if there was no other distraction that worked to get Yoongi’s attention, a piano would do.

He went through pieces like the Fur Elise, Moonlight Sonata, The Four Seasons and Clair de Lune all from memory, his brain euphorically blank as he let each note seep from his fingers to the keys and strings, closing his eyes until all his pieces were finished. He felt how he expected meditation to work for others, light and relaxed and peaceful, body feeling refreshed and ready. It had been so long since he had last played, and it confused him as to why he hadn’t thought of the piano beforehand.

His eyes fluttered open to see Jeongguk watching him from one of the couches, a small smile on his face which made Yoongi return one of his own, rising and walking over to the younger.

“You’re always so pretty when you play,” Jeongguk murmured once Yoongi reached him, pulling the smaller onto his lap.

“I thought I was pretty all the time,” Yoongi pretended to huff, and he felt Jeongguk’s laugh in his hair.

“I’m serious about what I said about tomorrow,” he said, and Yoongi tried to think about a specific thing the younger told him, but his mind came up blank. “I’m not letting you out my sight, not for a second.”

Oh, that. Perhaps it was overbearing, but Yoongi was secretly relieved. He knew exactly the type of men and women his parents did business with, knew half of them wouldn’t even think twice if the opportunity to take someone like Yoongi occurred. The human trafficking and prostitution rings that half of the attending businesses controlled were hellish, and Yoongi was sure people would pay a pretty price to have their way with the eldest son of the Kim family, the one known for being weak and pretty.

“Okay,” he breathed, and Jeongguk kissed him lightly on the temple, just holding him close.

Dinner that night was a simple affair. They had the hotel set up a private room to eat in, a large table with a golden tablecloth, silver cutlery and plates set out neatly in the centre of the room. Waiters and waitresses in black and white three piece suits presented food, steaks smelling like a five star kitchen, free complimentary champagne (and soft drinks for the seventeen year olds,
Jimin pouting as Namjoon refused to let him drink alcohol). It was nice, especially when the staff left, only familiar bodyguards left by the windows and doors.

“Tomorrow,” Seokjin spoke up, placing his knife and fork neatly on his plate. “It will be high risk, so remember to always be with someone else. People wouldn’t dare to target two people from our family at once, so if we do get separated, stay at least in pairs.”

“If you hear gunshots, don’t panic, but don’t get involved or stay around. These people are dangerous, and killing someone can put you in a bad position with a whole company,” Namjoon explained, and Yoongi ignored the anxiety he felt from the idea of being able to create hundreds of enemies from one fatality.

“Don’t trust anybody you don’t know to be completely loyal, or listen to anybody telling you an order that’s apparently form us, these are professional liars we’re dealing with,” Jin added again, tapping his fingers rhythmically on the table, one after another.

“You’ve said all of this about three times,” Jimin told him with a laugh, making Jin roll his eyes and tut.

But it was true, the pair had repeated exactly what to do in every situation again and again, so much Yoongi could probably repeat it word by word by now.

“I know, but we’re just being cautious,” Namjoon hummed, Seokjin still pulling an offended face. “And you’re ready for the showcase?”

Ah, the so called ‘showcase’. Namjoon had told them the day after they had got the letter that every company was expected to display something, a skill of some sort. Yoongi had an entertaining thought of them all dancing some sort of k-pop girl group routine, which made him almost laugh out loud. He became more subdued when Namjoon told him he wouldn’t take part as he technically wasn’t an official criminal heir anymore, meaning he would sit with the older couple and simply watch. At least this time there was a legitimate reason as to why he wasn’t taking part instead of ‘overprotective family members’.

Jeongguk had alluded what it was the quartet was doing, but the younger wanted it to be a surprise to Yoongi, to make his time more exiting, so except for the fact it had traditional Korean elements, Yoongi had no clue. He had some ideas as to what it could be, after all there were limited amounts of traditional things one could perform on a stage, but knowing the others he was expecting the unexpected.
“Yeah, we did final rehearsals yesterday before we left, everything went perfectly,” Hoseok beamed, and Yoongi had a hunch it had something to do with dance from the younger’s excitement.

“That’s great, but there’s one last thing,” Namjoon’s smile drifted off of his face, the room becoming more serious in the drop of a hat. “Yoongi, we know you don’t like being underestimated,” he started, and Yoongi already knew exactly how annoyed he was going to be by the next words. “But after what’s happened, people talk,” he said, desperation seeming to shine in his eyes. The display was confusing, because they had already all talked about safety and all that sort of planning. “We think it’s best if Jeongguk marks you, or does something to show you’re his.”

“What?”

What the fuck? Yoongi felt anger climb up his throat, head dizzy from the sudden emotion. He wasn’t a pet that had an owner, he didn’t belong to anybody, wasn’t an object. And it was funny how he was the only one they were saying this to. Not Jimin, who was pretty and seductive, not beautiful Taehyung who refused to kill mosquitoes but was happy beheading traitors, not Hoseok who was so sunny and energetic, not even Jeongguk who was the youngest. No, it was always Yoongi, small, weak, pale and sickly Yoongi.

“Listen,” Seokjin sighed, and the only redeeming point was the distaste in the elder’s expression. “You gave up your place at our company, so people might see you as someone to conquer, someone who isn’t as much as a threat,” he explained, and Yoongi understood, of course he did after what happened with Zack, but it was still unfair, still unequal. “So if you show you belong to Jeongguk...”

“Jin, I’m not... I’m not his whore,” he found himself stuttering, and he heard Jeongguk let out a startled cough at the word choice, but it was what he had to say.

That was what Seokjin was painting Yoongi to be, Jeongguk’s whore. Someone who he slept with and owned, but didn’t really love. It made him feel sick, made him want to throw his perfectly cooked steak in someone’s face. Of course he didn’t, but he felt so much anger he was sure he would snap.

“We know, God,” Seokjin choked out, sounding like he was disgusted by his own words, which made Yoongi feel better. At least his own family didn’t see him as a commodity to buy. “Do you think we like the idea of our son being targeted just because he’s slightly more vulnerable? We wish it was different, but it’s the bleak truth.”
Yoongi was overreacting, he was sure. After all, the truth wasn’t his parents’ fault. The fault was with the fucked up society they were a part of, and Namjoon and Seokjin only desperately wanted to keep him safe. But this method of safety was ridiculous. Could a group of people not keep their hands off of an eighteen year old boy for one night?

“We can find something to do that you might like?” Jeongguk suggested, still sounding taken aback by what Yoongi had said previously.

It made Yoongi fix a glare on him, feeling the disbelief written in his expression.

“I’m not letting you put a hickey on me for everyone to see for a professional meeting.”

Panic flew over Jeongguk’s face for a second and he quickly grasped Yoongi’s hand, shaking his head with wide eyes. The reaction made Yoongi feel better, that Jeongguk didn’t mean the whole sexually-objectifying-his-boyfriend thing, but the whole situation was still frustrating.

“I’m not suggesting that. Why don’t we look for a necklace, or something?” he asked, and it made Yoongi hesitate.

He wasn’t going to deny the fact he loved being spoiled by the younger. His reluctance to the whole marking scheme wasn’t because he hated the idea, no, he loved the idea of Jeongguk being proud of him, ensuring people knew they were together, Yoongi was taken. The problem was the driving force behind the statement, the fact it was actually needed. It was revolting that Yoongi would be a target if he didn’t have a stronger person practically owning him, but he was willing to compromise.

“Maybe,” Yoongi mumbled, still holding Jeongguk’s hand in his own, drifting his fingers over the calluses.

“We’ll let you two decide about that,” Namjoon dismissed, looking as uncomfortable as Yoongi felt about the situation, the fact his parents just asked him to get a visible hickey.

Yoongi found himself enchanted by the desserts that were brought out after everyone finished the main course, little cakes, biscuits, pastries and fruits, all displayed artistically on spotless white plates. Taehyung looked like he was about to make love to one of the Victoria sponge displays, fruit and chocolate sauces drizzled in patterns around the cake, gold foil covering white icing.
It was moments like this where Yoongi hated his appetite, or lack thereof, because there were at least five different things he wanted to eat, but only the stomach for one. Yoongi almost swooned when Jeongguk offered him small pieces of each of his own servings, the younger able to eat enough to feed a football team, one that had spent the whole day kicking a ball around a pitch, tired and ready to demolish a feast.

The evening was subdued, at least in Yoongi’s suite. Namjoon and Seokjin went to bed early, surely refining last minute plans and business propositions they might make, checking and checking information again and again. Yoongi knew the pair worried more when their children were involved, felt responsible not only for themselves and their company, but also for the people they loved the most. It must be nerve wracking; knowing one wrong move could put your whole family in danger.

Jeongguk was also quiet, Yoongi watching him looking over different jewellery websites on his phone, trying to find something suitable that they could get by tomorrow night. Yoongi was doubtful, Jeongguk probably looking far too into detail, and timing was another issue. Money could do basically anything, but slowing down time wasn’t one of them.

A knock at the door startled Yoongi where he was resting his head on Jeongguk’s thigh, the younger laughing softly before calling the person in, resting his free hand in Yoongi’s hair.

“Yoongi? Jungkook?” Taehyung called as he entered alongside Jimin, grinning his boxy smile once he saw the pair on the bed. “We have something you could use,” he said enthusiastically, and Yoongi was confused for a second before Taehyung presented a black velvet box, the Gucci logo glistening in gold on the lid.

With tanned nimble fingers he opened the seal, presenting the box to where the couple could see, and Yoongi felt the breath leave his body. Inside the box there lay a necklace, a choker, glistening silver in the dim hotel lights, and Yoongi felt himself become entranced. There seemed to be diamonds all over the white gold, which was twisted in floral design, flowers and dragonflies shaped out of thin metal.

“It’s Taehyung’s, but he has another one that he’s wearing, so you can use this one,” Jimin informed them, a small smile on his face at Yoongi’s expression. “It’s 18 karat white gold, with diamonds, values around £14,950 since we’re in England. That’s over twenty two million won.”

“You know, for what Namjoon and Seokjin suggested,” Taehyung shrugged, but Yoongi heard the hesitance in his voice.
“I’ve even clipped on a ‘J’ charm I had from a different necklace, which can stand for Jeongguk instead of Jimin,” Jimin quickly demonstrated, showing that connected to the centre point of the choker there indeed was a silver J, the colour matching perfectly to the choker, diamonds indented within the thickest parts of the calligraphy-style letter.

“Is it... okay?” Taehyung asked, the couple still having not answered.

“It’s beautiful,” Yoongi murmured, making the pair smile widely, eyes crinkled in happiness.

“Thank you guys, it means a lot,” Jeongguk said, but Yoongi almost missed it, eyes following the box as Taehyung handed it to the youngest in the room.

Taehyung always knew what he was doing with fashion, could probably have a career as a designer if he wanted to, but this was unlike Yoongi had ever seen the other wear. He was spellbound by the piece of jewellery; so much so that he completely missed the exit of the duo, was only pulled back into reality by Jeongguk pressing a kiss to his temple.

“It’s so beautiful,” he couldn’t help but whisper again, feeling Jeongguk’s breath against his skin.

“Not as beautiful as you,” the younger murmured before carefully closing the lid, putting the box on the bedside table next to his guns. “Now, we should sleep.”

The younger’s words were easier said than done, the luxurious bed and covers doing nothing to help lull Yoongi into the land of dreams. Perhaps it was anxiety over the day that was to come, perhaps jetlag, or perhaps it was just Yoongi’s regular states of insomnia, but he found that sleep evaded him, no matter how long he closed his eyes. Jeongguk seemed to be in a similar state, his irregular breathing telling Yoongi he was awake, feeling each exhale into his nape where Jeongguk was lying against his back.

Almost an hour passed with no sign of rest, until Yoongi sighed, turning to face the younger, who opened his eyes to meet Yoongi’s own. He didn’t say anything, just looking at the other until Yoongi buried his head in Jeongguk’s neck, whining at the lack of sleep.

It wasn’t that Yoongi wouldn’t be able to function without sleep; in fact it was quite the opposite. He often found his best times to be when he only slept for a few hours the night before, but that was not the situation Yoongi needed to be in now. Tomorrow was a big day, and being anxious
while sleep deprived was a bad mix of qualities.

“I’ll run us a bath,” Jeongguk suggested, and Yoongi nodded against his neck, not moving away until the younger tried to get out of bed to go to the adjoining bathroom.

Yoongi was reluctant to let go but eventually let Jeongguk disappear behind the doorway, hearing the water start to run. Despite how much he knew he was going to miss the warmth of the covers, Yoongi pulled himself out of bed, shuffling over to the bathroom, where he watched Jeongguk pour oils into the bathtub from the door. Small bursts of pretty bubbles were already floating around in the water, and the smell was sweetly intoxicating, roses and other flowers blooming into the room’s air.

He copied Jeongguk once the younger began to remove his t-shirt from his body, pulling his sweater over his head and sliding off his boxers, walking over to where the taller was already reclined in the large white tub, carefully sliding into the water between Jeongguk’s legs. It was warm, and Yoongi let his body relax as he lay against the younger’s chest, arms wrapping over his abdomen and interlacing their fingers.

It was exactly what he needed; the water making his muscles go limp and his mind go blank, the soft fragrance making him feel drowsier than before. Yoongi also felt Jeongguk relax, felt relief that the younger found the same comfort as he did, and allowed himself to just lie in the heat, mind too sluggish and sleepy to produce coherent thoughts.

Yoongi was on autopilot when Jeongguk coaxed him to get out, the water starting to cool and become lukewarm, the younger wrapping fluffy towels around them both before drying Yoongi softly, helping him redress and tucking him under the covers, whispering a promise to be back once he sorted out everything in the bathroom and his own pyjamas.

It felt like Jeongguk returned in just a blink, his body pressing close to Yoongi’s own as he wrapped them under blankets, whispering words of love Yoongi was too dazed to respond to, the darkness he lusted for finally engulfing his vision.
Yoongi was grateful that Jimin hadn’t decided to get them to wear full traditional hanbok for the meeting. He had only ever worn the full outfit once for Chuseok, the year Seokjin decided the younger males needed to become more ‘in touch’ with their culture, and it had been suffocating. There were so many layers, ties, ribbons, and Yoongi had found himself shedding half the items before the end of the night.

But Jimin’s design was much simpler, Yoongi wearing a white undershirt and golden trousers with an open knee length robe, black and embroidered with golden patters. It flowed as he walked, and Yoongi quickly did a spin to amuse himself while the younger wasn’t looking, enraptured with the way the fabric seemed to cut through the air. It was beautiful, and he made sure to thank Jimin for his hard work.

He didn’t notice Jeongguk coming through the door in his own outfit, his own robe a dark grey to match Yoongi’s black, golden patters on both the robe and the black undershirt. It made the younger look like a prince, the dark colour scheme making his eyes look brighter. Yoongi probably would have swooned if Jimin wasn’t currently fixing his trousers with a sharp needle, the waistband too large on his slender hips.

“You’ve lost weight,” Jeongguk frowned, watching Yoongi as he examined the smaller’s clothes in the mirror.

Well, he wasn’t wrong. Yoongi had noticed his body becoming even thinner throughout the time after his kidnapping, any progress he made previously lost in a few short months. He was surprised Jeongguk hadn’t commented on it sooner, the younger always worrying too much, but he had been uncharacteristically quiet on the matter recently. At this point, Yoongi knew for a fact his thigh was almost smaller than Jeongguk’s bicep, maybe even the same size, and any sort of broadness he might have held in his shoulders was softening, like a reverse puberty. It was odd, because he was doing even less amounts of activity since the event, and yet no sort of body fat was staying.

“That’s the first thing you say?” Yoongi asked, and he was only slightly annoyed. He knew Jeongguk only worried, but was that really the only thing he could think to say to Yoongi at this point?

“I mean, you look absolutely beautiful,” Jeongguk corrected, making a small smile grow on Yoongi’s face. “But you’ve lost weight. I noticed it earlier, as well,” he said as he let his eyes glance all around Yoongi’s form, watching Jimin’s hand movements. “It’s not healthy.”
This sounded like every other lecture his family gave him over his weight, and Yoongi could probably predict what Jeongguk was going to say word for word. He knew it was a problem, but it wasn’t like Yoongi didn’t care. He was trying, he was, but nothing seemed to want to help him. Seokjin kept threatening him with an IV line, which wasn’t really helping the whole situation, but the younger knew it was only out of the goodness of the eldest’s heart.

“Can we discuss this tomorrow?” he pleaded, and watched Jeongguk hesitate before nodding slowly, but his eyes were still fixed on how much fabric Jimin was having to bunch up and sew together.

“Okay,” he hummed. “But definitely tomorrow,” Jeongguk said with determination, and Yoongi knew there was no way he could get out of having this conversation.

Thankfully, Jimin distracted them by standing from where he was crouched, rearranging the robe to hide the extra stitches at the side. The fabric also hid just how slender Yoongi’s body was, which was a relief. He didn’t need everyone else becoming hyperaware of his weight as well as his family.

“That should do the trick,” Jimin exclaimed, looking proud of his handiwork.

“Thank you, Minnie,” Yoongi smiled, and he stepped away from the mirror to reach a bottle of water which was on the side of a cabinet, unscrewing the lid and taking a sip before he offered it to Jeongguk, who did the same. Together, they wandered into the living room, seeing everyone else in the process of getting their makeup and hair done, Hoseok already finished and reading through business transaction opportunities for the evening.

“If anybody stains their outfits I’m going to use their heart tendons as thread next time,” Jimin called from the other room and Yoongi laughed to see Namjoon quickly check his outfit, the clumsy man sighing in relief when his off-blue fabric was spotless.

It took an hour for all of them to become ready; Yoongi’s own makeup being done by a woman he knew had come with them from home. It ran through his mind that if they wanted him to be ignored, they probably shouldn’t make him look nice, but then he reasoned it was probably a pride thing. Namjoon and Seokjin couldn’t present him as their son if he looked like shit, and it probably didn’t reflect very well on his boyfriend either, him being an heir to the biggest company in the business and all.
He noticed that the makeup he had applied was more on the feminine side along with Jimin and Taehyung, Seokjin also verging on the line of stage makeup and beauty-centred makeup, but it wasn’t like he wasn’t expecting it. Jimin and Taehyung loved to mess with people’s gender stereotyping, loved to wear clothes branded for girls to prove that people like them looked amazing in anything, even when they were male. Seokjin just liked to look nice, his pride centred around his looks and appearance blooming when he had makeup to emphasise his best features, which was basically everything. Yoongi was different, in which he was sort of just given feminine makeup not because he particularly liked it, or wanted to defeat stereotypes, but because every stylist they had saw how he looked and who he was dating, and automatically labelled him as ‘the girl’ (which was stupid, because he was a boy dating a boy, the point was no girl was included at all).

Of course, Jeongguk, Hoseok and Namjoon got barely noticeable makeup which was only for covering up blemishes, and Yoongi was almost jealous until he saw the way Jeongguk seemed entranced with how Yoongi looked, making him feel a minuscule amount of thankfulness in regards to the makeup artist’s choices.

Before they left, the last thing Jeongguk did was to carefully fasten the diamond choker around Yoongi’s neck, the metal making his skin look even more luminescent. He made sure the ‘J’ was completely centred, checked that it wasn’t too tight against Yoongi’s throat to cause discomfort, admiring the way it glimmered.

“A beautiful necklace for a beautiful person,” he whispered, and Yoongi couldn’t resist pressing a kiss to the other’s lips, tasting Jeongguk’s strawberry chapstick the stylists chose.

Throughout the whole car journey, Yoongi felt his heart beat faster and faster, eyes trained on the world outside the vehicle instead of the dark interior. Jeongguk hadn’t let go of his hand since they sat next to each other, deciding to sit at the back while Namjoon sat just behind the driver and security guard in the passenger seat, the others in a car directly behind them, more guards following in cars and motorcycles.

Collectively, there were about twenty guards accompanying them to the meeting, as well as other high status workers that took the jet a few days before Yoongi himself and the family did, preparing for their boss’s arrival. Yoongi had thought having so many people of importance in one place was an extremely bad idea, but Namjoon insisted everyone had to attend the meeting, not only as a sign of trust, but also as a sign of power. If a company had an extremely large council of powerful leaders, then it showed the size and strength of the company in question, being able to afford so many people and their loyalty. But Yoongi was still paranoid about the sheer amount of key people that were attending. Even a loss of one person would have side effects, let alone a group of employees.

Jeongguk brought him to the present with a firm squeeze of his hand, showing a small smile when Yoongi turned to face him. Jeongguk was always a comfort, a safe place in a world of chaos, a
grounding force when the rug was pulled from under Yoongi’s feet. It was almost a reflex, his muscles relaxing and his mind coming to ease once Jeongguk brought his attention. It was like a drug, a sedative, Yoongi feeling his heart slow.

“I’m not letting you out of my sight,” Jeongguk whispered, lips trailing over Yoongi’s ear. “I won’t let anything hurt you,” he promised, finally bringing Yoongi into a kiss, short and gentle and barely more than a brush of their mouths, but it felt like so much, bringing a warmth to Yoongi’s chest. “Nothing will hurt you,” he repeated louder, looking Yoongi right in the eye.

“I love you,” Yoongi whispered, letting his eyelids fall shut, Jeongguk’s hands coming to frame his face.

“I love you, more than anything else in the world,” he returned, and the strength in the words made Yoongi want to melt away.

“We’re arriving,” Namjoon brought them out of their bubble, Jeongguk automatically moving to check the guns hidden under his clothes.

Yoongi had three knives hidden over his body. Two were above his shirt under his robe, easily accessible to Yoongi yet hidden from other’s eyes. They were the silver knives from Namjoon and Seokjin, sharpened and shaped to perfection in preparation for the evening, whatever may come of it. The third knife was completely concealed, strapped to Yoongi’s outer thigh under his trousers, directly against his skin. It was for ‘what if’ situations, the worst-case-scenarios his parents liked to be wary of. The knife was smaller, silver, and Yoongi hoped he wouldn’t be at a point in the evening where he had meaning to use it.

Once the door was opened Yoongi took a deep breath, following Jeongguk out of the car and grasping his hand tightly once his feet hit the ground. Immediately the street was teeming with people, men in suits, women in long dresses, Yoongi able to see at least ten guns from where he was standing. It was a good thing England had strict gun laws, because it meant people were less likely to use them, gunshots attracting police and unwanted attention immediately.

There was a door in the side of a black wall, looking innocent and inconspicuous, but judging by the sight of so many well dressed people entering the doorway Yoongi knew it was the venue they were invited to. There were occasional familiar faces, people he knew from meetings, dinners, missions. He was sure less people would recognise him than the rest of his family, most never even seeing Namjoon and Seokjin’s prized family picture, even if the tale of his existence was widely known.
The area, apart from the people congregating by the door, was dark. There were what looked like old industrial factories, warehouses, left derelict in a place seeming to be in the centre of the city. An old boat seemed to be just past one of the walls, and the area was maybe a stretch of abandoned docklands, left to rot after newer technologies and jobs were introduced elsewhere. It was fitting, that this was the area chosen, the isolation from the rest of the world clearly displayed in full force.

It was Namjoon that lead them inside, Seokjin at his side, and instantly the scent of cigarette smoke and expensive liquor filled Yoongi’s lungs, a smell that was telling of the type of people attending. It was dim, a large chandelier hanging lowly, occasional candles and lights on the dark walls. There were tables of people, each with drinks and foods, ashtrays littered on surfaces, half of them already almost full of discarded cigarettes and cigars. There were chairs around some of the tables, most occupied by people gambling or talking, women sitting with their legs crossed as men stood around them, boisterous laughter rising to the ceiling.

That was what Yoongi wanted to avoid looking like, appearing as though he was Jeongguk’s arm candy, sugar baby, or escort. You could tell exactly which women were there as a part of the company, and who was there for aesthetic purpose, a dark haired lady at one table playing a knife definitely was there as a businesswoman, not a whore. It was sad, most of the women here as dates probably forced to come, and Yoongi knew if Namjoon and Seokjin had been arranging the evening that it wouldn’t be allowed.

Yoongi watched his surroundings carefully as he let Jeongguk lead him forward, arms linked as their parents continued to walk confidently through the crowd, people turning to look at them as they passed. Of course, he was aware how infamous and powerful his family was within this environment, but he underestimated the attention it would bring. People seemed to straighten their posture, check their clothes, look bigger than they were. It was almost funny, but the sight of so many people made Yoongi feel nauseous.

Familiar faces floated in and out of view, and he recognised people from Namjoon and Seokjin’s meetings, files; murders, thieves and businessmen. A particular man stood out, perhaps because he started to walk towards their group, cockiness in his footsteps and a woman draping herself over his side, a revealing red dress split the whole way up one thigh, the neckline low enough for Yoongi to see the bottom of her ribs. It was an American, a boss of one of their allied companies, and the type of person to act as though he was best friends with you after talking to him once.

He was smiling as he finally reached them, dropping a cigarette and smothering it with the sole of his shoe, teeth on display. It reminded Yoongi of a shark, showing its weapons before making a kill, but he knew better. There was no way the man was able to be a threat, the alliance one point, but the status of their family another. It would be foolish for anyone to make a move against them, especially as their status was rising higher and higher since the move. It was a reassurance to know they were practically untouchable, Yoongi able to swallow his nerves as the man opened his mouth to speak, a lazy smile on his face.
“Namjoon and Seokjin Kim!” he said loudly, as though he wanted to attract the attention of the room, and Yoongi saw that he partially succeeded. People were looking over, watching the exchange. It made Yoongi feel uncomfortable, but there was nothing he could do apart from to depend on Jeongguk. “A pleasure to see you two alive,” he seemed to joke, taking a glass of alcohol from a passing by waiter, taking a sip from the glass.

“Are you surprised, Jason?” Namjoon raised his eyebrows, and Yoongi was relieved that they weren’t pretending to be friends with everyone here. They sometimes had that approach with non-criminal business meetings, being friendly with every guest in attendance, but it didn’t seem to be a trait that extended to criminality.

“Of course not, just happy,” Jason amended, still smiling that creepy, confident smile, the woman giggling at his side.

She seemed drunk, or high, and Yoongi hoped it was by her own consent, but even if it wasn’t, there was nothing they could do. Despite being probably the most powerful people in attendance, they still had to be cautious of their actions. There were plenty of people waiting for the Kim family to have a weakness, people like Zack. They had to cooperate with everyone, and couldn’t interfere with things out of their power, no matter how much they may want to.

Yoongi’s attention was drawn away from the conversation by the sound of a glass smashing, but it was only a wine glass on the floor, a red-faced man laughing heartily over it while waiters and waitresses rushed to clear the mess. Someone reached to dab at a spot of wine on the man’s shirt but they ended up with a hand around their throat instead, apologising quickly for not asking permission first. Eventually the man let them go, the person stumbling away before starting to clean the floor with the others, keeping eyes downcast.

It made Yoongi’s own neck feel too constricted, and the only reason he didn’t try to reach for the choker was Jeongguk’s arm wrapped around his own, his other hand resting atop of Yoongi’s free appendage which was rested against their arms. It meant Jeongguk would know exactly when he moved, would be aware of his discomfort, and Yoongi didn’t want to worry him.

He was brought back by Jin’s voice, his familiar tone bringing a small amount of comfort to Yoongi’s mind.

“And I’m sure you know of Jeongguk, our youngest heir,” Seokjin said to Jason, and Yoongi must have missed the other’s introductions, Jeongguk releasing Yoongi’s hand to shake Jason’s, still keeping their arms linked.
As soon as Jason let go, Jeongguk’s hand was back to Yoongi’s, but the elder couldn’t think while Jason’s eyes drifted to his own, looking up and down his body like it was a piece of meat.

“And who’s this beauty?” he purred, and began reaching for Yoongi’s hand, as though he was to bring it to his lips to kiss it, not shake it like Jeongguk’s. It made Yoongi panic momentarily, clutching onto Jeongguk harder, making the younger interrupt the movement.

“This is Yoongi,” his boyfriend stated, tone cold and emotionless. “And I suggest you keep your hands to yourself unless you want to lose them,” Jeongguk threatened bluntly, and Yoongi watched Jason freeze, taking his outstretched hand back and instead putting it on the woman beside him.

He released a nervous laugh, and Yoongi watched his eyes flicker from Jeongguk to a straight faced Namjoon, Seokjin’s expression matching his partner’s. Yoongi knew Jeongguk was intimidating, his normally large doe eyes and soft face being able to morph into one of cold anger, and Yoongi was relived.

“This one’s got fire,” Jason said, trying to reclaim his agency that he seemed to think he had over the situation, nervous eyes darting between members of his family, smile not so confident as before.

“I’d follow his advice,” Namjoon stated, raising an eyebrow. “People have lost much more valuable things than their hands before.”

Yoongi watched Jason swallow, throat bobbing before he nodded, smile still fixed on his face, looking ready to shatter in the dim room, the glint less intimidating. The man had realised he had overstayed his welcome in the conversation, so he wrapped his arm around the woman, asking if she wanted another drink.

“Well, I bid you a good evening,” he excused, quickly leading her away to a table of people, reconstructing his pride.

“You too, Jason,” Namjoon said, and despite the normal tone of voice Yoongi knew he was heard, Jason’s footsteps pausing for a miniscule amount of time before walking away even faster.

“Are you feeling okay?” Jeongguk turned to ask, voice only just higher than a whisper. Yoongi nodded shakily, flashing a small smile he was sure Jeongguk knew was more of a grimace, but they were here. There was not much he could do.
Namjoon continued to walk through the crowd, and people seemed even more hesitant than before to approach them, something that Yoongi saw as a plus. Eventually, they came to a table near to a wall, and Namjoon sat down, Yoongi being lead by Jeongguk to a chair in the corner, the furthest away from the large crowd of people.

Immediately, they were served drinks and food, Yoongi watching the others accept the wine before dipping a small indicator inside, checking for toxins. It wasn’t completely effective, only able to check things like pH, use monoclonal antibodies for specific substances, but it was still the best they could do in the environment. Once deemed clear, Namjoon nodded, turning to talk to Seokjin.

“I know you’re uncomfortable, I’m sorry I can’t help,” Jeongguk said right away, taking Yoongi’s hands.

It was tough to hear Jeongguk sound so regretful, almost guilty, and it made Yoongi feel worse. It wasn’t Jeongguk’s fault he hated where they were, and the younger was the reason he wasn’t completely freaking out already.

“You are helping,” Yoongi murmured, eyes fixed on the table.

More people each came to approach their table, and Yoongi was fascinated by the fact that people flocked to them in the corner, a Scottish woman congratulating them on their profits before proposing an alliance, Namjoon smiling and giving her a contact to talk to. It was business, and Yoongi found it fascinating how Namjoon and Seokjin so easily charmed the people around them, could persuade deals and shares that would seem ridiculous if proposed by anyone else in the room.

An older man smiled as it reached his turn to talk to the pair, the mix of both young women and men hanging off of him making Yoongi feel slightly uncomfortable, especially when some looked to be Jeongguk’s age. It was sad when people had to enter their lifestyle this young, that teenagers were often forced to decide between living and selling themselves in order to eat, to have a safe place to sleep. It was the reason why Yoongi investigated Namjoon and Seokjin’s business empire so much in the first place, when he had just moved in. Their family only managed prostitutes which were fully willing and at the age of adulthood, normally young women looking for rich men to date them and look after their needs, and Yoongi new his parents wouldn’t stand for any harm to come to any of them.

But the people hanging off the man looked too young, slightly uncomfortable, trying to avoid direct touch and interaction. It made Yoongi feel sick that they might have been bought, trafficked, traded between people, but Namjoon and Seokjin had no power in this case, even though Yoongi
knew they would love to help the world.

“Where did you get your toy from?” The man asked Namjoon, and Yoongi realised he missed most of the conversation.

“Excuse me?” Namjoon asked, eyebrows furrowed in confusion as he looked for an explanation, the man smirking and wandering over to the side of the table closer to Jeongguk.

“Your toy, your whore, concubine, whatever you call him. Who did you buy him from?” The man repeated, and in an unpredictable motion faster than Yoongi could see the man was grabbing his jaw in one hand, moving his face up into the light as if to admire Yoongi’s features.

It lasted seconds before Jeongguk was yanking the man’s hand as gently as he could off of Yoongi’s face, Namjoon standing and pulling his gun out to press it as subtly as he could against the man’s waist. Jeongguk positioned himself in front of Yoongi, hiding him behind his back and away from the man’s lustrous gaze, which sent shivers down Yoongi’s spine and his breath to shake.

“Attached to your possessions, are we?” The man leered, and Yoongi couldn’t understand how someone could seem so confident when one of the most powerful men in the world was pointing a gun directly at your body.

The young escorts around him seemed agitated and distressed by the weapon, eyes fixed on it before seeming to try to ignore its presence, subtly distancing themselves from where Namjoon was stood tall.

“I think you will find,” Namjoon spoke, voice as deadly as the gun he pressed further into the man’s abdomen. “That that is my son.”

All the colour drained from the man’s face and he shot a panicked look over in Yoongi’s direction, Yoongi feeling him watching as Jeongguk continued to make his human barrier, pushing his hands behind his back to hold Yoongi’s own and lace their fingers together. It was comforting, and Yoongi felt calm ripple through his mind as he pressed his forehead to Jeongguk’s back, the muscles tensing rhythmically under his clothing.

“I’m-I didn’t realise-I’m sorry,” came the stuttering reply, and Yoongi was happy to finally hear the fear in the man’s voice. After all, their family was infamous for protecting each other; any
insult to one is insult to everyone.

“I suggest you leave us, before I decide you would look better as a leather briefcase,” Namjoon almost hissed, and Yoongi could hear the man’s hurrying steps backwards easily over the noise of the other people in the room.

“Yes, yes of course, thank you for your time,” he rushed once more before his steps hastily retreated, the escorts following him like loyal pets.

It took a moment for Yoongi to recover before Jeongguk turned, pulling him into a tight hug, grasping his hips tightly. Almost like he had completely forgotten, Jeongguk quickly pulled away to gently and carefully put his fingers on the bottom of Yoongi’s jaw, making sure the man hadn’t left any sort of marks.

“I was going to kill him,” the younger whispered, eyes still fixed on Yoongi’s skin. “I would have cut off his hand, his tongue, make him kiss your feet.”

The drive behind the statement made Yoongi hesitate shortly before nodding, standing on his toes to try and get Jeongguk to kiss him.

“I wouldn’t have stopped you,” he hummed, allowing Jeongguk to lead them back down to their seats, except this time Yoongi was sat in Jeongguk’s place, which was harder to reach from the edges of the table. The only downside was that Yoongi loved the protection of the corner, but he figured his boyfriend was better protection than any inanimate object.

“Next time,” Jeongguk breathed, sitting down once more and holding Yoongi’s hand firmly within his own.

As time went on, Yoongi started to relax slightly. It wasn’t as bad as he thought it was, their family able to just sit and people coming to them instead of having to actually mingle, and Yoongi thanked whoever was listening for Namjoon and Seokjin’s status. It meant that he could stay in his corner, not having to talk to anyone he didn’t know, getting comfort in the security guards loyal to them around their table. He was sure their other specialists were talking to people, trading ideas or agreements, but their family could let people come to them instead of having to move. It was a relief.

The evening was constant, sometimes brawls breaking out but no weapons involved, and Yoongi
was finally feeling like maybe this wasn’t the worst thing to ever happen. At eight o’clock, people started to move through a door, and once most people were gone Namjoon stood, Seokjin rising once he finished his glass of wine. Despite the supply, Yoongi knew everyone would only drink a single glass, the meeting too important to spend intoxicated. Drunk people were more vulnerable, more unpredictable, and their parents would probably kill them if anyone drank too much alcohol, even though some people (Jimin) could drink most well experienced adults under the table.

Rising from his own seat, Yoongi quickly linked his arm with Jeongguk’s, following Namjoon and Seokjin as they passed through the next doorway. It lead to what looked almost like a theatre, but instead of the fabric foldable chairs there were sofas and coffee tables, enough to seat four at one point, and Yoongi felt a momentary panic at having to sit next to a stranger until Jeongguk lead him to where Jimin and Taehyung were sat, letting the elder sit between Taehyung and himself. Namjoon and Seokjin sat either side of Hoseok, nobody else daring to sit at their side, leaving an empty space.

It was a comfort, to have Jeongguk and Taehyung’s broad figures either side of him, the youngest’s arm over the back of the seat. He felt protected, safe, and he knew they wouldn’t let anything hurt him. The hanbok was surprisingly comfortable, the silky fabric calming against Yoongi’s skin, and he remembered to compliment Jimin’s work again after the evening.

“It’s the beginning of the showcase,” Jeongguk told him quietly, lips pressed close to his ear. “To show power, technique, it’s like a bragging of skill I guess,” he explained, and Yoongi nodded slowly, eyes fixed on the stage in front of them. There was some movement, people looking to be setting up the area for the first performers, and an aspect of it made Yoongi excited.

He always appreciated when he could witness hard work, always recognised when someone poured their heart into something. It made him think of music, the piano, how much he loved being able to make melodies under his fingers. He loved when people shared their talent, what they lived and breathed for. It was like a window into people’s souls, and Yoongi understood people much better after he saw them do something they loved.

The lights dimmed after a couple of minutes, just dim enough to bring attention to the stage, where a group of four women were stood frozen in place, their hands gracefully raised above their heads. They wore white ballet shoes to match their outfits, the skirts stuck outwards, glittering under the spotlight. It almost took Yoongi’s breath away, the sight so beautiful in such a dark room, and it reminded him of swans in a polluted lake.

A violin piece began to play, and the women started dancing. It was so intricate, controlled, managed, and every step was perfectly in time with the others, arms and legs perfectly in sync. They twisted, turned, danced across the stage like it was ice, like no friction was underneath their feet. And Yoongi knew the purpose of the display, the show of control and sternness, of obedience. They danced like robots, windup toys in a jewellery box, and it was one of the prettiest things
Yoongi had ever seen.

In what felt like only moments the music was ending, the women in fixed final positions until they stepped forward, bowing in unison before gliding off of the stage. The lights didn’t come back on, so Yoongi figured the next act would appear soon after, and he was right when a man appeared.

A red coat stood out above all else, and he wore large black boots, leather gloves over his hands, which held a large array of different swords. He bowed before he began, and he brandished the weapons, laying some on the floor as he picked up a short sword, placing the tip near to his lips, under his moustache.

As soon as the blade was put anywhere near his face Yoongi turned his head to avert his eyes, quickly moving to rest his forehead on Jeongguk’s shoulder to avoid the sight. He knew the man was probably well practiced in his art, could swallow the sword perfectly, but it still made Yoongi anxious to watch. There were so many things that could go wrong, including the man eventually bleeding out all over the stage from inside out, and it was something Yoongi would rather not watch.

Jeongguk laid a hand on Yoongi’s cheek in comfort, shielding his eyes further but still watching the man, probably out of respect. It wouldn’t look good if a number of members of the most powerful company in attendance were distracted from the performance, especially when Hoseok and Seokjin were probably freaking out about the act as much-or more-than Yoongi was.

Every time there was applause Yoongi knew the man had performed some sort of trick, had swallowed a sword or something just as daring, but he kept his eyes away. He only looked back when Jeongguk moved his hand away, a sign it was finished, and Yoongi joined the final round of applause for the man, knowing it was no easy feat to put a weapon into your throat.

The following hour was filled with fencing, archery, dance, even some singing, one particular lady operatically performing the whole of the Fur Elise only with her voice, which Yoongi enjoyed greatly, the song completely perfect, note for note. It was after a troupe of acrobats that Jeongguk rose from his chair, beckoning Taehyung and Jimin to follow.

“It’s our turn soon, so we need to go,” he murmured, pulling Yoongi up as well to his confusion. “You should sit with Namjoon and Seokjin while we perform.”

Yoongi nodded, and Jeongguk settled him between the couple, kissing him lightly then turning to leave, taking Hoseok with him as well as the other duo. Yoongi followed him with his eyes for as long as he could, but eventually the younger was enveloped by darkness, making a pulse of anxiety
run through Yoongi’s body. It was his parent’s presence that brought him back, their dually strong forms either side of him making him feel almost as relaxed as before, but they weren’t Jeongguk.

He was almost completely spaced out as a man showed off his shooting abilities, bodies hitting the floor one by one as he pulled a trigger as fast as lightning, one shot after another. It was impressive, but Yoongi couldn’t focus on anything much with Jeongguk gone, the younger’s presence normally being his grounding point. He was only pulled back at the sound of a drum, red and blue flames appearing on a screen, fire climbing up the wall.

He immediately knew it was their family. It was a beat he had heard in the house before, one he was pretty sure Hoseok created to dance to, but he hadn’t realised it would be for this. The flames flared perfectly in time with the music, regular patterns spreading all over the screen. A platform started to rise from the stage, and it seemed to be three tiered, Yoongi automatically recognising the women positioned on each layer. They were workers he recognised from Korea, women who worked as stylists, guards, assassins, an array of jobs all working under their family.

Dressed head to toe in hanbok, they played their traditional drums perfectly to the beat, twisting and turning to hit the drum in front of them, behind them, to the side of them. It was perfectly choreographed, and Yoongi admired how many of the women probably knew the dance through tradition, family, the movements fluid and perfect in every way.

Another platform rose in a gap right in the middle of the stage, and he watched as Hoseok ascended to the second tier, crouched down and looking into the audience. He slowly stood up, and Yoongi felt breathless at the power the younger was emitting, the confidence making him feel intimidated, despite knowing Hoseok would rather jump off a cliff than hurt his family. It was the way his stony face and cold eyes scanned the crowd, a small smirk forming on his lips.

As he stood, his arms started to move, his right arm the first to flow in a wave motion which was carried to the other, and then he looked fluid, arms twisting and turning. When the second beat kicked it, Hoseok’s movements became faster, lifting both arms behind him and starting to really dance, making Yoongi feel enchanted by every action, every perfectly executed move. His body jerked, and it should have looked awkward, or bad, but Hoseok made it look amazing, arms and body moving in complete sync with one another. At another beat, he spun into a crouch, and Yoongi heard people behind him gasp as Hoseok kicked as he came back up, robe parting perfectly to display his leg, which Yoongi noticed had no shoe, Hoseok performing with bare feet.

It was so strong, so controlled, and the younger was in absolute accurate timing with the drumming women, with the music’s beat, hands and feet moving into moves so quickly it looked almost magic, like an illusion. He let the beat flow through him, and Yoongi always admired the way Hoseok looked like he was conducting the music through his body, electrical impulses travelling from one hand to the other.
He reached down, spinning as he picked up an orange fan, looking like part of the routine as he quickly spread the fan in his hand, closing it, and then throwing it to another part of the stage, the lights quickly changing to reveal Jimin, who caught the fan perfectly in the hand.

Another melody, even more traditional with Korean instruments, started up, and Yoongi felt breath escape his lungs. Jimin looked ethereal, grey hair shining under the lights as he brandished the fan, a spiral of people holding white fans spreading the fabric around him. He looked like a prince, a faerie, features beautiful under spotlight. He spun, fan held above his head, and Yoongi didn’t know anyone more graceful than Park Jimin, not even the ballerinas at the start of the showcase able to rival his movements.

All the people moved on stage, fans moving in unison as Jimin danced at the centre. He spun and brandished the fan in perfect time with his movements, crouching down with a leg outstretched to the slide, eyes dangerous as they scanned the crowd. It was a wonder, how Jimin could look so scary, so intimidating, when he could also be so adorable, cheeks and eyes scrunching up when he smiled. But none of the cuteness was here now, the younger looking deadly centre stage.

He moved his fan from corner to corner, the people flourishing their fans in each direction Jimin pointed, until he raised the fan from his left to his right over his head. An arch of white formed over him, fans forming a full body halo around him, moving as Jimin still danced.

In another flurry of movement, the people formed two parallel lines, and as Jimin opened his own orange fan the white fans spread out each side like a wave, Jimin in the centre of an ocean of white, his own fan the colour of fire standing out. He turned again, reaching into his trouser waistline to grab the white cloth Yoongi didn’t notice hanging at his waist, flourishing it around as he spun before looking to throw it somewhere else but this time the cloth didn’t actually leave his hand, instead the light switching quickly to show Jeongguk.

Yoongi didn’t even have time to think about Jeongguk before the younger was bursting towards the audience, white cloths on each hand flying forward. He was surrounded by other people, who fell around him, cloths flashing in all directions away from the youngest. They stood, and Yoongi was hypnotised by Jeongguk, hands making the fabric flow in firm movements.

If Hoseok was control, and Jimin was grace, then Jeongguk was strength. Every move held a sense of danger, a sense of unvocalised power, that Jeongguk could kill you with his hands tied behind his back. As he brandished the white fabric his eyes scanned the audience, and Yoongi felt frozen as the pupils fixed upon his own, keeping eye contact for a second before Jeongguk looked to the floor as he continued the dance.
He raised the cloths before immediately bringing them back down, then spinning them in perfectly large circular motions, the people around him echoing his actions with their own steps. Jeongguk kicked into the air, spinning the cloths around so fast they seemed like one piece of fabric, floating about him like a halo. But Jeongguk looked nothing like an angel, eyes dark and face as cold and emotionless as the illustrations you see of the devil in a church.

Jeongguk pulled the left cloth through his right hand, slow, eyes fixed on the audience, probably locked with a powerful businessman or influencer. There was no hint of emotion on his face, nothing showing any sort of weakness. It made Yoongi feel almost proud, the boy he first met, young and foolish and nothing but shy, growing into the perfect leader, someone perfect for the job he was destined to do.

He quickly changed hands, pulling the right cloth tight, then spun and crouched, the people around him copying the exact same. It was beautiful, the dance paired with the hanbok they all wore, flowing around the stage like a sea of fabric. Yoongi was so absorbed in his boyfriend’s performance, his display of talent and grace, the rest of the room melted away until it felt like it was only his boyfriend centre stage, even the other dancers fading in and out of his vision, he only had eyes for Jeongguk.

Flashes of white occasionally covered his face, but for most of the minutes his boyfriend was on stage Yoongi was entranced by the way he looked, raven hair shining in the stage lights, eyes focused and hard. He looked more handsome than Yoongi thought he had ever seen him as Jeongguk ran forward to the centre stage, cloths flying out in front of him as he halted, the dancer’s behind him whipping theirs in a circle before once again moving away across the stage.

Three dancers dressed in true traditional hanbok stood where Jeongguk was just before, obscuring him from sight as they reached out their hands, masks over their heads making them look almost like statues, the bright colours a nice change to the darkness floating over the room, the gloomy atmosphere.

The three ducked down, and Yoongi couldn’t help but smile when Jeongguk was revealed, lying across the hands of the dancers in black, as if lying on a couch for a photo shoot. One of his legs was bent and propped up, one arm behind his head, but it shifted to reveal a colourful mask which Jeongguk pulled slowly over his face, the red and blue standing out against the dark colours suspending him in air.

For a moment, he paused, mask over his expression before in a flash he threw it to the side, another part of the stage, and the light faded from Jeongguk’s section, Yoongi feeling a hint of sadness when he could no longer watch his boyfriend perform on stage, show off how skilled he was. The lights flashed on above the centre stage where Hoseok previously was, although Hobi was nowhere in sight.
The mask had landed once again in the middle of the stage how Yoongi had predicted, and was immediately grabbed by Taehyung, who kicked into the sky, robe floating around him like there was no gravity in the room. He slowly brought it up to cover his face, but Taehyung’s expression was different from the others. Where Jeongguk, Jimin and Hoseok had been emotionless, faces straight and not giving away a single thought, Taehyung’s was pulled into a smirk. It looked dangerous, sly, like he knew something everyone else didn’t and it made Yoongi want to smile too, because Taehyung was fully aware of the exact effect he had on people, he knew he could bewitch them in seconds flat.

In a flash he threw the mask again to one side, it disappearing into the dark side of the stage. The lights were all completely focused on Taehyung and the small group of people around him, and Yoongi was confused for a second before the other people moved away, their black clothes blending into the background.

Taehyung bowed to the audience, a smirk still hinted on his face, before he spun on the ball of his foot, kicking a person in the face. It was a taekwondo demonstration, and Yoongi was willing to bet that Taehyung wanted to do it because it had ‘Tae’ in the name, something the younger would surely find amusing. Of course, taekwondo was a traditional Korean fighting style, so it made sense they were adding it in.

More people dressed in black started to approach, and Taehyung dealt with them all almost simultaneously, kicking up high by his head and spinning, perfectly landing every hit to their heads. The actions were coordinated perfectly with the music still in the background, and it made it look like a dance, people falling to the stage as Taehyung continued to turn. It was amazing, and Yoongi wondered why he had never seen the younger practice the fighting style, Taehyung often not able to keep his excitement at bay when he wanted to show or tell people things. Yoongi was almost surprised he hadn’t spilled information about what they were doing, but he imagined the others had threatened him to keep quiet.

One large spin had Taehyung jump into the air, planting a foot on the chest of a person with his other foot also pointed in the same direction and it was beautiful, looked like something out of a ballet routine, landing lightly on the person’s chest before he jumped up, wrapping his legs around another person’s neck and spinning, making them fall to the ground, Taehyung rolling away. He grabbed something, the mask, which he slowly lowered onto his head, smirk being veiled. His feet stepped back, and he faded into the dark background, the lights dimming and nobody else appearing on stage as the music faded, like they had somehow disappeared.

The darkness lasted for a few seconds before the stage lit up, a new person there to represent a new group, the others not seeming to come back out for the customary bow. Yoongi didn’t know why they didn’t, every person having come back to bow to the audience once finished, but he must say it was much more dramatic when it seemed they had somehow completely left.
It was midway before the new act, a person playing the violin, when the others returned to where their family was seated. Namjoon and Seokjin had matching smiles, the pride visible in their eyes, and Yoongi was sure he looked the same as Jeongguk took his hand, coaxing him up and leading him back to their sofa with Jimin and Taehyung, the younger putting Yoongi on his lap instead of beside him on the seat.

There were sweat droplets on his forehead, one running down the side of his face, and Yoongi grabbed a tissue from the side to dab at it, Jeongguk smiling at him adoringly. Yoongi couldn’t help when his smile widened, leaning forward to press a light kiss to Jeongguk’s temple, wrapping his arms around him in a hug.

“You did so well,” he whispered, and he could almost feel Jeongguk’s smile, the way his hands rubbed up and down Yoongi’s back.

“I’m always trying to make you proud,” he murmured back, and Yoongi felt happiness bursting in his chest, allowing Jeongguk to move them so they could both see the stage, Yoongi still on his lap as they watched the musician finish her piece, bowing and walking off stage.

The short minute break between performances had Yoongi relaxing against Jeongguk’s chest, listening to his heartbeat, letting it sooth him, until the calm wash shattered by a deafeningly loud, sharp sound, cracking through the room. It was a gunshot, then another, and Yoongi heard screams as they continued, him being frozen in place as they rained down around the room.

Chapter End Notes

So... someone is getting shot in the next chapter...want to place bets?
I'm on 122k right now and I think I have about one more chapter left to write, so be assured nothing is left unanswered ;)))

Yoongi was paralysed, his mind blank, body locked, refusing to even think about what was going on around him. This wasn’t meant to happen; this was meant to be a relatively safe meeting weapons-wise, a single gunshot able to anger whole countries, generations of alliances all willing to defend or attack others in the room. Yoongi just mindlessly had assumed the majority of people wouldn’t have the foolishness to pull a gun, especially when people as high in the hierarchy like Namjoon and Seokjin were present, people with the power to access nuclear weapons, kill in an instant.

This wasn’t meant to happen; this wasn’t meant to be happening. It was like in a movie, where the main character was just completely lost in their own heads, the rest of the world spinning around them. Yoongi couldn’t tell you what was up, what was down, whether the voice he could hear screaming was him or someone else, footsteps thundering over floors.

The room was filled to the brim with people who were armed like soldiers going to war, even the escorts and prostitutes most likely having a knife or some other small weapon concealed on their body. It made a situation like this even worse, everyone a threat, everyone capable of causing harm if they felt too vulnerable. The sheer volume of bodies rushing by made Yoongi’s chest clench, eyes unable to focus in the ocean of bodies, colours and shapes blurring. He was sure people were running for the exits, but that seemed to be where the main sounds of gunfire were coming from. It was like a trap.

His vision focused completely as soon as he felt Jeongguk jolt below him, the hands around Yoongi’s waist leaving as the younger reached for a weapon. The absence of touch almost made Yoongi panic until he focused on the legs below him, trying with all his might to stay calm. A panic attack wasn’t what Yoongi needed, could compromise his whole family and put them in danger, although calming himself down was becoming more and more difficult with that thought in his mind.

“Hey, Hey, love, look at me,” Jeongguk interrupted his interior anxiety, voice smooth to his ears.

Yoongi’s eyes darted back to Jeongguk’s from where he hadn’t even realised they had wandered,
and was met with the hard gaze of his boyfriend, the one he got when he was working, when he was shooting or planning or anything of the sort. It was a sight Yoongi welcomed, how in control Jeongguk appeared to be, a comfort which made him feel better.

Jeongguk promised nothing would hurt him, and Jeongguk never broke his promises.

“There we go, now I need you to listen to me, okay?” He said, and to some the tone may have seemed patronising, but to Yoongi it was perfect, loving. He nodded, never taking his eyes off of the younger even as Taehyung and Jimin moved around them, guards scurrying next to where they were still seated. “You’re not to leave my side, okay? Stay with me, or someone else in the family.”

Jeongguk’s tone was firm, in control, and Yoongi could do nothing more but nod, swallowing down his anxiety. It would be fine, as long as he stayed right next to Jeongguk, listened to his boyfriend’s orders. It wasn’t the first time their family had been in a situation like this, gunfire everywhere, and it definitely wouldn’t be the last. He just needed to stay calm, focus on Jeongguk, only Jeongguk.

Nodding himself, the younger stood, gently placing Yoongi on the ground before his face hardened, and he grabbed Yoongi’s hand. The guards were everywhere around them, and Yoongi could hear Namjoon shouting orders, but he couldn’t focus on the words. There was too much screaming, too many voices overlapping and making his ears throb, head spin. A squeeze of Jeongguk’s hand grounded him, and in a flurry of movement he found himself moving.

Stumbling behind Jeongguk as the taller lead him somewhere was like a natural instinct, and he felt a body press up against his back, the height giving away the fact it was Jimin, gun held tightly in hand. He couldn’t see the others, but he knew they were safe, knew there hadn’t been a casualty. He would know, would be able to tell from Jeongguk’s face, his actions.

There was a crack to Yoongi’s right, and he almost fell as a man’s body slumped over him, the large hole in his head giving away the fact he was dead. There was blood running down his red shirt, and Yoongi almost screamed before Jeongguk pulled him forward with a jerk, pressing him against his chest, cupping the back of Yoongi’s head. More and more people fell around them, and Yoongi was able to hear Hoseok shout that he had spotted one of the shooters, guns being fired around them by members of their family.

There was a pause in fire, and immediately Jeongguk tucked Yoongi under his arm, pulling him along again to the exit with the least casualties, the least amount of bodies littering the floor. He almost tripped a number of times, Jeongguk always steadying him before their fast pace returned, almost reaching the door before there was a loud shout behind them, sounding like Seokjin.
The words were fuzzy to Yoongi’s ears, but Jungkook seemed to understand. In one swift movement, he swung their bodies around, pressing Yoongi tightly to his chest and covering his back with his hands, like he was trying to engulf him.

The close proximity made the jolt of Jeongguk’s body feel obvious, the way his chest spasmed forward suddenly, shout muffled by gritted teeth. It confused Yoongi, until he felt Jeongguk’s body start to loosen around him, the younger falling to his knees.

“Guk?” Yoongi questioned in confusion, crouching down before him to cup his face in his hands. “Wha... What’s wrong?”

He swayed, until he fell onto his side, and that was when Yoongi saw the blood pooling on the floor. The puddle was already large, and kept growing under the younger’s body, the red staining the hanbok’s fabric.

“Guk, no, no, Guk? Jeongguk?” Yoongi choked frantically, trying to stop his hands from shaking as he stroked Jeongguk’s face urgently, trying to get a reaction. “Jeongguk, wake up, I need you, please,” he sobbed, breath coming in short, irregular bursts out of his lungs, making him cough.

Hands on his shoulders made him panic even more, made him struggle and try to fight against the body behind him. He didn’t want people touching him, didn’t want anyone but the person who was bleeding out on the floor, eyes shut and Yoongi not able to tell if his chest was still moving. He heard a voice in his ear, the low tone revealing the person to be Taehyung, but Yoongi didn’t stop fighting, didn’t stop trying to get out of his arms.

“Yoongi, Yoongi stop,” Taehyung pleaded, wrapping his arms even firmed around the elder’s small body. “There’s still a gunman somewhere, we need to go.”

“No, no!” Yoongi’s sobs were making his whole body convulse, still fighting against Taehyung’s hold. “We can’t go, we can’t, Jeongguk,” he begged, and Taehyung seemed to be having a hard time controlling his own emotions, choked breaths quiet in the loud room.

“Yoongi, the others are getting Jeongguk, but we need to go,” he pleaded, begged, and it made Yoongi cry even harder, but he allowed Taehyung to take him out the room, quickly picking the smaller up in his arms and running to the door.

There were panicked people all around them, and Taehyung held him close the whole time, Yoongi
still sobbing into his chest. He couldn’t see from where his face was buried in the taller’s chest, but he could hear everything. There were screams, people calling names, shouting for help. It was a building full to the brim with suffering, Yoongi able to hear a woman hysterically screaming just to the right of the room, the sound cutting out after another flurry of gunshots could be heard.

Namjoon yelled something behind them, and Yoongi felt Taehyung let out a deep breath, holding Yoongi even closer to his chest.

“They got the gunman,” he said as his voice shook, something angry bubbling to the surface. It was something Yoongi had barely ever heard in the younger’s tone, Taehyung only ever sounding calm when angry, and even that anger was rare.

As they reached a hallway, Yoongi was set down on a sofa which was against the wall gently, large hands leaving his body. Taehyung stood directly in front of him, like a guard, but he strode away as Jimin appeared through the door, a man being dragged by his feet out the large hall. It made Yoongi widen his eyes, the younger leaving him in the open even though he knew he was right there, right in front of him.

He didn’t want to be alone, wanted someone holding him tightly, didn’t want to be left on a sofa as his brothers focused on the man. There were unknown people all around the room, and he didn’t feel safe, just wanted Jeongguk. He just wanted Jeongguk.

It was a face Yoongi would never forget, the one of the man on the floor. He didn’t even know if this was the one that shot Jeongguk, but he knew it was the only surviving gunman left. His face was disfigured, deep scars running over his nose, cheeks, lips, skin tanned and partially covered by a bandana, which Taehyung ripped away as he reached where Jimin was stood. A trail of blood followed the man’s body, a deep wound in his thigh making a river of red be left behind after his body, surely staining the wooden floor.

The face stayed in his vision as Yoongi blinked, and it made him sob, sob harder and harder because nobody was with him, nobody was here.

Grabbing a handful of hair, Taehyung forced the man into the middle of the corridor, people forming a crowd around the sight, but Yoongi had a front row seat. Pulling his head back, Taehyung made the man muffle a scream as he pulled him up, the man’s legs not strong enough to hold his weight, leaving him suspended in air from Taehyung’s tight grip.

“Who are you?” Jimin hissed as he joined Tae, in a flash revealing the blade under his robe, pressing it to the man’s neck.
All that was radiating from the duo was anger, Yoongi feeling paralysed again as he sobbed, as he watched his brothers question the man. There was no answer, so Jimin stood on top of the man’s already damaged leg, pressing down until there was a sickening crunch of bone, this time the scream escaping the man’s mouth.

It made Yoongi shake, made his mind short circuit and be intolerant to any feeling other than panic, which grew and grew, breaths becoming more and more irregular, but nobody was here to help him.

“Let’s try again,” Jimin grit his teeth, but he smiled, eyes still full of fire. “I said,” he punctuated each word with another press on the man’s leg. “Who,” a scream, “are you?”

The man parted his lips, and a hysterical laugh tumbled out, making Taehyung yank his head back by the hair, Yoongi covering his ears. But his hands were shaking too much, were too weak to stay up and cover the sounds coming from the room.

“He can’t hear you,” Taehyung growled, reaching for his brother’s arm. “Stop it, Jimin.”

Yoongi shuddered again at the man’s tone of voice, how the words twisted around between his ears. It made him feel sick, and he still hadn’t stopped sobbing, just wishing Jeongguk would walk through the door like he was okay. There was pain building in his chest again; panic that Jeongguk wasn’t here to stop. It was fighting to erupt out of his body, his throat, but he couldn’t drag his eyes away from the demonstration Jimin and Taehyung were putting on. Why couldn’t he look away?

“If you won’t tell us anything, I have no use for you,” Jimin sighed, and Yoongi felt scared by the smile which grew on his face, cold and unnerving and insane. “Let’s have some fun.”

It was like both he and Taehyung were waiting for the right time, because in a flash they were both all over the man, both smiling as they held knives in their hands. There was a moment of pause, of nothing, where every single breath in the room was held, but the man screaming filled the silence.

A lump fell onto the floor, Jimin sighing as he wiped his blade on the man’s shirt, blood now pouring from where his ear used to be, now only a hole on the side of his head. It had been so quick, Yoongi not even noticing what Jimin had done, but Taehyung didn’t have the same idea.
His knife moved slowly, only millimetres at a time, and it made a strangled sound fight its way out
the man’s chest as Taehyung paused half way through his other ear, making the pain last slowly.
He pushed lightly until the whole thing fell to the floor, the taller pulling a face of disgust before
flicking it away with his dripping knife.

Jimin let a laugh fall through his lips, eerie and unnatural, and Yoongi watched people in the crowd
around them back away, fearful glances directed towards the duo in the centre of the room, now
digging their knives just under the skin of the man’s cheeks.

Yoongi didn’t know exactly what point he shut his eyes, but he felt his breath becoming less and
less controlled as Taehyung and Jimin tortured the man. It was graphic, and violent, and nothing
like anything Yoongi had ever seen the duo do before. It was scary, and the sight paired with the
memory of Jeongguk’s figure made him choke on a scream, throat giving out and pain blooming
through his body.

There were shouts erupting again from the centre of the room, but Yoongi didn’t want to open his
eyes, just closed them even further until there were specks of white. He couldn’t focus on anything,
not even his own thoughts, all of them running around his mind in random, not lasting in one place
for more than a second.

A hand touched his shoulder, and it made another scream claw its way through his mouth, but the
hands stayed, one running though his hair. He wished it was Jeongguk, wished the younger was
here with him, but he knew it wasn’t. The hand was too small to be the younger’s, fingers softer,
and opening his eyes he was met with Seokjin’s face looking at him.

―Seokjin, Jin, please,‖ he choked, trying to breathe but nothing was responding, having to tilt his
head back for any air to enter his lungs at all.

He felt a prick in his arm, moved his head to see Seokjin’s hand holding a needle imbedded into his
skin, the metal still in his body. Seokjin himself was also crying, tears streaming down his face,
but he tried to smile at Yoongi, tried to reassure him, humming with a croaking voice and hushing
his sobs, frantic breaths.

―Dad, dad, please, Jeongguk, please,‖ Yoongi felt as though his lungs would stop working, sobs
making his body jerk inwards with every gasp for air. It hurt, it hurt so much, Yoongi sure he was
having a heart attack from the pain crawling over his body from his chest.

―It’s okay, honey,‖ Jin’s voice echoed in Yoongi’s ears, throat hoarse and raw. ―He’ll be okay;
you’re okay, just rest.‖
And he didn’t understand the darkness which invaded his vision, the substance from the needle surely causing the stillness which was seeping into the corners of his mind. It was like falling asleep, body feeling heavier and heavier until he fell limp, Jin’s hands wrapping around his shoulders in a soft embrace.

“Just rest,” Seokjin’s voice echoed again, until the only thing he could hear was fuzz, static buzzing flowing from one ear to another, brain relievingly blank.

Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry
Yoongi woke up while in a car. He was lying on his side across three seats in the middle row, his head resting upon the lap of someone, whose arms were wrapped around him, almost like a seatbelt. The leather was cold beneath his body, and he felt wrong, something was wrong. The hum of the vehicle wasn’t soothing, it made him feel odd, like an important thing was missing, a constant reminder of something he didn’t remember in his ears.

For a second he forgot the apocalyptic events that had just happened, forgot the way his heart felt like it was shattering into pieces in his chest, shrapnel being imbedded into his lungs, ribs, stomach. But it all came back, hitting him like a train, making the air leave his chest, brain freezing. Jeongguk holding him, Jeongguk on the floor, Jeongguk covered in his own blood. He felt like the world was ending around him, but at the same time, he felt nothing.

His whole body was numb; he couldn’t feel a single emotion, a single thing. Eyes refusing to focus on anything before him, nose and tongue unable to smell, taste. He felt like he was floating, aimlessly, nowhere to go, nowhere to stay. He could barely remember why he was in such a state. Perhaps he should have been more concerned about how much he couldn’t feel, how much he couldn’t think, but it was nice. There was no way for him to fully grasp the images materialising in and out of his mind, unable to focus on the memories. It was relief from the pain, and Yoongi felt high on the feeling of purely nothing.

Blinking, he vaguely saw Jin in the driving seat, able to see his face in the mirror, eyebrows furrowed and eyes determined as he drove frantically. But he couldn’t focus, couldn’t think about why one of his parents looked so angry, concerned, worried, a cocktail of emotions all mixing together over his face, but Yoongi was confused, his brain not wanting to work. It was probably Jeongguk, Jeongguk on the floor, Jeongguk covered in blood, but not one thought was lasting in Yoongi’s mind.

Jeongguk holding him, Jeongguk shuddering, Jeongguk on the floor, Jeongguk covered in blood.
Why was Jeongguk covered in blood? Normally he was clean, sensitive to smell. He didn’t like chaotic mess, not knowing where things were. He had once told Yoongi he liked order because his life had been so chaotic, liked knowing where things were because when he had lived on the streets, if he couldn’t find something it was probably stolen, lost for good. Speaking of which, where was Jeongguk? He was never normally away from Yoongi for too long. He must be one of the people in the car, then.

_Keongguk on the floor, Jeongguk covered in blood._

He let his eyes flutter shut, but a painting of red kept appearing before him. Why was that image returning? It seemed to nag his mind, like it was trying to tell him something, but he didn’t understand. He would just ask Jeongguk, when he found out who he was in the car. It was the younger in the image, so he would surely know something about it, would surely know why something so horrific kept appearing in Yoongi’s mind.

“Guk?” He tried asking, but his mouth was dry, his throat hurt. It was like he had swallowed a desert, scorching heat and sand all he could feel, taste.

“No, Yoon, it’s Hobi,” he heard Hoseok murmur, a hand stroking through his hair, soothing.

“Wh-” a yawn interrupted his words, “where’s Guk?” He asked, confusion bleeding through the words.

The question was met with silence, until Hoseok let out a breath.

“Jeonggukie will be here when you wake up, okay?” Hoseok told him, but the words sounded weird, sounded hollow, like they were a veil over a hidden object.

But sleep sounded so tempting, so perfect, and Yoongi couldn’t help the second yawn from falling between his lips. Hoseok’s hand was moving through his hair, and he felt the person by his feet start to lightly rub his leg, the touch making him feel even more fatigued than before.

“Just sleep.”
Yoongi rarely had dreamless rests. When he wasn’t having nightmares about his father, Zack, or any other monstrous figure his mind could create, one weird dream revolving around the Duolingo owl, he was dreaming of the most mundane things his mind could come up with.

He dreamed of a kitchen, the cream counters and soft blue walls basking in the sunlight coming from the window, greenery and flowers all he could see out of the glass. There were translucent white net blinds hanging from the top of the pane, but the sun still lit the room in a gentle glow, the sky only just starting to turn pink. On the walls hung pictures, family portraits, seven people at a beach, a wedding, a couple standing by a river. Each was framed in wood, hung perfectly on the blue canvas, perfect.

Yoongi was cooking something, meat and vegetables sizzling in the pan he was holding over a stove. It smelled good, seasoning able to be detected even away from the food. It seemed nearly ready, the ideal colour, so Yoongi turned off the heat, reaching into a cream coloured wooden cupboard to grab some plates. It was a challenge, the shelf a small centimetre too high for Yoongi to reach, so he had to jump slightly, gently putting the china on the countertop once he managed to retrieve them.

A front door opened with a rattle of keys, and Yoongi felt his mouth curve up into a smile, voices able to be heard from the doorway, small barks and laughed words. He carefully put some food onto each plate, moving them to the table which was already set in the small room, a loud meow distracting him.

“Okay, Keopi, I’ll feed you, you old thing,” he huffed, quickly retrieving her bowl and emptying a sachet of tuna, tutting when she ran after him to where her water was. “The only time I ever see you run is to get to food, huh old lady,” Yoongi teased, a small smile on his face as she batted her head against his hand, then quickly abandoned him for the food.

Standing up straight, he found himself immediately embraced in a hug from his back, strong arms wrapping around his middle as a kiss was pressed to his neck. He could feel Jeongguk smiling against his skin, bunny teeth still there even after years, still making the man adorable to look at. There was a moment of silence, before Jeongguk pressed another kiss this time to his shoulder, and Yoongi let out a laugh.

“It smells lovely, baby,” the younger hummed, squeezing Yoongi lightly before letting him go, interlacing their fingers together, silver bands glinting in the disappearing sunlight. “You’re always so good at cooking.”

Jeongguk looked older, face more structured, but he looked the same as Yoongi always remembered him, large eyes, honey skin, dark hair, bunny teeth. If anything, he had grown a couple more inches, Yoongi having to look up even more to meet his eyes, which radiated warmth.
like a fire, burning and burning, never running out of fuel.

“If this is your attempt to make me blush, I have to say it might be working,” Yoongi murmured back, projecting all the love he could through a simple gaze.

Jeongguk’s laugh was almost drowned out by that of a child, a dog barking as footsteps rushed through the door.

“Holly! Holly, stay!” The child giggled, his cheeks flushed, chest rising and falling from running after the small brown poodle. “Appa, abeoji, Holly won’t listen!”

“Beomgyu, Holly just wants to play,” Jeongguk laughed, letting go of Yoongi’s hands to pet the dog which bounded up to him, crouching down to the floor.

Yoongi couldn’t help but to approach the small, pouting boy, sweeping him into his arms and pressing kisses all over his face. Beomgyu wasn’t too heavy, barely weighed more than a couple sacks of flour, and Yoongi could carry his around comfortably, nestling him in his arms.

“And what did my little angel do today?” He cooed as he began to walk over to the table, putting Beomgyu onto his favourite chair, the food still hot enough for steam to be rising.

“Appa took me and Holly to the park! There were swings, and the slide, and Holly tried to steal a girl’s ball,” Beomgyu rambled, Yoongi pressing a kiss to his head before sitting in his own chair, Jeongguk also joining them at the table. “Oh! And appa let me have ice cream, but I’m not meant to tell you,” he whispered, and Jeongguk let out a sound of objection, Yoongi laughing loudly.

“Oh, did he now?” He huffed, but still sent a small smile in Jeongguk’s direction.

“He was begging, and they had mint chocolate,” the younger explained as he playfully glared at the child, who only continued to giggle as he ate. “Besides, it’s going to be too cold for ice cream soon, so now really was the best time to get some.”

“Uh huh,” Yoongi couldn’t help but smile, gums on show.
“And uncle Hobi always says that mint chocolate is the best!” Beomgyu chimed in, Yoongi letting out a small, amused sigh as the child almost knocked over his drink.

“Careful, uncle Jimin and uncle Tae will have your head on a platter if they hear you say that,” he warned, but Beomgyu only continued to smile, some teeth missing at the front where the adult ones hadn’t grown back yet.

“I saw uncle Tae eating some a couple of weeks ago!” He tattled, and Yoongi heard Jeongguk gasp, Beomgyu giggling at the sound.

“I’ve converted someone!” Jeongguk exclaimed, grinning so widely that Yoongi was sure he would never need another light source ever again. “Just you wait, I’ll get uncle Jimin soon, and then I’ll get both your grandparents. It’ll be like a religion.”

“You mean like a cult?” Yoongi teased, spooning some food into his own mouth, watching as Keopi ran away from where Holly was trying to cuddle up to her, the dog following enthusiastically.

“And I’ll worship only you,” Jeongguk promised, eyes gleaming and making Yoongi’s heart skip a beat.

It was perfect, the sight of Jeongguk and their son at the table eating dinner that Yoongi had made, and it made him pause, small smile still painted on his face.

“Yoongi, love, are you okay?” Jeongguk questioned, eyebrows furrowed in question.

Yoongi was about to answer, but there was a smash of glass, the table jolting forward from Jeongguk’s side. A few sharp cracks of sound could be heard, coming from the direction of the window, the silence following after heavy and suffocating.

Yoongi was confused, looked at Jeongguk’s small smile on his face to try and get an answer. The younger simply continued to smile, eyes full of love as a red pool of blood began to seep through his white shirt from his chest. It was like slow motion watching him fall to the floor, and if Yoongi was to ignore the red Jeongguk would look like he was sleeping, eyes now closed.

“Appa? Abeoji?” Beomgyu’s voice softly called, and Yoongi turned to watch the small boy’s chest
seep red just like Jeongguk’s had done, eyes scared and full of tears.

He fell to floor, just next to Holly and Keopi’s also lifeless bodies, and the red seemed to pool all over the floor, until it covered everything Yoongi could see. Walls, the floor, even the ceiling was covered in a layer of glistening blood, and Yoongi felt himself choking on his breaths, tears blurring his vision as he tried to shake Jeongguk awake, tried to wake their son.

In panic, he looked around, searching for something that could help, anything, but everything was red except the window, where an earless, mutilated face looked in at him, grinning.

Yoongi’s eyes opened in a flash, sitting up so fast he felt the world spin below him, feeling hands quickly rest on his shoulders to steady his movements. Hoseok was to his left, Namjoon his right, and he felt the touches grow softer over his skin, a hospital gown falling down one shoulder. He was grateful he wasn’t attached to a heart monitor, because he could hear his head throbbing madly, breaths uneven as he looked around the room, eyes resting on the figure in the bed opposite him, the only other bed in the room.

His body couldn’t help but burst into tears at the sight, his family’s sounds of comfort falling upon deaf ears. Jeongguk looked so different in a clean white hospital bed, eyes closed and body still, the gown somehow making him look small despite Yoongi knowing the younger almost towered over him. Honey skin was pale, paler than Yoongi had ever seen before, and sullen, like Jeongguk hadn’t seen the sun in years. There were machines connected to him from what felt like everywhere, a steady rhythm of beats echoing through the room constantly, the stillness making it look like he was dying.

Was he dying?

In frantic haste, he looked back over to Namjoon, who seemed to understand his panic, gently pulling the blankets back from where they were tangled around Yoongi’s body.

“He’ll be okay, Yoongi, he’s going to be okay,” he said, a watery smile on his face. “He was so lucky; the bullet missed everything important, not one organ or major nerve damaged. He’s just sedated for pain,” Namjoon explained, and it made Yoongi cry even harder, clutching at his father’s shirt.

“He’s not dying?” Yoongi checked again, and felt his heart soar when Namjoon shook his head, grasping at Yoongi’s hand.
"Do you want to get closer?"

Giving up on speech, Yoongi nodded, letting Namjoon pick him up from the bed. He felt like all his bones had turned to jelly, muscles wasted away until only nerves were left, able to feel but not move. It was probably a side effect of the drug Seokjin had given him, the substance the needle had injected into his blood, but Yoongi wasn’t upset. He knew it was probably a sedative, to keep him calm until they knew what was going on, and honestly he was relieved that he didn’t have to sit through the waiting period for news on Jeongguk.

“What day is it?” He asked, letting go of Namjoon’s neck slowly once he was sat on a chair directly next to his boyfriend’s bed, Hoseok immediately bringing a blanket for Yoongi to drape over his lap.

“The meeting was two days ago,” Namjoon answered, spending time tucking the blanket into Yoongi’s sides, like a parent to a young child. “We’re in the Royal London hospital in Whitechapel; the others have just gone upstairs to the canteen for some food.”

Yoongi could do no more than just nod at Namjoon’s words, Hoseok joining them with another chair. It was easier, to pretend like everything was okay. It hurt less when he looked at Jeongguk while thinking he was just sleeping, to looking at him and knowing he was shot. It was quiet after that, Yoongi close enough to take one of Jeongguk’s hands in his own, carefully intertwining their fingers in a way to avoid the needle in the back of his hand.

“How... What did they have to do?” Yoongi asked quietly, and he felt the other’s eyes on him, but he refused to move his gaze from Jeongguk’s features. He looked so peaceful, it was almost unfamiliar.

“Yoongi...” Namjoon trailed off, clearly trying to be delicate with him.

“Just tell me,” Yoongi pleaded, finally locking eyes with his father, trying to push back the tears. “Please.”

“There was a surgery, to remove the bullet. Had to cut quite deep despite the actual bullet being relatively close to the surface, because it was buried in quite tough tissue, so it will defiantly leave a large scar,” he explained quietly, and Yoongi listened to every word, every breath. “They said they didn’t need to operate further because after an examination, it was concluded nothing major was hit, only some muscle tissue which won’t have incredibly large effect. He’s lucky, and was wearing his semi-bulletproof vest.”
“Well, our golden maknae of course would survive a bullet in the back, practically good to go,” Hoseok laughed wetly, and Yoongi couldn’t help but agree.

“The gunman?” Yoongi almost whispered, and he was met with confusion. “I didn’t find out what happened to him, is he dead?”

“As a doornail,” Namjoon confirmed, and it made a small smile form on Yoongi’s face.

The door opened after another period of silence, the beeping machine the only thing to fill in the air. Seokjin entered first, followed by Taehyung and Jimin, and the door opened just wide enough for Yoongi to see guards in suits positioned outside the doorway and in the hall. They had small smiles on their faces as they saw Yoongi, each giving him a small hug before Seokjin kissed him on the forehead, running his hands through Yoongi’s hair.

“I’m so sorry I had to drug you,” he whispered, gently petting Yoongi like a kitten, smoothing the knots from his hair. “You were panicking, and Jeongguk was already in an ambulance,” Jin began to explain, but Yoongi just nuzzled his head into the elder’s hands, sighing contently.

“I understand, it was probably for the best,” Yoongi murmured back, and he felt another kiss be pressed to his forehead before Seokjin wandered over to Namjoon, intertwining their hands tightly and staring at Jeongguk’s form on the bed, covered in white.

There were some places, Yoongi decided, where time flowed differently. Hospitals, empty shops, lonely roads, all places where the area seemed disjointed from reality, where hours felt like days and days felt like hours. He couldn’t decide if it had gotten dark quickly outside the window of the hospital room, or whether the day had dragged on for years. Everything was like a blur, and yet as crystal clear as the image in front of him.

It was fortunate their family was wealthy. As amazing as the NHS was in the UK, people who weren’t EU citizens still had to pay for medical care after the initial emergency check up. At least, that was what Namjoon had been rambling about for hours? Minutes? Money also managed to get a private room, complete media and police related confidentiality, and the allowance of their family to stay with Jeongguk at all times.

Yoongi knew they shouldn’t be benefitting from wealth and celebrity status, especially in this sort of situation, but he had to be selfish. He himself was discharged quickly after waiting, Seokjin telling the medical staff that Yoongi must have been drugged by Jeongguk’s attacker with the
sedative. The story was that the couple was on a date when the man had tried to drug them both, Jeongguk fighting back and getting shot by the concealed gun in the man’s clothes, Jeongguk calling their parents for help before he fell unconscious. In some way, Yoongi felt bad for lying, felt bad that they might be sending the police on a wild goose chase after a person who didn’t exist, but it had to be done.

The police hadn’t been notified to even request to question Yoongi, Namjoon having enough hospital staff under their family’s power to convince them to not tell anyone else of the grounds of Jeongguk’s treatment, and Yoongi was glad. The less law involvement that was applied to the case the better, there being less of a chance of messing up a cover story, or hinting that their family wasn’t as perfect as it was implied. It made Yoongi able to only focus on the present, focus on Jeongguk.

Jeongguk was going to be okay.

“Yoongi, it’s getting late, do you want to lie down?” Seokjin whispered, cautious of Hoseok and Taehyung cuddling while asleep on another empty hospital bed beside the one which had been Yoongi’s, Namjoon sat on the last one in one of the room’s corners.

He didn’t want to leave Jeongguk’s side for one second, didn’t want to take his eyes off of his boyfriend just in case he somehow awoke, but he knew that was foolish. So he agreed with a nod, Seokjin smiling softly before carefully picking Yoongi up like how Namjoon did before, transferring him to the bed he had woken up in.

Jimin was already there, under the blankets, and he gently took charge of Yoongi from Seokjin, flashing him a reassuring smile, the elder leaving to sit next to Namjoon. Yoongi saw them kiss softly, share a tight hug, whispering things too quiet for him to hear but he could guess the general mood of the conversation. It must be hard for them, to watch the ever-strong, mighty Jeongguk become the teenager who was lying motionlessly on the hospital bed. It was probably as hard for the others as it was for Yoongi, their whole family so close and loving with one another that any sort of casualty was a disaster, injuries hurting every single person mentally.

Jimin brought his attention back to the bed, gently positioning Yoongi to lie down and rest his head on Jimin’s chest, the younger wrapping himself around Yoongi like an octopus. The close proximity was exactly what he needed, and Yoongi knew Jimin felt the same, the younger used to affection from Taehyung, Hoseok, every member of their family. It used to be something Yoongi disliked, but now he was so grateful for it, relished in Jimin’s steady arms wrapped around his body.

“There was a moment, when he was in the ambulance with Namjoon,” Jimin started to murmur, Yoongi listening closely to every word. “Jeongguk, he woke up, not properly, only half there,” he
stumbled through the sentence, pausing and seeming to need time to arrange letters in his head.
“All he did was ask about you, ask if you were okay, where you were. You mean the world to him, you know.”

“I know,” Yoongi whispered back, barely audible, but he knew Jimin heard.

There was silence, Hoseok muttering something from the other bed once before Jimin hummed, pressing a light kiss to Yoongi’s head.

“He’ll be okay,” he said before nestling his face in Yoongi’s hair, a small yawn coming from his mouth. “It’ll all be okay.”

When Yoongi woke up, he couldn’t remember why he was crying. Of course, he could probably guess what his nightmare was about, would bet on it if he were a gambler, but the dream itself he didn’t remember. Jimin was the one to comfort him, holding him tightly until most of his tears were dry, running a hand through his hair. It was nice, the affection, Jimin knowing exactly what to do, but it wasn’t one hundred percent right. It wasn’t Jeongguk.

The chair beside Jeongguk’s bed had become Yoongi’s space. If he wasn’t sleeping across the other side of the room in his original hospital bed with one of the others, then he was curled up in a ball on the plastic chair, which was made a little bit more comfortable by pillows Seokjin had gotten a guard to bring along, probably bought from some sort of shop just around the corner. It still wasn’t the most luxurious place Yoongi had spent his days, but it definitely wasn’t the worst, and nothing mattered when it came to Jeongguk.

Yoongi was sure he would lie in the snow in shorts and a t-shirt if it meant he was next to Jeongguk, who was still lying almost lifelessly in the bed. His cheeks had regained some colour, and he was less pale than Yoongi now, but he was still nowhere near his normal skin tone. Occasionally, Yoongi thought he felt Jeongguk’s hand move in his own, thought he saw his face change expression in the blink of an eye, but every time he tried to focus on it there was nothing. He could be a painting, real to look at but never changing, nothing moving an inch.

It was Seokjin that persuaded Yoongi to leave for a moment to go back to the hotel, spend a moment to himself. It had been days since he bathed, changed clothes, ate a proper meal, and Jin wanted Yoongi to spend some time out of the now suffocating room, away from the beeping machines.

There was nothing that hurt more than having to kiss an unconscious Jeongguk goodbye. His lips were warm, so warm that for a second Yoongi could fool himself into thinking his boyfriend was
okay, fool himself into believing that this was just like a normal kiss. But it wasn’t, Jeongguk’s hands never came up to hold his waist, to pull him closer until every limb was touching, so, so close, so perfect. The illusion was shattered by the lack of response, the lack of whispered words of love and adoration, and Yoongi had to wipe the tears off of his cheeks that had betrayed him and decided to fall.

Walking out the hospital room felt odd, and Yoongi was spending as much time as possible pretending to struggle to put on his coat, to lace up his shoes. There was a bathroom for patients in the hospital room, and Yoongi hadn’t had a reason to leave Jeongguk’s side other than that, people bringing him food and water. Since he was unconscious when he was taken into the room, he hadn’t actually seen the outside, the white walls and nurses’ stations dotted along the hall.

There were four guards directly outside the doorway, dressed in black and white suits, probably with weapons under the blazer. It made Yoongi wonder for a second whether they could possibly have guns, before he decided they definitely did. Namjoon and Seokjin had enough influence to get armed guards to stand outside their son’s room, and Yoongi knew both his parents probably had their guns with them as well. By now, it was just like just another clothing item necessary for the day, something they never left the house without, like a phone, or wallet.

Perhaps that was sad. They lived a life where it was autopilot for Jeongguk to keep his guns on the bedside table at home in arm’s reach, that Yoongi knew Jimin slept with a knife under his pillow, Seokjin kept poison in their kitchen for worst case scenarios. He had heard stories of times where Namjoon has had nightmares and aimed a gun as soon as he woke; Taehyung has hallucinated and almost stabbed members of their family when in a fever, Hoseok tried to run away so many times when he was convinced an intruder was in the house. It was saddening to Yoongi that they were forced to always be on their toes.

Guilt filled his mind when he thought about how Jeongguk had to be doubly prepared, doubly ready to protect not only himself but Yoongi, putting himself in charge of two lives at once. It hurt, that Yoongi knew Jeongguk put his own life after Yoongi’s, proving it in every decision. The fact he was on a bed with a bullet in his back because he was protecting Yoongi at the meeting hurt, made Yoongi’s heart throb in pain. Jeongguk’s life was much more valuable, held much more importance than Yoongi’s, but the younger couldn’t see that. He never had, and Yoongi supposed he never will.

There were four more guards at the entrance of the hospital ward, and six by the public lift which were the only ones available to non-staff members, and Yoongi had a suspicion the staff lifts were watched, as well as every entrance to the building. It must have looked strange, like the secret service was doing something in the hospital or something of the sort, Yoongi already able to see curious eyes around the hall. It was lucky there was the confidentiality code within the staff, many contracts signed and the message communicated clearly that Namjoon and Seokjin were perfectly happy to sue anyone who let out that Jeongguk Kim was in the hospital due to a gunshot wound.
Waiting for the lift to arrive, Yoongi felt his shoulders tensing, his body curling into itself. It was a habit of his, to make himself seem smaller, baggy clothing and terrible posture making him seem inches shorter than he really was. Already he had been one of, if not the shortest member of his family, Jimin seeming to surpass him and the others having left him behind long ago. He always felt small around the others; their commanding presence and ability to change an atmosphere in seconds making them all seem nearly seven feet tall, especially on jobs or in meetings. But Yoongi was smaller, felt smaller, like he could hide from the world if he tried hard enough.

The doors opened with a ding, and Seokjin walked purposefully into the lift which had two other people inside, a couple by the looks of things. Realistically, they probably could have used the staff lift, their status enough reason to ask for more privacy, but Seokjin seemed set on going this way, pressing the ground floor with confidence while Yoongi slouched next to him. Two guards from the six had joined them, standing either side of the pair and they said nothing, Seokjin simply nodding to show he noticed their presence.

The couple looked slightly bewildered, but Yoongi was happy to see they didn’t seem to know who they were, just confusion in their eyes when looking at the bodyguards. It was a relief; Yoongi sure too many questions would be asked if they were stuck in a lift with people who knew them, and the fewer questions asked meant there was less room for error.

“Have this,” Seokjin said from beside him, making him jump slightly before looking at the outstretched hand.

It was a black surgical mask, like the one Yoongi normally wore outside of buildings, and he flashed a small smile at Seokjin in thanks before carefully placing it over the lower section of his face. Seokjin was always amazing at reading a room, knowing exactly what people needed. It was a relief to have him, Yoongi knowing most people would just ignore someone’s discomfort, but Seokjin was one of the best people to seek help from. Perhaps it was due to his role as the eldest, his need for people younger than him to be comforted, to not be missing something they needed, or perhaps it was his natural caring nature. Whatever it is, it made Yoongi lean into his shoulder, the elder’s arm wrapping around his waist in affection.

The walk from the lift to their car was short, Seokjin leading him quickly to avoid attention, more guards positioned in points on the ground floor, two more joining them as they walked outside. Yoongi was grateful there was a driver already inside the vehicle, himself and Seokjin just getting into the back while a guard opened the passenger door seat, the three others waiting until the doors were shut to enter the car behind them.

Despite all the empty seats in the seven seated car, Yoongi already felt crowded. Maybe it was the change of scenery after spending so long in the spacious hospital room, or maybe it was the anxiety building from remembering what happened last time he was outside, the image of Jeongguk falling to the ground playing over and over again in his mind.
Seokjin just tucked Yoongi under his arm, starting to talk about the most random things, like Mario Cart and the amusement park he was thinking of buying every single ticket to in order to get it private for Jeongguk’s next birthday, just in case they turned down his request to get it shut. It took his mind off of things, even made him laugh a few times when he told Yoongi how he wasn’t scared of rollercoasters, despite Yoongi knowing Seokjin was scared of most things (except, it seemed, killing and blood and gunfights).

The car journey somehow seemed short, and soon enough Seokjin was opening their hotel room door, the guards positioning themselves outside. It was a decided rule before Yoongi even lived with Namjoon and Seokjin that guards were not permitted to enter private spaces. This applied to hotels, restaurants when they had a solo room, and even their own house, guards only present in corridors. Yoongi supposed it was more of a privacy thing, to ensure the family felt as normal as possible, but he can’t help thinking how it could be for security reasons, or even personal comfort. With that had happened throughout his life, Yoongi would feel neither safe nor comfortable with people he didn’t even really know standing in the room when he was sleeping, his most vulnerable state, and the thought almost freaked him out.

But here, with just Seokjin, Yoongi felt okay. He felt as safe as he could when he was away from Jeongguk as well as home, the two things which were his usual security blankets.

Nothing was said as Seokjin gently lead Yoongi to the bathroom the elder shared with Namjoon, Yoongi silently grateful he didn’t have to look at all of Jeongguk’s things which were bound to be on the counter in their shared space, the mundane clothes and belongings left in the room when they thought they would return that very same night. Even the knowledge of Jeongguk’s improving health did nothing to make him feel less lonely, his heart feel less broken. The younger’s ever present role in Yoongi’s life made his absence feel even larger, like he was missing half of his soul, one of his limbs.

Seokjin switched on the taps, made sure the water was a nice temperature before taking a lavender bath bomb from the basket on the bathroom’s counter, dropping it carefully in the water. It fizzed purple, the sweet smell of flowers rising from the tub as it dissolved. It smelled of home, one of the fabric softeners Jeongguk used once in summer smelling like lavender, Namjoon telling them the scent was a natural mosquito repellent.

Yoongi was standing in the corner, near to the radiator with the white fluffy towels as he watched Seokjin move. He didn’t quite know what he was doing, his brain refusing to think and his mind refusing to shift into autopilot, everything too overwhelming and yet also so empty in the room. Seokjin seemed to notice, walked over and grasped Yoongi’s hands in his own, squeezing lightly.

“You get undressed and bathed, and I’ll just be in the lounge,” Seokjin told him, starting to turn
away as he dropped his hands.

As fast as he could, the movement still slow and sluggish, Yoongi grasped at Seokjin’s sleeve, making the elder pause. Maybe it was something in his expression, or maybe it was the look in Yoongi’s eyes, but Jin just nodded, gently starting to brush his hands through Yoongi’s hair, humming a quiet song.

“Oh, why don’t we get you in the water,” he said, and Yoongi felt relief flood through his system as Seokjin stayed in the room.

He didn’t want to be alone right now, didn’t want to have to be isolated with his thoughts, with the ever haunting memory of Jeongguk. That, of course, was never going to go away, but Jin’s presence helped him stay grounded, stay sane. He didn’t know what he would try to do if the images got too much, didn’t like to think about what his mind would stray to. It wouldn’t be the first time his unconscious body was found in the bath, but he had hoped the previous time was his last.

Seokjin’s fingers worked gently over the clothes Yoongi had been brought to wear at the hospital instead of the patient gown, one of Jeongguk’s hoodies and a pair of Jimin’s sweatpants, before leading him to the coloured water, helping him to sit amongst the purple bubbles. It was more soothing than Yoongi thought it would be, the water enveloping his skin like an embrace, warm and refreshing.

Closing his eyes, he mindlessly let Jin cover his head with water, then rub in some floral scented shampoo and conditioner, the touches against his scalp making him feel sleepier and sleepier by the minute. He almost let his mind go blank before the elder was coaxing him to open his eyes again, rinsing his hair of the product.

“Don’t sleep, not here,” Seokjin murmured, tone low and almost making Yoongi feel sleepier before he blinked his eyes open, Jin smiling warmly beside him. “Do you want to stay in here, or do you want to get out?” He asked, and Yoongi took a moment to think between the options before closing his eyes again, Seokjin humming.

“Can I stay for a minute longer?” Yoongi slurred, and felt Seokjin’s hand grasp his own which was lying on the side of the bathtub, tracing patters into the skin.

“You can have whatever you want, sweetheart,” he cooed, making Yoongi smile back at him.
By the time he needed to get out, the water was starting to cool, just enough for the warmth to no longer seep into Yoongi’s bones. He was wrapped by the elder in a soft towel, who then pulled the plug from the floor, letting the water drain as he used another towel to dry Yoongi’s hair gently. They took their time, Seokjin spending longer than normal to do each task, helping Yoongi into fresh clothes and to dry his hair with the hairdryer they had in his and Namjoon’s room. He was warm, chest no longer feeling quite so hollow, so empty.
Sixteen

Chapter Notes

I thought I would post this sooner, but I had a work experience placement last week that took all my time, so I'm very sorry! Enjoy,

There were noises coming from the hospital room when the pair returned from their trip to the hotel, and for a second Yoongi thought the worst. Breaking away from Seokjin, he ran to the door, expecting to see nurses and doctors around Jeongguk, a still unconscious Jeongguk with a motionless heart monitor, a body bag on the side of the bed. What he hadn't expected to see was the younger sat up on the mattress, seeming to be ready to stand, Hoseok, Jimin and Taehyung attempting to keep him down while Namjoon was nowhere near sight.

“Where is he?” Jeongguk almost shouted, and Yoongi could see the distress in the other’s faces, how they looked scared of hurting the youngest with their touches.

“We said, he’s just with Seokjin right now, at the hotel,” Hoseok said, voice sounding frustrated and like he had said the same thing hundreds of times, arms eventually pinning Jeongguk’s legs to the bed.

“You’re lying, where is he?” Jeongguk repeated louder, the scowl on his face and panic in his eyes making Yoongi’s brain decide to finally move his body.

“Guk?” He asked quietly, eyes wide as he stepped through the doorway, pausing in his pace.

At the sound of his voice, Jeongguk seemed to freeze, slowly turning his head to survey the smaller with eyes just as wide as Yoongi’s own, mouth parting. There was a pause, a moment of time where a minute stretched on for years, Yoongi just looking at Jeongguk. He was awake, he was talking and trying to search for Yoongi despite the wound and stitches in his back, and the relief Yoongi felt flood into his body made him feel high, gave him a boost of euphoric energy.

Before he knew he was moving, he ran towards Jeongguk’s bed, stumbling over his feet until he was able to throw himself as gently as possible onto his boyfriend, mindful of his state. Warm arms automatically grasped around him, holding him even closer, no gap left between their bodies. It wasn’t enough, Jeongguk seeming to agree, and Yoongi found himself being pulled onto the hospital bed, curled up under the covers next to the taller.
He couldn’t quite pinpoint the exact time he started to sob, cries loud and gasping, tears wetting Jeongguk’s hospital gown. But lips just pressed frantic kisses to his head; arms cradled him like a child, words of love whispered in his ears until it was all he could focus on, all he could hear. For now, he could forget that they were in a hospital, could forget the gunshot wound, the worry and pain of the last day or so. For a moment, they could be back home, but the bubble was shattered by Seokjin walking over, an urgent pace to his steps.

“JK, please try not to break the stitches,” he reminded him before kissing him on the head, embracing him lightly before moving away.

It looked like he wanted to do more, wanted to pour his care into Jeongguk, but the younger wasn’t in the right state of mind. His current focus on Yoongi’s safety probably meant he would brush off any attempts for people to care for him instead, as sad as the truth was. Seokjin looked around the room, a confused look growing on his face.

“Where’s Joonie?”

“He smashed a mug earlier so he went to apologise,” Jimin said, but Yoongi didn’t catch the rest of the words.

Instead, he diverted every fraction of his attention to Jeongguk, surging up gently before pressing a lingering kiss to his lips. It felt like it always did, but at the same time so different. Jeongguk’s normally soft lips were chapped, movements less enthusiastic and eager than normal, the painkillers in his system probably making him tired, especially after all his struggling just minutes before. But it was heaven, being able to kiss Jeongguk again and him to respond, Yoongi never realising how addicted he was to the taste, the feeling, even when his tears made a salty tang linger on his lips.

“I love you so much,” Jeongguk laughed disbelievingly, lips still practically touching Yoongi’s, the words falling in warm breaths over his face.

He brought a hand up to wipe Yoongi’s tears, but the elder could see how even that simple action made the limb weak, fingers shaking slightly against Yoongi’s skin. Despite the obvious discomfort, Jeongguk just smiled at Yoongi with watery eyes, trembling fingertips gliding over his cheekbones.

“I love you,” Yoongi returned with a murmur, once again hiding his head in Jeongguk’s chest.
When the shaking of Jeongguk’s hands became unsettling against the back of Yoongi’s head, the elder grabbed them in his own, placing them on the bed. “Don’t, Guk.”

“I’m okay,” he whispered, but moved his arm again to lay it across Yoongi’s form, pulling him closer with sluggish tugs.

If he concentrated hard enough, Yoongi could hear Jeongguk’s heartbeat in his ears, noticing the heart monitors had fallen silent. The younger had probably removed them when he was struggling to get out of bed, something Yoongi didn’t exactly approve of but he knew Jeongguk would just brush off any of his concerns. When Jeongguk was focused on something, normally Yoongi, he often forgot that he had his own needs, that his main priority should be himself. It was something that caused Yoongi great stress, Jeongguk’s habit to put himself last.

In all honesty, Yoongi almost forgot there were other people in the room. Namjoon seemed to have returned from wherever he went, his low tone passing through the air next to Seokjin’s own sharper voice, the words too muffled to understand. It made a light blush rise to his cheeks, despite knowing there was nothing he could do to embarrass himself in the eyes of his family. They were long past the days of Yoongi being uncomfortable with public displays of affection in the others’ presence, but today was different.

He wanted to be able to just be with Jeongguk alone, let his mind completely relax. He wanted only the younger to see his most vulnerable state, wanted only the younger to watch him fall apart, then help piece him together again. There was a presence in his chest that wouldn’t disappear, a weight that was pressing him down into the bed, not letting him become completely comfortable.

“Guys, we’re just going to go to the café, give you some time.” Jimin called from the door, and Yoongi couldn’t suppress the sigh of relief that escaped from his mouth.

As soon as he heard the last pair of shoes leave the doorway, the click of the door falling shut, Yoongi let himself release the tension in his body. His limbs were shaking, but not like Jeongguk’s due to his body’s fatigue, but because of the sobs crying to claw through his chest, up his throat and out his lips. It wasn’t like before, the soft crying, the type they show you in movies, on TV. The cries scraping his throat were ugly, loud explosions of air; the sobs that make you want to vomit as your body turns itself inside out.

Jeongguk just held him, pressing kisses to his head, hushing Yoongi in comfort, with no real intention behind the noises. It was the build up of everything that had happened within the last few days, the release of the pain and hurt and heartbreak that had been flowing through his body, thick and sticky and toxic. Gasps and sobs fell through his throat with no control, body almost jerking with movement as they continued, an end nowhere in sight.
“I thought—I thought you were dead,” Yoongi managed to choke out through the sobs, words heavy as lead.

As he admitted it, the sights flashed through his eyes, Jeongguk on the floor, Jeongguk in a pool of the blood from his back, chest not seeming to be moving. It made his body retch, jolting forward, Jeongguk quickly trying to comfort him with tender touches, it only working partially.

“There was so much blood, Guk, so much everywhere, and you fell, and wouldn’t respond, and—” A gasping breath made Yoongi feel lightheaded, eyes filling with momentary black and white static. He resisted the urge to dry heave again, swallowing the need to rid his body of all the food he had eaten recently. “I tried, I tried and you wouldn’t wake up, you wouldn’t move,” Yoongi said with his voice breaking pathetically, only a whisper sounding from his mouth by the last word.

It seemed to be the last straw for Jeongguk, the younger first seeming to want to pull Yoongi onto his lap, but letting out a frustrated sigh as his body didn’t let him. Instead, he pulled Yoongi as close to his body as physically possible, making sure nothing was pressing too firmly down onto his chest to avoid aggravating the wound in his back.

“Yoongi...” he murmured, nuzzling his nose over the elder’s hair where Yoongi was resting in the crook of his neck, hands gripping weakly onto the back of Yoongi’s shirt. “Love, don’t cry, don’t cry.”

But Yoongi couldn’t listen, couldn’t stop the tears and the sobs ripping through his body. It seemed these days that he spent most of his time crying, most of his time with Jeongguk attempting to calm him down and dry his eyes. The weight of the world seemed to be slowly making him crack, shatter, fall to microscopic pieces that Yoongi would only let Jeongguk touch, that he would only let Jeongguk painstakingly glue back together when they finally stopped splintering apart.

“I was so scared,” he admitted, breath coming a little easier, sobs a little less powerful. “I thought you’d, you’d left me.”

And that was the main source of Yoongi’s devastation, the main source of the fragile state of his heart, because as horrifying as it was, Yoongi could deal with Jeongguk being hurt. He could cope with the younger bleeding, or shedding a tear from pain, or shaking from a pure lack of sleep or food. Those were things he could help, things he could persuade the younger to be helped for, only temporary issues which could be resolved. But seeing Jeongguk motionless, a pool of blood, his chest barely moving, was what had made his mind rip open in a new wound. Yoongi knew very well you couldn’t bring back the dead, and that was what scared him the most.
“I’d never leave you, love, I’d never dream of it,” Jeongguk pledged, pulling Yoongi into a short squeeze, his fatigued arms not letting him hold the position for as long as Yoongi knew he would like.

The words, however, didn’t bring Yoongi the intended comfort. For as long as he had known Jeongguk, his boyfriend had almost never broken his promises, gone against his words. But this was something he didn’t have control over, something he couldn’t just agree to. Death claimed people as it pleased, didn’t just stop and wait because someone made a promise to their dependent boyfriend that they’d come home safe.

It made a burst of anger ripple through his mind, red hot and dangerous, Yoongi suppressing it as much as he could but he couldn’t resist the words bubbling through his throat, only as strong as a candle flame, but still there. Still burning, able to set alight a stronger fire.

“But you did,” Yoongi almost hissed, feeling Jeongguk tense beside him. “You weren’t awake, because you cared more for me than yourself and got fucking shot-”

“If you’re telling me to never do it again, I’m going to have to say no,” Jeongguk interrupted him, voice controlled and making Yoongi burn a little brighter. “I wouldn’t hesitate to do it again,” he said as if it were the most obvious thing he had ever stated, bordering on patronising in tone.

Seeming to properly register Yoongi’s anger, he sighed, gently nosing at the smaller’s hair until Yoongi huffed, feeling his whole body relax. It was so frustrating that Jeongguk knew exactly what to do, was frustrating that the younger seemed to know Yoongi better than he knew himself. If he wasn’t so... Jeongguk then Yoongi would probably be worried about the power the younger held over him, be concerned about manipulation, but Jeongguk was Jeongguk, and Yoongi knew Jeongguk almost as well as Jeongguk seemed to know him. He knew his boyfriend would rather eat his own foot than manipulate Yoongi’s thoughts and decisions.

“You’re the most important thing in my life, darling,” Jeongguk whispered, and it made a warmth rush over Yoongi’s chest, not like a flame but like melted chocolate, like roasted marshmallows or a warm bed or Jeongguk’s touch, warm and safe and soft. “I don’t know what I would do if you ever...”

“But Guk,” Yoongi sniffed, looking up at Jeongguk’s eyes, soft brown and the feeling of home. “You’re the most important thing in my life too, don’t you see?” He asked, a tone of desperation leaking into the words. “You can’t leave me either.”
Jeongguk looked away, eyes darting to the right to avoid Yoongi’s gaze, and Yoongi almost could swear he saw guilt flood into the pupils.

“I’m selfish, Yoongi,” he mumbled, pressing the elder back down to lay his head on the crook of Jeongguk’s neck. “I’m selfish because I’d rather die and not live a life without you, than let you take the fall,” he admitted, voice so quiet Yoongi almost couldn’t make out all the words, and once he did he had no clue how to respond.

“I’d die anyway if you weren’t here.”

“Don’t say that,” Jeongguk muttered, putting one of his hands on the back of Yoongi’s head, as if he was cradling a baby, fragile neck and undeveloped muscles.

“But it’s true,” Yoongi shrugged, and he physically felt the tensing of Jeongguk’s arm, muscles moving as if the younger was about to attack something.

“Then I just have to make sure I won’t go anywhere, love,” he stated, and Yoongi felt the same melted chocolate warmth spread from his heart to his fingertips and toes, every inch of his body seeming to flush. “I told you nothing would hurt you, and I intended to keep my promise,” he whispered the last words, but it was enough.

Yoongi’s eyes fluttered shut, brain feeling like it was almost shutting down because of the affection, words refusing to form at the front of his mind. As much as he hated it at times, Jeongguk’s complete and utter devotion always sent his mind spinning, made him feel euphorically high. He loved to feel loved, loved feeling appreciated and cared for and Jeongguk never failed to achieve that.

“I love you, Jeonggukie, so much, so much,” he murmured, just breathing, letting himself fall faster and faster into the feeling of pure heaven.

“And I love you,” Jeongguk returned, a hand moving to stoke Yoongi’s hair at the back of his head. “More than the flowers love the sun, more than the deserts love the rain,” he said like poetry, voice soft and sounding almost hoarse, raw. “More than the birds love the sky...”

“Never leave, never leave again,” Yoongi made him promise as he blushed, Jeongguk’s words making his cheeks glow a bright pink, blood rushing through his ears.
“I wouldn’t even dream of it,” Jeongguk swore, a small smile audible from the way he spoke, soft and almost like every word was fizzing, making Yoongi smile too.

Falling silent, Yoongi’s head was running with thoughts, one thing in particular recurring through his mind. It was the dream, the one which had started so beautifully and ended a nightmare, but he could weirdly only really remember details from the start. The way peace fell over the room made his focus glide even further into the illusion, the small homely kitchen, family pets, a child... He wanted to share it with Jeongguk, not just tell him of the dream but really share it, move into a house with him and have a family. But it seemed too much to say, every detail and factor, Jeongguk was seventeen, there was no way he’d be even imagining children anytime soon.

“I had a dream,” Yoongi decided to whisper, not too loud or he feared their bubble would shatter, burst with no return. “When you were unconscious, I had a dream,” he clarified, and he already felt nerves running up and down his back.

He wasn’t scared of Jeongguk, but was scared of how he would react. The younger seemed so sure of his future, so sure of the choices he was bound to make. It seemed so obvious to Yoongi that he was going to stay with their family, become a key member of the business and live his life in the environment he was now, danger and risk in every move, everyday. Yoongi was nervous that Jeongguk would let him down gently, would tell him how nice it sounded, but that it couldn’t come true. He would never outwardly dismiss the elder, Yoongi knew Jeongguk would care too much about Yoongi’s feelings to ever laugh, but the nerves were still there, making Yoongi begin to ramble.

“We had a little house, and a dog, and of course Keopi,” he rushed, still trying to be as quiet as possible but being able to say all the words he could all at once.

He wanted Jeongguk to hear everything, but didn’t want him to think Yoongi was being delusional. Where was the line drawn? He reined in control of his mouth to stop saying whatever came to his head, pausing to regain his breath. What else should he tell him? It seemed scary, to bestow the thought of a child on Jeongguk, was sure the younger knew as well as Yoongi that it was impossible. They were too young, family in too dangerous a position for it to possibly work, to even think about it. No, he wouldn’t tell Jeongguk about their son, would keep the detail like a secret for himself, a hidden fantasy that could no way become true.

“And a little kitchen with baby blue walls and a view of the garden, with pictures in wooden frames, and mint chocolate ice cream,” he stopped, falling silent.

Had he said too much? Jeongguk was silent beside him, but was still relaxed, and Yoongi felt better at the fact the younger didn’t seem agitated. It could mean many things, but it couldn’t mean anger. It could be that Jeongguk enjoyed the words, liked the thought of a quiet life with a little
house of their own, nothing to worry about other than the weather, or if the dog might dig up the flowers in the garden. Or maybe Jeongguk was too tired to listen, or even trying to think of the words to say to explain he didn’t want the same, trying to keep Yoongi’s heart in one piece.

All the nerves left his body as soon as Jeongguk pulled away from Yoongi to see his face, and Yoongi was met with a set of bunny teeth pulled into one of the biggest smiles he had ever seen, Jeongguk’s eyes almost shut with how much they were squinted. In a flash Yoongi was assaulted in a flurry of kisses, small giggles falling from Jeongguk’s mouth to match Yoongi’s own.

“I promise you,” Jeongguk declared, still grinning from ear to ear. “I promise you a house with a view of a garden and all the baby blue walls you want, love,” he proclaimed, making Yoongi shush his voice fondly, pressing another kiss to the corner of Jeongguk’s mouth. “I’ll build it myself if I have to,” he said, not having quieted down at all, but it just made Yoongi laugh, pressing his face into Jeongguk’s neck.

“Thank you, Jeonggukie, thank you,” he murmured, and Jeongguk wrapped his arms back around Yoongi’s body, holding him as tightly as he could when in his weakened state.

They stayed in a beautiful silence, not broken by anything but the occasional laugh from Yoongi as Jeongguk traced his fingers up and down his back, nails ticklish as they brushed pale skin. It would seem like a completely normal day if it wasn’t for how tired Jeongguk looked, how slow his actions and responses were. Yoongi knew the younger wasn’t suffering, a mix of the drugs and Jeongguk’s high pain tolerance from past wounds probably helping him to feel almost okay.

It wasn’t the first time the younger had been shot, but it was by far one of the worst. There was a scar on his left calf from a gunshot wound about a year and a half ago, got it from a shootout gone wrong at a dinner Yoongi wasn’t present at. There was one on his side, just by his hip, so much at the edge that the bullet barely even entered the body, just clipped the tissue, gotten from a sniper when in Taiwan.

Discounting scars from gunshots, Jeongguk also had marks from knives; however, none were too big or damaging on the skin. Some were from the time Jeongguk spent living on the streets of Busan, times when people had decided they wanted things he had, or just wanted to pick a fight. It was a factor that explained why Jeongguk had been so skittish when he first lived with them, explained why it had taken so long for him to trust someone other than Yoongi (he had trusted Yoongi as soon as he met him, had taken one look at the elder in his entirety and declared in awe that he was one of the prettiest people Jeongguk had ever seen. As embarrassed as the younger looked after, Yoongi knew he didn’t regret it, especially when they started dating just a month after Jeongguk moved in. Jeongguk liked to say it was fate, Yoongi said it was because he knew the younger would just crush on him for years anyway, even if he agreed it was fate). Jeongguk had never been fully stabbed before, a fact which made Yoongi fill with relief, one less thing to have nightmares about.
A knock on the door signalled the other’s return, and Yoongi decided they must have a doctor with them from the unrecognised voice. Namjoon was the first one to approach them, Seokjin not far behind, Yoongi hearing them stop at the side of the bed, probably just looking at Jeongguk and Yoongi holding onto each other like it was each their own individual lifeline.

“Yoons, Guk, are you awake?” Jin called, and he had a soft smile on his face when Yoongi opened his eyes, Namjoon’s to match with added dimples.

“Wasn’t asleep,” Yoongi mumbled, yawning and rubbing his eyes as Jeongguk’s flickered open.

“Yoongi, the doctor just needs to look over Gukkie, okay?” Namjoon told him, picking the smaller up and sitting him down on his designated chair at Jeongguk’s bedside, ruffling his hair before gesturing for the doctor to approach.

The doctor walked quickly over to Jeongguk, sending a single nervous glance in Namjoon and Seokjin’s direction before helping Jeongguk to reveal his back. She must have been specially employed by his parents, her lack of questions about Jeongguk’s marks and her concerned looks towards the older pair showing her nerves. It was essential that information about Jeongguk didn't leave the room, didn't reach the greedy ears of the media and reporters. It could put their family in a compromising position, trying to explain so much harm written on the youngest's skin.

From where Yoongi was sat, he could see the entirety of Jeongguk’s exposed back. He couldn’t view the wound yet, a white square of fabric covering the expected hole in the skin, but as the doctor moved her hands towards the covering Yoongi closed his eyes. He knew exactly what to expect, knew how a bullet wound looked from the countless ones his family managed to get, but at the same time be wasn’t prepared at all for the sight.

This was different. The positioning of the wound, the circumstance, the threat. He had gotten it by protecting Yoongi, at a meeting that was meant to only end in agreements or minor disagreements, and if the positioning was any closer to any other piece of skin, then a major organ could have been hit, even if the bullet was relatively shallow. Jeongguk would have most likely died if he had been any less lucky, and Yoongi thanked any god that might have existed for the exact point the bullet entered Jeongguk’s back.

He felt a hand on his shoulder, a whisper of ‘it’s okay’ from Hoseok, and he opened his eyes. Jeongguk’s tanned skin was an irritated red around the neatly stitched laceration, but it didn't look as bad as Yoongi was expecting, no blood oozing or muscle visible. That was a relief, but it was still hard to see, and Yoongi looked away after only a moment of examining the sight.
Jimin, Taehyung and Hoseok were stood beside Yoongi, silent with faces expressionless, but Yoongi could see the relief. Jeongguk was still the youngest, their youngest little brother, and Yoongi knew they were almost as worried as he was by the events. Jimin and Taehyung’s treatment of the gunman was just one indicator of their hidden concern, Hoseok’s lack of laughter and smaller smiles an indicator of his anxiety. The events had taken their toll, the relief in every expression a relief to Yoongi as well.

“He’s healing incredibly well, the wound only slightly irritated from movement,” the doctor commented, touching around the cut. “You were lucky. No bones, organs, or even tendons were hit when the bullet entered the body, and no muscles were majorly ripped due to a messy entry, effects stopped even more effectively by the semi-bulletproof vest worn” she continued, a close press making Jeongguk hiss through his teeth.

“How long will it take to heal?” Seokjin asked, looking at the wound from the other side of the bed.

The doctor paused, eyes glancing over the whole of Jeongguk’s back before she hummed, reaching for another dressing from the tray she had brought with her to the room.

“For a relatively safe recovery? Probably around six weeks, if I had to guess. A healthy seventeen year old with no infection and a healthy metabolism wouldn’t take as long to heal as expected, but it still depends on the next few days.”

“How long until he can leave?” Namjoon questioned, and the doctor paused in her dressing of the wound.

“I wouldn’t recommend large amounts of movement for the next week, however you could transfer Mr Kim to a different, nearby location safely in probably about three days if the movement isn’t strenuous on his part,” she answered as she taped a new piece of cover over the dressing, the wound now looking like how it had before she arrived.

“Thank you, Dr Peters,” Seokjin said as he shook her hand, her gloves she was wearing to assess the wound thrown in the bin in the room.

“It’s no problem,” she returned, but looked a little flushed, cheeks rosy. “Um, this is your assigned specialist nurse, Josephine Schulz, who will be handling medications.”
The gestured woman was short, about forty with olive skin, and Yoongi could already tell they wouldn’t have a problem with the stereotypical evil medical staff, especially if the faint happy lines around her eyes were taken into consideration. The others seemed to share the same view, and Yoongi watched Namjoon nod at the women, a signal for their leave.

Once it was only their family in the room and the door had fallen shut, Namjoon ruffled a hand through Jeongguk’s messy black hair, making the strands stand on end in some places. Jimin and Taehyung were both smiling widely, Hoseok almost vibrating with energy. It was the happiness over Jeongguk being okay, being able to perfectly recover in a significantly short time, and Yoongi felt his own mouth mould into a smile, exposing his gums.
Chapter Notes

Well, I did promise more frequent updates...

See the end of the chapter for more notes

This morning, billionaire couple Namjoon and Seokjin Kim denounced their eldest child Yoongi Kim as an official heir to the company, making the announcement through their publicist. However, there seems to be no ill feelings between the family, Namjoon Kim saying that ‘Yoongi has different interests which do not involve the company, and asked personally to be no longer a legal heir.’

However, suspicions have been made that the decision also involved the safety of Yoongi and his health, the elder often absent from company events and rarely seen outside with the rest of his family, although his net worth is still equal to that of his counterparts at a stable £1.7 billion, the Kim family boasting a combined worth of an estimated £100.4 billion-

“I had no clue we were worth £1.7 billion each,” Jimin exclaimed from where he was sat on the floor, Taehyung attempting to look at his hand of cards without him noticing. “Think about how many dogs I could buy with that!”

Yoongi sighed, fanning his coloured cards out repeatedly. From where he was sat, he could see the amount of cards other people had, and his odds weren’t looking too good. He had given up trying to persuade Jeongguk to let him see his cards, his competitive boyfriend happy to work together to beat people they didn’t know, but family was different. Playing games was every person for themselves, especially in stupid card games that Seokjin bought with him like Uno.

“I’m wondering why it’s only £1.7 billion, where is the rest of the, what did she say? £100 billion?” Hoseok almost shouted back, hitting Taehyung on the back of the head, making the younger pout and whine about the unfairness of their family’s gaming manner.

Yoongi sighed again, almost throwing a red five onto the pile, glaring at the millions of cards in his hand. Jimin and Hoseok had stacked two pick up fours on top of each other, the victim being none other than Yoongi, who cussed them out in a weird mix of Korean and English, with the occasional Japanese word thrown in. All the travelling had messed up his language, but it did mean he could mix together the worst words in each language to make the ultimate swearing compilation, so he had no right to complain.

“£100.4 billion,” Yoongi yawned, not even trying to hide his cards as he covered his mouth. “It’s
probably with the company, and Joon ‘n Jin.”

There were scandalised gasps from half the room, which Yoongi just ignored to the best of his ability. It wasn’t a surprise that their parents had all their company’s money, as well as Namjoon’s inherited family fortune and Seokjin’s inheritance from his upper class roots. Yoongi was just surprised that all of the younger generation had the same net worth, especially when he knew for a fact the youngers did more for the company, as well as the random modelling things Taehyung and Jimin sometimes did. It probably should have put Yoongi back a couple of million, but knowing Seokjin and Namjoon they probably gave him money for ‘participation’ and ‘self-care’.

“Um, rob list,” Taehyung muttered, and Yoongi couldn’t stop the snort coming out of his nose, Jeongguk laughing at him.

“Shut up,” Yoongi muttered just as Hoseok exclaimed “Oh my God Tae they’re literally your parents,” making Taehyung roll his eyes dramatically.

“It’s not like I haven’t stolen from all of you before,” he shrugged, and Yoongi heard Jimin release a little scream as he tackled Taehyung from beside him, making them both topple over and their cards spew all over the floor.

“Tae,” Yoongi sighed, putting down a green seven as the others tried to remember whose cards were whose, fighting over the pick up four that Yoongi knew really belonged to Jimin.

The shorter managed to snatch it, making Taehyung pout again, glaring at Jimin as the older smiled, putting down a green nine.

Jeongguk let out a dramatic sigh, but Yoongi was more concerned about the smile that was creeping onto his face, the one which meant Jeongguk knew exactly what he was doing, and it was something the others were clueless about. It was the one he wore when he stole Jin’s food, or pretended he wasn’t trying to slyly mark up Yoongi’s neck while they were just lying in bed.

“I think you’ll all find that I,” he started; tone smug and it made Yoongi dread his next words. “Have Uno,” he said after a dramatic pause, and Yoongi hit him lightly on the thigh, making the younger yelp.

“Jeongguk you fucking brat—” Hoseok exclaimed as he got onto his knees, starting to move towards Jeongguk but instead falling onto Taehyung, the pair tumbling a bit before Hoseok made himself at
home draped over the taller’s legs, resting his head on a protesting Jimin’s lap.

They squabbled for a bit before Hoseok bribed Jimin with food, the cooked pork and beef probably the most appealing offer, which Jimin accepted with a grin. It was probably not a wise deal, a moment of resting a head on a lap having a much lower value than the meat Jimin was surely going to demand once they returned home, but Yoongi laughed at the ecstatic look on Hoseok’s face at the turn of things, Jimin smirking.

“Pick up four, bitch,” he demanded with the smirk still on his face, making Taehyung cry out and look forlornly at the slowly decreasing pile of cards, mumbling about how Jimin was a villain. “The colour is now yellow because Hufflepuff is the superior Hogwarts house,” Jimin added, making everyone but Hoseok cry out in disagreement.

“My Ravenclaw ass begs to differ,” Taehyung almost hissed while picking up his cards, miming flicking them one by one at the shorter as Jimin had an angelic smile painted over his face, teeth bared dangerously.

“Then beg,” he said, the smile making the words seem even more threatening, Taehyung looking slightly intimidated before he actually flicked a card in Jimin’s direction, ducking out the way of the elder’s fist which flew in the direction of his head.

“Hey! That’s rude!” Taehyung cried, which only made Jimin move to kick him, Hoseok grumbling from his place on the duo’s laps.

“Aren’t you a Slytherin?” He muttered, making Jimin glare his way.

“Bitch, if I say I’m Hufflepuff I’m fucking Hufflepuff.”

Yoongi couldn’t help the fond smile which seemed permanently painted over his face, moving to lean against Jeongguk’s shoulder, the younger wrapping an arm around his waist. It was nice, being so domestic, just having fun and not worrying about the future, the past; even though Yoongi knew they’d have to pay attention to everything in only a matter of hours. Over days, Jeongguk was doing better and better, the wound not showing any sort of sign of infection and the healing process being exceptionally fast, Jeongguk of course even being good at recovering from gunshots. It meant they were able to travel, and the flight was arranged for this afternoon, Yoongi looking forward to his own bed no matter how lovely and luxurious the London hotel was (he also really missed Keopi, but he knew the others would tease him if he said that, so bed was the reason he kept repeating).
“You’re all missing the point that Gryffindor is the best but go off I guess,” Jeongguk said nonchalantly, tutting at the trio and pulling Yoongi closer, who exhaled pointedly at his boyfriend’s statement.

“Nah, it’s definitely Hufflepuff,” Hoseok called as he high fived Jimin, the pair chanting something about badgers and yellow, although Yoongi was sure they had just made it up on the spot.

“I think you pronounced Slytherin wrong,” Yoongi huffed, Jeongguk cooing as he pressed a kiss to his pink hair, making Yoongi blush as he put down a random card, not even caring about the game anymore.

“I’m sorry my cute little Slytherin love, but bam! Gryffindor for the win,” Jeongguk cried out as he violently threw down his last card, the other three shouting in disbelief as Yoongi just rolled his eyes as his boyfriend’s antics, letting Jeongguk push him lightly a couple of times before settling back down against his side.

An opening door brought them all out of the game as Namjoon appeared in the doorway to their room, his shirt looking messily buttoned and his hair looking like he hadn’t brushed it in years, cheeks blushed bright red. Yoongi didn’t need to make two guesses at the fact he and Jin were having some private couple’s time, although Yoongi was grateful to know that they definitely wouldn’t go further than kissing when their kids were in the next room, thank God.

“Can you five please keep the noise level down? We’re trying to be romantic here,” he scolded, but his resolve crumbled as half the room started giggling softly, the eldest trying to pat down his hair with an even more darkly flushed face.

“Ew, gross,” Jimin pretended to retch, making Namjoon sigh not dissimilarly to how Yoongi had earlier, but right now Yoongi didn’t really care about the eldest pair’s presence of intimacy.

“I agree for once,” Jeongguk muttered, obviously not sharing Yoongi’s point of view as Namjoon made a hasty retreat, the door shutting quickly as he returned to where Jin was probably waiting.

“We have literally another room, why are we here,” Hoseok groaned, Jimin and Taehyung almost simultaneously pushing him onto the floor, making him cry out. “Fuck!”

Visually checking Hoseok was okay, Yoongi tried to kick him once he deemed the only thing
bruised was the younger’s pride, but Jeongguk’s grip on his waist made him nowhere near able to reach any part of Hoseok’s body which was spread out over the floor. Since the injury, Jeongguk had become a lot more adamant about Yoongi staying by his hide at all times, often wrapping the smaller up in his arms to stop his straying too far. It was fair, Yoongi knew. It was probably a natural thing that Jeongguk had an even larger impulse to keep him out of harm’s way, especially when any slower movement on the day of the meeting could have ended with Yoongi bleeding on the floor instead of Jeongguk. Anyway, it wasn’t like Yoongi was complaining, his love of his boyfriend’s affection and need for validation being fed constantly as the younger paid every single moment of awareness directed at Yoongi.

“Because Gukkie is meant to stay here,” Yoongi reminded them softly, feeling Jeongguk smile into his temple where he had rested his lips, making a soft smile creep onto his face as well to match

“Fuck you Jeongguk, getting shot was so inconvenient,” Jimin cried out from the other side of the room, making Yoongi jump slightly as Jeongguk pulled away to stick his tongue out in Jimin’s direction, Jimin sticking his middle finger up in a single graceful movement in return.

“Bitch,” Jeongguk gasped, his scandalised tone making Yoongi giggle quietly, Jeongguk huffing as a response to the action.

“I’m still your hyung, have some respect,” Jimin demanded, pointing his finger at Jeongguk with a mock scowl on his face, but Yoongi could see the smile which was trying to creep over his expression.

“Thou bitchass highness,” Jeongguk said in a dramatic tone, trying to make his accent sound like an upper class English person’s, moving one of his hands in a grand gesture as if he was trying to greet Jimin for the first time.

Jimin’s mouth gaped, the offended expression on his face making Yoongi laugh even harder. Jeongguk was chuckling behind him, attempting to not let Jimin notice his amusement of the situation, but when Jimin’s mouth closed with a quiet popping sound Jeongguk’s laughter was amplified, loud giggles bursting out of his lungs.

“I think we should reintroduce honorifics, but just for Guk,” Taehyung muttered, and Jimin nodded along enthusiastically, Hoseok grinning and quietly whispering the word ‘maknae’ over and over again.

“Oh look, three bitchass highnesses,” Jeongguk exclaimed, eyes bright and for a second Yoongi didn’t even process the words, too captivated by the galaxies his boyfriend’s eyes to listen to the
protesting shouts of Jimin and Taehyung.

It was nice to see Jeongguk so happy, rare but so beautiful. The weight of the world always seemed to be on Jeongguk’s shoulders in recent times, every year the amount of time the younger spent carefree and happy seemed to decrease, a fact which worried Yoongi to the bone. He didn’t want the younger to be emotionless, cold, didn’t want him to feel like fate was plotting against him and everything he loved. Yoongi decided he would make it his mission to try and keep Jeongguk as light as he felt now, but he knew how hard that task would be. With their lifestyle and what they do, it was rare to find someone who wasn’t somehow emotionally scarred by events, images.

A shout from Hoseok brought him back to the conversation, “Mind the fucking language,” yelled so loud that Yoongi was sure his ears would throb for hours, the irony of Hoseok’s words making him choke on a laugh.

“You’re all insane,” Yoongi groaned, and Jeongguk pressed multiple little kisses to his forehead, emphasising the noises with each peck of his lips, making Yoongi squirm.

“Oh shut up Yoons stop acting like we don’t know you think we’re fucking hilarious,” Jimin huffed as he watched Jeongguk’s display of affection, rolling his eyes when the kisses carried on for longer than what would have been acceptable as genuine, confirming Jeongguk’s aim to simply annoy Yoongi until he broke into laughter.

“I don’t-” Yoongi tried to protect, but Jeongguk covered his mouth with his hand, and didn’t pull it away even when Yoongi licked it, probably on the basis that it isn’t the grossest thing they had done together.

“Fucking liar,” Jimin shouted, throwing his whole hand of cards in Jeongguk and Yoongi’s direction making Yoongi squint his eyes shut, one or two cards hitting his face.

“I’m literally about to throw hands,” Jeongguk deadpanned as he clutched Yoongi to his chest, acting like Jimin had threatened to take him away, like a child and their favourite toy.

“That would be assault!” Jimin yelled as he dived behind Taehyung, squealing when Jeongguk picked up a pillow as if to throw it at the duo, but a violently opening door startled them all.

A slightly more ruffled looking Namjoon was at the door, shirt barely buttoned and hair unable to be fixed without a hairbrush, lips looking suspiciously swollen. He was fixing a glare at all five of
them, eyes softening slightly at the sight of Jeongguk and Yoongi intertwined, but they hardened as soon as they set on Jeongguk’s raised arm holding the pillow.

“Can you please be quiet,” Namjoon hissed, and the room was silent, until a voice rose from the dark doorway.

“Gryffindor is superior, Guk is correct,” Seokjin yelled, making Namjoon sigh and put his head in his hands, the laughter from the five younger people erupting again.

“Ravenclaw wins but okay, dear,” Namjoon said, and Yoongi could see every drop of his will to live falling from inside his eyes, shoulders sagged in defeat.

“Namjoon I will end you,” Seokjin threatened, and Yoongi watched Namjoon’s form droop even more, rolling his eyes.

“Okay, dear,” he repeated, retreating back into the room.

The mood settled down after their parents’ appearance, soft smiles and lazy actions what was left of the hysterical laughter and energy. It was nice, it was comfortable, and Yoongi had to admit it only got better after they all somehow moved to lie on the floor, Yoongi almost squished between Jeongguk and Taehyung, and it almost made him drift off to sleep until he remembered what else they were meant to be doing today.

“When is the flight?” He almost slurred

“Four o’clock, Heathrow airport,” Hoseok answered, and at the words he felt Taehyung jolt, the younger sitting up in place and checking the time on his watch.

“Shit I need to pack,” he yelped as he jumped to his feet, quickly running out the door, Yoongi hearing the guards following him quickly, the rush of semi-panicked footsteps amusing.

He knew some of his family would be harder to guard 24/7 than others, himself probably being the easiest and Taehyung and Jimin the hardest. The duo was notorious for disappearing randomly to do things in the day, and their guards probably have to watch them like hawks to not let them escape, the duo trying to slip away every chance they could.
“Fucking language,” Hoseok groaned, and Yoongi almost doubled over himself laughing, feeling Jeongguk do the same beside him and ending up with them spooning each other, but Yoongi wasn’t complaining.

He and Jeongguk relaxed until it was time to leave, Yoongi having packed for them both the day before, not without protest from Jeongguk, who still thought he could do whatever he wanted despite having a newly healing bullet wound in his back. It was kind of frustrating, how Yoongi would randomly find Jeongguk doing things he wasn’t meant to be doing around the hotel, like trying to do exercise or lifting heavy objects. The matter wasn’t that Jeongguk couldn’t do it, the problem was more that he shouldn’t, the wound healing nicely now, but capable of having worse effects if Jeongguk messed it up. There were even a couple of moments Jeongguk tried to pick Yoongi up, but Yoongi made sure to scold him for the forbidden action.

Throwing a warning look at the younger, Yoongi immediately requested guards to take their suitcases, Jeongguk rolling his eyes. Of course, the younger was planning to take his own, but disobeying doctor’s orders wasn’t about to happen on Yoongi’s watch.

“You know, I’ve done missions while still healing from bullets before,” Jeongguk had told him in the car, moving his hand to brush through Yoongi’s hair, whose head was on his shoulder.

Yoongi didn’t answer him, and Jeongguk got the message that he didn’t want to talk, and the rest of the ride was spent nonverbally as they listened to music together on the younger’s phone, sharing a pair of earphones. Jeongguk skipped any sad songs that came on, only leaving the upbeat, love songs that the younger was secretly a big fan of, and Yoongi couldn’t help but smile. His big, musclely boyfriend was a fan of Justin Bieber and Ariana Grande.

It was only them in the car with four guards, who stayed silent and alert, hands always positioned on their guns. It probably should have been reassuring, but it made Yoongi more nervous than he was before.

“This one reminds me of you, love” Jeongguk had whispered, just as She Looks So Perfect by 5 Seconds of Summer started playing, Yoongi hitting him lightly when Jeongguk sang along. “You look so perfect standing there, in my American Apparel underwear...”

“Jeongguk I swear to God,” he whined as he blushed, squirming as Jeongguk pressed playful kisses all over his face.
The private jet was ready to leave as soon as they got there, and Yoongi was thankful they could just make themselves comfortable and take off whenever they liked, the pilot waiting for Namjoon or Seokjin’s order. There were more guards on the plane than normal, and Yoongi was slightly confused about their presence because what could they do in the event of a crash? But the idea that maybe there were more guards to fight a possible traitor made him feel worse. It was always a heavily monitored thing, the loyalty of their workers. Namjoon and Seokjin ensured to eliminate any suspicious activity as soon as possible, and made each new employee endure a test of loyalty once they joined, and a few times throughout their working period. It had never failed them before, the older couple also renowned for treating loyal staff well, an attractive incentive to promote loyalty.

Just like the way there, Yoongi lay with Jeongguk in the bed which was further back in the aircraft, but this time it was Yoongi that was completely taking care of the younger. Despite Jeongguk’s complaints, he always thought he should be the one caring for Yoongi, Yoongi ensured Jeongguk had to do basically nothing throughout the whole flight, constantly getting his boyfriend drinks and snacks he knew the younger wanted, but wouldn’t ask for. It felt nice, to finally have the chance to baby his boyfriend when he was often the one in Jeongguk’s place, but he knew Jeongguk wasn’t enjoying it as much as he was, if the permanent pout on his face was anything to go by.

“It’s my job to look after you,” he kept insisting, making Yoongi laugh.

“I’m older than you,” Yoongi reminded him, but Jeongguk just shrugged.

“Yeah, but you’re my baby.”

Namjoon had managed to somehow get the legitimate full version of *Avengers: Endgame*, and for three hours Yoongi watched Jeongguk watch the movie on the small TV near the bed, his eyes wide as he was entranced by the whole film, but eventually Yoongi found his attention pulled to the screen as well. It was amazing, the scenes, colours, dialogue, *everything*. Jeongguk cried at the end of the movie, Yoongi close to tears as well, but he wasn’t as emotionally invested as his boyfriend with the characters, Jeongguk practically having an Iron Man shrine by their bookshelf.

The others seemed to finish it at almost the same time as them, and everybody practically leaped onto the bed beside where Jeongguk was, all letting words fall out their mouths at once, Yoongi pretty sure someone was sobbing at some point. It was domestic, it was nice, and it felt so... normal, even with the guards watching their every move, even with guns hidden all over the jet and knives stashed between the bed frame and the mattress.

He must have slept throughout the rest of the flight over the Atlantic Ocean, because the next thing he knew Jeongguk was shaking him, the pilot announcing their arrival in America over the intercom speakers dotted around the room, guards already prepping the jet to enter the airport. As
much as Yoongi had loved England, he missed his bed, missed Keopi and wouldn’t miss the fact a
guard had to follow him every time he tried to visit the members of his family in a different room.

“The school thinks that there was an ongoing family crisis,” Namjoon told them as they prepared
to leave the jet, Namjoon positioning his mask over his mouth. “So any pictures taken need to look
solemn, or at least expressionless, okay?”

Everyone nodded as they put on their masks, Yoongi positioning his own back one over his face
and pulling his hat as far over his eyes as possible, Jeongguk copying and tucking Yoongi into his
side at the first opportunity, the elder not protesting. They were taking a private exit anyway, but
there were always people who tried to follow them, and it was always better to be safe than sorry.

As it turned out, safe was the much better option. There were about nine news reporters and a large
group of people there, all seeming to think it was perfectly okay to rush forward at the first
possible moment, the guards doing a good job of keeping about a meter of space either side of
them. The reporters were shouting a mix of things, but one lady seemed to be talking specifically to
Yoongi, who couldn’t hear her words until he got closer, her mic being thrust in his direction.

“Yoongi! Yoongi! Want to say why your parents denounced you?” She almost yelled, and it just
made Yoongi shrink into himself, Jeongguk feeling the change.

He moved forwards, tucking Yoongi even further into his side and standing completely straight, as
if trying to take the attention for the shorter onto himself. Despite the younger’s effort, there were
still reporters all around them, all shouting variants of the same question, over and over. It was like
an echo, and it made Yoongi dizzy, trying to make himself as small as possible.

A large, beefy man tried to break through the line of guards and put his camera right in their faces,
and it made Yoongi stumble, almost falling if it weren’t for Jeongguk’s arms holding him upright,
the younger pausing briefly to check Yoongi was okay. Yoongi was honest, never lied to Jeongguk
so he shook his head, eyes continuously flicking to the crowd restrained by their bodyguards, like a
stampede of people. It made Jeongguk frown, eyes flaring in anger before he was gently pulling
Yoongi along again, trying to keep him as close as possible.

At the next possible mic, Jeongguk strode forward, letting Yoongi go to stay in the middle of the
empty space while he went to the edge, making the anxiety in Yoongi’s chest lurch forward, frozen
in place as his boyfriend reached the sea of people.

“He’s scared of people, and you’re all going to give him an anxiety attack, so back off,” Jeongguk
almost growled, and the volume of the crowd decreased slightly as they heard the words, eyes
flickering to Yoongi who was still trying to make himself seem as small as possible, hands shaking slightly as he watched the floor.

Yoongi knew very well that they weren’t meant to stop walking, weren’t meant to separate from the rest of the group which was getting further and further away ahead of them, but he couldn’t go without Jeongguk, even if the guards were sending slightly panicked looks at one another. Soon enough, Jeongguk returned, and they resumed their walk, but the crowd had backed up a little, much quieter and less invasive. It did nothing to calm Yoongi, but it stopped his nerves from becoming worse, preventing him from becoming too panicked to think. Nothing good ever came from a situation where he couldn’t think.

In the car on the way back they were with Namjoon, and Yoongi could see the oldest was thinking about talking to Jeongguk about his actions, but Yoongi and the rest of their family probably knew it would be pointless. The youngest would have no regret for this sort of thing, no regret when defending Yoongi, and they all knew it, Namjoon just staying quiet on the matter. What Jeongguk said anyway wasn’t that bad, probably eluded to the idea that Yoongi was denounced for problems with anxiety, and that wasn’t entirely false, so Yoongi didn’t complain. Maybe if people were more aware of Yoongi’s crippling anxiety, they wouldn’t swamp them with attention like they normally did, which would be nice.

The house was exactly alike to how they had left it, everything seeming untouched in their absence, no evidence of even the cleaners having been through each room. Namjoon’s papers he had left strewn out over the kitchen table were still in his weird messy order only he could understand, the only evidence of human activity being the absence of dust all around the home.

As soon as they had walked through the door, Keopi ran down the stairs with a low meow, reaching the hallway and immediately head butting Yoongi’s legs, making him smile. He had missed the cat more than he liked to admit, even if he knew everybody realised his attachment to her, despite not having her for over a year. Jeongguk liked to point out that Yoongi looked like her, but it just made the elder roll his eyes, because Yoongi was a human, and Keopi was a cat, and it just wasn’t physically possible.

Going to bed with Jeongguk that night was the best it had been for a long time. It was a familiar bed, in their own room, with their covers and their walls and Keopi jumping up next to them to sleep at the foot of the bed. Jeongguk held him tightly until he fell asleep, and Yoongi dreamt of nothing at all, no blood or gunshots or bodies hitting the floor.

Chapter End Notes

I just want to let people know that I'm going to start editing and rewriting the first story in this series to make it better and more reader friendly, and may add extra
information and things along those lines. It won't be done soon, but I'm just letting people know that I'm extending chapters and whatnot, which is why the word count will rise slowly in the next few months. No major plot lines will be changed.
By the time Yoongi woke up the next morning, Jeongguk’s side of the bed was already cold. Keopi was laid against Yoongi’s side, so he stayed under the covers until she moved in fear of waking her. No matter how much he might be teased, Yoongi was now completely happy to admit how much he loved her, and there was no way he was going to move and wake her up.

After about an hour, Keopi stood and arched her back, and Yoongi sighed in relief as he sat up against the decorative cushions Jeongguk insisted they left against the headboard. The clock on the wall showed that it was quite late in the morning, and Yoongi frowned. Normally, someone had coaxed him out of bed by now, either Jeongguk with sweet words, Taehyung with annoyingness as persuasion, or Seokjin with threats on missing meals. Even with the fact it had been a stressful holiday, Yoongi didn’t think they would leave him in bed for so long, at least not without company.

Yawning, Yoongi pushed off the duvet, the slightly chilly air in the room making a strong shudder travel through his bones, waiting a moment before he stood. Immediately, he grabbed Jeongguk’s hoodie that was draped messily over the side of the wardrobe, sluggishly pulling it on before almost stumbling towards the door, which was half open in consideration for Keopi. Scratching his head, he pulled the door open messily, and almost froze at the sight of guards lined across the walls.

Since London, Namjoon and Seokjin had increased safety precautions so much that it felt like twenty knew people had joined their family. He had first noticed yesterday, after they got home and there were guards everywhere Yoongi turned, but he hadn’t realised it would be so extreme even when they were settled in their own house.

He blushed slightly before trying to fix his hair, looking at the floor as he began to walk to the kitchen, hoping to see someone, although realistically he knew they were probably all out. If so many bodyguards were in one place, it suggested there was nowhere else in the house to be, and unless everyone was hiding under his bed it meant they were all probably working. He could hear the footsteps of the guards behind him, them keeping their distance but also not straying too far, and Yoongi was happy to bet that each of them were armed to the teeth.

Yoongi congratulated himself as being right as he entered the empty kitchen, glancing around the room briefly before wandering over to the fridge. You could tell a lot about his family just by the sheer mess of food the container was in, no order to be seen as Yoongi grabbed an apple from next to Taehyung’s weird plastic-like cheese slices, ignoring the fact there seemed to be a whole shelf full of banana milk cartons. If that was what Jeongguk wanted to use fridge space for, then Yoongi
wasn’t going to question him.

Putting the apple on the side of the counter, he flicked the kettle on, reaching into the cupboard for his coffee. Almost the whole family drank coffee, Taehyung and sometimes Jeongguk being the exceptions, but they were all very particular about the brand. Yoongi personally liked the strongest, most caffeinated coffee he could find, the kind that came in a glass bottle and a golden lid with a fancy Italian name. He threatened to kill anyone who even thought of touching his coffee, unless it was Jeongguk, who only touched it if he was making a drink for Yoongi anyway.

As he waited for the kettle to boil he took a bite of the apple, trying to ignore Keopi as she meowed at him in her form of begging for food, and pointedly paid no attention to the army of guards positioned by the doorway, pretending he was alone. No matter how used to the guards he should be at this point, Yoongi couldn’t help but feel uncomfortable when so many of them were watching. Sure, he felt safer, but there was a different sort of nervousness in his chest of the fact that anything embarrassing would be seen by what seemed like a legion of people, all eyes either fixed on Yoongi himself or possible places threats could come from.

The flick of the kettle switch made him quickly pour the boiling water into his mug, stirring it with the coffee at the bottom with a teaspoon before taking a sip as soon as possible. It burned his mouth, but Yoongi didn’t care, trying to drink a sip as soon as humanly possible. Jeongguk would call him impatient, but Yoongi couldn’t be bothered to wait for the coffee to cool when the most damage it could do would be to slightly kill his taste buds.

Keopi looked him right in the eye from where she was sitting at his feet, green eyes unwavering and making Yoongi feel like she was staring into his soul. Giving in and sprinkling a handful of treats onto the floor, Yoongi picked up the apple to eat another bite, but jumped at the shout let out from the front of the door, dropping the red apple on the floor and watching as it rolled under the counter. He stayed in place as half a dozen guards ran into the room, almost surrounding him and blocking his view of where the apple had last been, his practically full cup of coffee left forgotten on the side. Yoongi didn’t understand what was going on, just that there were now a barrier of guards protecting him from all sides, shouts coming from the direction of the front door.

At the sound of the first gunshot, Yoongi felt his mind flash blank. The only thing he could think of was Jeongguk, Jeongguk holding him, Jeongguk shuddering, Jeongguk on the floor, Jeongguk covered in blood. It made him stumble when the guards tried to get him to move, losing his balance and almost falling if it weren’t for the body in front of him, the back of the guard allowing him to stand up straight and begin to move forward. He didn’t know where they were going, but all his attention was pulled to the front door as they were forced to pass, and the body lying on the porch.

Dressed fully in black, Yoongi didn’t even need to think about the profession of the man, even if the weapons didn’t give away the fact he was an assassin. He couldn’t see the man’s face, but the
minute rising and falling of his back told Yoongi he wasn’t dead just yet. There was a guard who was speaking into his earpiece, and Yoongi could guess exactly who he was calling but he didn’t have the chance to see if he was right, the people around him getting him to climb the stairs and rush through one of the second floor hallways.

Suddenly, the wallpaper was all burring, the floor seeming to become water underneath his feet, and the only reason he was still upright was the support of the bodies around him, acting like scaffolding. Nausea was climbing up his throat, making his stomach feel like rejecting the few bites of apple he had eaten, the pieces stuck in his throat. He didn’t want to be here, he wanted Jeongguk, or another member of his family, or even Keopi.

The guards led him through the doorway of the third lounge, and Yoongi was at best stumbling towards one of the sofas, falling onto the soft fabric and letting his head rest with his eyes closed. If this was his body’s reaction to the events that were happening, it was incredibly odd. Yoongi only ever felt ill in a panic attack when he was heaving for air, but now he felt as though he was going to be sick, shivers passing through his bones like currents of electricity.

“Bring,” he said, pausing as the words made his head spin even with his eyes closed. “Bring me Keopi,” Yoongi ordered weakly, but he immediately heard some of the guard’s footsteps exit the room, and suddenly the idea of a few bodyguards trying to chase his cat made a small smile form on Yoongi’s mouth.

A fuzz was setting over Yoongi’s mind. It didn’t feel like sleep, the kind of fuzz that resembles just a black hole, pulling you in until you’re gone, it felt lighter, and Yoongi felt like he was floating. A comfortable weight was deposited on his chest, and Yoongi felt Keopi move on his body until she curled up beside him, the weight of her against his side grounding him somewhat, the fuzz not fully carrying him away.

It was actually nice, felt so, so nice and so calm, the terror and nerves fading and fading until only a buzzing content was left, body feeling like it was just filled with feathers, weighing no more than a few pounds. Somewhere in the back of Yoongi’s mind he was confused, confused as to why he wasn’t panicking about the situation, why he felt perfectly fine while there was a dead body on their home’s porch, but the relief of the feeling outweighed the puzzlement.

Soft voices next to him were muffled by the fog, but a hand stroking through his hair made him open his eyes, blurry and unfocused but he could make out the basic shape of Jeongguk’s head above him. The wide eyes and confused expression on the younger’s face were becoming clearer, although his mind still felt slightly like it was filled to the brim with cotton, words taking a moment to be processed.

“Hey love, are you okay?” Jeongguk asked, voice soft and quiet as if he didn’t want to break the
serene atmosphere of the room, a small smile of comfort on his face.

He must have been kneeling on the floor, positioned right by the couch Yoongi was laid upon, and his presence made some of the fuzz both increase and decrease at the same time, Yoongi’s resistance to the feeling fading with every moment the younger was with him, Jeongguk making everything feel better, feel right. Yoongi let his thoughts go now that Jeongguk was here, didn’t allow himself to ponder over things that weren’t relevant.

It probably should have been slightly concerning how long it took Yoongi to remember the question, but Jeongguk didn’t stop brushing his fingers through Yoongi’s pink hair, the dark roots of Yoongi’s natural hair starting to emerge from his scalp.

“I feel... fuzzy,” Yoongi slurred, a smile on his face as he looked up at his boyfriend, eyes fluttering shut until Jeongguk coaxed them open again.

“Hey, eyes on me, there you are,” he murmured, looking more concerned but not letting the emotion leak into his words. “Fuzzy how?”

Yoongi had no clue how to describe the feeling, the feeling of floating on an ocean but there was no water, just air and clouds and feeling so light he could fly. He felt so relaxed, so free, and like he had nothing to worry about at all, no problems, no concerns. The only other time he ever felt even close to how he was now was when he was with Jeongguk, but even that wasn’t to this scale. It felt like he should know something was wrong, but this was by far better than a panic attack, so how bad could it be?

“’M just fuzzy,” Yoongi giggled, nuzzling his head into Jeongguk’s hand further, the younger seeming happy to continue his petting. “Feel like ’m floating, ’s weird,” his voice slid between the words, so much that Yoongi was sure to most the sentence would be not understandable, slurred words and Daegu dialect, but Jeongguk understood, of course he did.

“Okay, love,” Jeongguk let the subject drop, and somewhere in the back of his head Yoongi knew they would talk about it more when Yoongi’s mind wasn’t so clouded, but for now it wasn’t anything Jeongguk could try to resolve. “Why don’t you sleep?”

“Don’t wanna sleep,” Yoongi whined, Jeongguk staying uncharacteristically silent for when Yoongi was in this sort of state. “You’re here, don’t wanna sleep.”
“Okay,” Jeongguk said after a pause, voice still sounding uncertain. “Okay.”

Jeongguk stood, and Yoongi was about to complain about the absence of his hand in Yoongi’s hair until he felt himself being propped up, the younger slotting his body to sit under Yoongi’s head, letting Yoongi use him like a pillow. It felt nice, and Yoongi couldn’t stop the small smile that grew on his face, trying to squint his unfocused vision up at Jeongguk. The younger looked troubled, and it confused Yoongi to no end, because how could Jeongguk not be happy when Yoongi felt so good? Did he do something wrong?

“Gukkie?” He hummed, and watched as Jeongguk shifted his attention to Yoongi beneath him, immediately switching his expression to one with a small smile.

The change was so quick, Yoongi was uncertain as to whether he had imagined the stormy look in the other’s eyes, the slight frown which tarnished Jeongguk’s youthful face. But Yoongi knew their whole family had a high skill level when it came to lying, he knew very well that Jeongguk was good enough at acting to fool almost everyone. Yoongi wasn’t almost everyone, and he could see the smile was hiding something else, even if he couldn’t exactly tell what.

“Yes, my love?” Jeongguk answered, and the tone made Yoongi feel even more unsettled, a small tick that something wasn’t right in the back of his mind.

“Is something wrong?” Yoongi asked slowly, watching every emotion which ran through the youngster’s eyes.

There was doubt, worry, and even some anger mixed behind his expression, and it made Yoongi feel weird, like something in his chest was now in the wrong position. He frowned, but Jeongguk automatically massaged over the lines with his fingers, soothing the skin back into place. In his eyes, Jeongguk’s emotions were all overtaken with nothing but love, and the thing in Yoongi’s chest snapped back into place.

“No, nothing at all darling, just relax,” Jeongguk convinced him, the smile on his face growing with every moment Yoongi seemed more aware of the world, the fuzz fading and letting Yoongi think.

“You sure?” Yoongi checked, although he was willing to trust Jeongguk’s word completely.

There were always going to be things that were worrying the younger, with their lifestyle, legacy,
position. He would always have something to be cautious of, something that would bother him. Yoongi knew that, he knew Jeongguk wasn’t obliged to inform him about everything, so he didn’t mind if Jeongguk didn’t want to tell him something that seemed so minor.

“I’m definite,” Jeongguk agreed, leaning down to press a kiss onto the end of Yoongi’s nose.

It made Yoongi giggle quietly, and the younger shot him such a fond smile that his insides felt like they were melting into a liquid goo, all molten and warm inside his chest. The clouds were fading from his thoughts, the cotton in his head turning back into the present, but Yoongi still felt strangely content, relaxed. He had no clue why the fuzz had invaded his mind, why he had become so zoned out of the world, and he was concerned. Is this natural? Healthy? Was it his head, something in his body?

Eventually, he felt almost completely grounded, his flying conscience now resting fully on his two feet, no longer high on something he seemed to have taken. It was confusing, but Yoongi had learned not to question what his body decided to do, and it was probably emotional based anyway. His brain was always trying to create new ways for Yoongi to be driven mad.

A throb of a headache was beginning to form at the back of his head, just behind his eyes, like someone was hitting his skull with a hammer from the inside. It made him squeeze his eyes shut, wincing slightly in pain when a particularly heavy hit made his brain feel like it was about to explode. Yoongi felt hungover, which was impossible since he hadn’t had any alcohol recently, not that he drank much at all in the first place. His father ruined that for him years ago.

“Who was he?” Yoongi managed to mutter, bringing a shaking hand up to rest it over his eyes, trying to block out as much light as possible.

Jeongguk gently took Yoongi’s hand in his own, intertwining their fingers but still shading the elder’s eyelids, humming quietly at the question.

“Who?” He murmured, brushing between the strands of Yoongi’s hair with his other hand, gently untangling any out of place strands.

It was soothing, and the headache made Yoongi want to pass out, but he needed answers about what was happening. There had now been two seeming attempts on their family, even if they weren’t the confirmed, definite target of the shooting in London. It would make sense though, if it had been a direct attack on their family. High status was always dangerous, especially in their world, and you wouldn’t find anyone with a higher status than their family.
“The assassin,” Yoongi expanded, and he heard Jeongguk sigh.

“Oh, him.”

The younger’s nonchalance wasn’t fooling Yoongi for one second. If Jeongguk didn’t want him asking, or knowing, then he didn’t know Yoongi very well at all. Of course, it was Jeongguk’s choice to answer the questions, but Yoongi would always ask them. He didn’t like being kept in the dark, didn’t like ignoring things which could be important. That wasn’t what he had ever done in life, and he knew Jeongguk was aware of that.

“Who was he working for?” He questioned again, and this time Jeongguk’s sigh wasn’t something Yoongi could just write off as a natural response.

It was like the younger was irritated that Yoongi was asking. Jeongguk had certain tells of when he was annoyed, the sighs, the tilt of his head to the side, the pushing of his tongue against his cheek. Yoongi knew them well, but they were never normally directed at Yoongi himself. That now started to annoy Yoongi, because Jeongguk had no right to be annoyed. If someone tried to kill Yoongi, he damn well wanted to know who had ordered the attack.

“Yoongi, that’s not really something you should be concerned-” the younger started to answer, but Yoongi cut off his sentence, not in a complacent mood enough to put up with Jeongguk’s avoidance of the question.

“Who was he working for?” Yoongi repeated while opening his eyes; although to his annoyance, the words became weaker at the end of the demanded question once he saw Jeongguk’s expression.

It wasn’t threatening, it never was when it came to Yoongi, but it was definitely one that said ‘don’t push it’. It made him rein his anger in, put his emotions under more control. As much as he hated to admit, it was Jeongguk that held all the power, the agency in their exchange, and it was no use if Yoongi pissed him off. He wanted answers, and Jeongguk definitely wasn’t going to give them if he thought Yoongi was behaving like a spoilt child.

“We’re not sure yet,” Jeongguk eventually told him, waiting until Yoongi was relaxed and calm underneath his gaze. “Jimin and Taehyung are trying to get him to talk.”

That made a shiver run down Yoongi’s back, a chill settling around the room. Jimin and
Taehyung’s methods of interrogation weren’t at all the most pleasant processes in the world, and Yoongi had never actually seen or heard them working in a proper, official working environment. He knew Jeongguk used a healthy mix of fear and pain, normally using a knife to do classic cuts on the skin, nothing too nasty or unethical. Hoseok was mostly the same, and Yoongi didn’t know anything about Namjoon and Seokjin’s methods, apart from the fact neither of them had had to interrogate people in many years. Yoongi himself had never even thought about it.

But Jimin and Taehyung were different. Even if Yoongi hadn’t seen them doing it in small room somewhere secure, he had seen the end result. Bodies missing teeth, nails, large areas of skin, eyes, whole limbs. He knew the pair wasn’t afraid to do anything to get answers, happy to use fire, water, metal. It was something terrifying, and Yoongi sometimes found it hard to imagine the pair doing what he knew they did, but it became easier after London. Witnessing the pair with the gunman at the meeting had made everything more real, made thing much harder to ignore and easier to imagine.

Yoongi almost hesitated before asking his next question, but he wasn’t going to let Jeongguk try to manipulate him into not wanting to know what was happening, even if that wasn’t what the younger was consciously doing. Yoongi knew Jeongguk held the belief that Yoongi was safer knowing nothing, but Yoongi knew he personally would feel safer if he knew everything, no matter if it would make him even more on edge.

“Could it be the same people from the London meeting?” He asked quietly, feeling Jeongguk’s thigh tense underneath his head.

“We don’t know,” he answered curtly, the brief answer probably trying to signal that it was the end of the conversation, but Yoongi wanted to know more.

“What if-” he began, but Jeongguk cut him off before he could even utter another single word.

“Yoongi, love, I don’t want you to worry about it,” Jeongguk dismissed, hushing Yoongi gently when he opened him mouth to protest. “You’re safe here.”

“I know, I just-” Yoongi said helplessly, and he felt his determined resolve deteriorate as Jeongguk seemed to become less and less tolerant of the conversation.

“It’s nothing for you to be concerned about,” Jeongguk told him, almost like an order. “You were the one who didn’t want to be a part of it, so keep your pretty head relaxed, okay?” He continued, and Yoongi felt himself deflate knowing he wouldn’t find out anything more on the subject.
It was just Jeongguk’s idea of protection, Jeongguk’s method of trying to keep Yoongi safe, Yoongi relaxed. It made sense, of course it did, the less Yoongi knew the less he was in a line of fire, but it meant he had no clue what was going on. He had no idea who just tried to make an attempt at ending his life, and Yoongi thought he was perfectly deserving of an explanation. The issue was that he knew Jeongguk would be stubborn about it, knew he wouldn’t even utter a word about who just tried to hurt Yoongi to Yoongi himself. Jeongguk’s idea of protection was Yoongi’s idea of keeping secrets.

“Okay,” Yoongi eventually agreed, Jeongguk pressing a light kiss on his forehead in response.

Jeongguk shifted, and it prompted Yoongi to sit up, head spinning for a second before it righted itself. Instead of how Jeongguk normally pulled him automatically onto his lap, he turned to pull his feet up onto the sofa and turn to face the elder, reaching forward to grasp his hands. Yoongi let him, tucking his own feet between Jeongguk’s legs and the back of the couch, the soft fabric tickling his skin.

“I just don’t want you getting worried, or hurt,” Jeongguk explained, squeezing Yoongi’s hands between his own and lightly tracing patterns into the skin with his thumbs. It was soothing, a relaxed point in a serious conversation, and Yoongi was grateful Jeongguk gave him a thread of safety. “I don’t know what I would do if you got hurt.”

Those words made a small frown form over Yoongi’s brow, mouth unwillingly being pulled into what Jeongguk described as a pout. It wasn’t fair, Jeongguk always made a big deal about Yoongi’s safety even though he was just as in danger as the elder, and Yoongi had even less control over the risks than Jeongguk did. Frankly, Yoongi was sure he should be more concerned over it than Jeongguk had any right to be, the younger always putting himself in danger at meetings and operations. By comparison, Yoongi was as secure as a single note of money in a two meter thick metal safe.

“But I don’t want you getting hurt either,” he protested, Jeongguk releasing one of his hands to trace his fingers over Yoongi’s cheek.

“You can’t prevent that,” the younger sighed, and it made Yoongi sigh in return, almost echoing his boyfriend.

“I know.”
And he did know, he knew it very well. There were so many different variables, so many different things that could kill his boyfriend daily, and Yoongi had completely no power over the majority of them. Even Namjoon and Seokjin, the most powerful people Yoongi had even heard of, the couple having more control than governments and monarchs, could do nothing to prevent half the risks Jeongguk was exposed to. It was something they had been aware of as soon as they had joined their family, a warning Namjoon had explained, Seokjin had repeated, but even then Yoongi didn’t quite understand how utterly useless he was at preventing the risks.

“I’ll do my best to stay in one piece,” Jeongguk said, seeming to notice Yoongi’s distaste of the subject.

Jeongguk knew, Jeongguk understood. After all, he had to go through exactly the same lectures and warnings as Yoongi had, probably worried about the same things. Yoongi knew the other had a hard time accepting the fact that there would always be a possibility of danger, knew Jeongguk sometimes wished he could just hide Yoongi away from the world. Even Yoongi sometimes wished he could just stay in one place and be protected, invisible, but in their lives there was no such thing as completely hidden, no such thing as a place nobody could find you.

“I love you,” Yoongi told him, Jeongguk squeezing his hands.

“I love you too.”

The clock kept ticking on the wall as they sat in each other’s company, the closed door surely hiding what felt like hundreds of armed guards, all waiting for them to move in order to follow. Jeongguk eventually pulled Yoongi to lean against his shoulder, playing gently with the long silver earrings the elder was wearing, humming a quiet melody.

“Did you sleep in these,” he asked absentmindedly, flicking one of the pieces lightly, bringing his eyes up to meet Yoongi’s own.

“Yeah, why?” Yoongi murmured, eventually picking up a harmony to Jeongguk’s song and humming along with him.

“I woke up with an imprint on my chest,” he smiled, making Yoongi laugh quietly. “Didn’t think you slept in them.”

“Can’t be bothered to put them back in the next day,” Yoongi confessed, making Jeongguk let out a
A loud burst of laughter, Yoongi blushing lightly at the reaction.

The laughter eventually faded into small, shared smiles, Jeongguk still fiddling with the delicate metal chains Yoongi was so fond of, Yoongi himself choosing to close his eyes and just focus on Jeongguk next to him. They were alone until Hoseok came bursting through the door, disrupting the comfortable silence the couple had been relaxing in. He looked out of breath, but judging by the smile on his face, he was happy about something rather than here to deliver bad news.

“Namjoon and Seokjin want you downstairs for one of those weird family bonding card games they like to play,” he said with a grin, but Yoongi could see very well the glint of mischief in the younger’s eyes.

“What else?” He asked with distrust, raising an eyebrow until Hoseok let out a little laugh, mouth moulded into a permanent heart shape.

“Namjoon is really annoyed Seokjin keeps winning, and I want you to watch him lose his shit with me,” Hoseok explained, and immediately Yoongi felt Jeongguk move, pulling Yoongi up after him.

“Why didn’t you just say that?” Jeongguk giggled, happy to follow Hoseok to wherever their parents were.

Yoongi could see that this was a distraction, an attempt to keep the attempt off of everyone’s (Yoongi’s) mind, but he was happy to play along with it. After all, he did in truth love to see Namjoon, composed, intelligent, mature Namjoon almost explode when Seokjin managed to beat him for a fifth time in a row, the eldest always making sure to make as big of a deal out of it as possible.

Descending to the ground floor and passing the set of stairs that lead to the house’s basement, Yoongi almost tripped over his own feet at the sounds coming from the lower level. Evidently, Jimin and Taehyung hadn’t closed the door, the shouting of what Yoongi assumed to be the assassin echoing up the passage to the rest of the house. Yoongi knew what the pain were capable of, and didn’t want to think about what they might be doing to extract that sort of vocalised agony, the sound sure to stay with Yoongi for a while.

“They didn’t shut the fucking door,” Jeongguk muttered, a small scowl making his eyebrows furrow as he quickly put his hands over Yoongi’s ears, but it wasn’t very effective against the deafening misery.
“I’m assuming Tae and Minnie are too busy,” Yoongi muttered, watching Hoseok nod with a false smile painted on his face, trying to evidently ignore the disturbing shouts.

“Well, they’re very busy people!” He exclaimed, but Yoongi saw through the happy exterior Hoseok was layering over his face. Even if Hoseok was used to this sort of thing, it didn’t mean he enjoyed it. “Shut that door for me,” he ordered a guard, expression slipping cold for a moment before he was turned back completely to the other pair, smile again glistening. “Let’s go!”

The evening did take Yoongi’s mind off of things and before he could process the time, it was already nearing midnight, the afternoon, dinner and even the evening flying by like it was only minutes long. Jimin and Taehyung had only made their appearance for dinner before disappearing again, the door this time being firmly shut behind them. Namjoon’s defeat really was a good distraction, especially when Yoongi knew he really was trying to win, Seokjin reveling in his victory.

“I want to learn how to beat Seokjin,” Jeongguk told Yoongi as they were walking to their room, Yoongi laughing at his statement.

“Good luck with that, Guk” he smiled, poking one of Jeongguk’s cheeks and making him pout. “Jin’s spent so much time in casinos and at gambling deals that I’m sure he could beat a world champion at this point.”

“Yeah, well, I’ll just become better,” Jeongguk huffed, Yoongi smiling at the words.

“I’m sure you will,” the elder agreed as Jeongguk opened their bedroom door, pulling Yoongi inside and firmly shutting the wood behind him.

They didn’t talk as they got ready to sleep, Jeongguk still humming the same song as before, occasionally adding different notes and adlibs to his original tune. Yoongi was happy to just listen to the beautiful sound as he pulled his pyjamas on, waiting for Jeongguk under the covers of their bed, which felt far too cold without the younger in it, next to him and keeping him warm.

After a few moments, Jeongguk was joining him, immediately bringing warmth to Yoongi’s skin. It made him shuffle closer, Jeongguk pulling him almost on top of his chest. It was a familiar place, and Yoongi was happy to just let himself relax, but the deep breath Jeongguk released made him tense.
“We need to talk about what happened,” the younger said, and Yoongi was happy he couldn’t see Jeongguk’s face from where he was lying, the wince that crossed over his features.

Yoongi didn’t want to talk about it, Yoongi had no clue what happened, what the cause of his weird fuzziness was. It could have been anything, from something in his head, to a drug, to even some sort of illness. He was clueless, and he knew Jeongguk would hate the fact he didn’t know why Yoongi felt the way he did, wouldn’t relax properly until he found an answer.

“What?” Yoongi tried to feign confusion, but Jeongguk could see right through him, just like always.

“You know what,” he sighed, and Yoongi could feel his frown in his words. “After the assassination attempt, when you were out of things.”

“Oh,” Yoongi breathed, closing his eyes and waiting.

There was silence for a moment, and Yoongi could hear the cogs and gears turning in Jeongguk’s mind. He was probably thinking of the best way to talk about the subject, but Yoongi knew there was no correct way for Jeongguk to ask. After all, everyone knew Yoongi was Jeongguk’s biggest weakness, and the younger hated the idea of Yoongi being in any sort of trouble.

“What happened?” Jeongguk eventually asked, bringing a hand down to pass through Yoongi’s hair.

“I… I don’t know,” Yoongi stammered.

The most frustrating thing was that he really just didn’t know what to say. He had no idea what happened, couldn’t pin point it down to a single variable. He wanted to be able to tell Jeongguk what to do, or what to solve, or whatever the younger wanted to do to defend Yoongi’s honour, but ultimately he had nothing to tell him. His mind was completely blank, and that made him even more agitated than before.

“Do you remember what happened?” Jeongguk pressed, and Yoongi shifted in his place.
“I’m not sure,” he said and he knew the annoyance was slipping into his tone, knew Jeongguk would be able to notice it.

“Yoongi, I need you to help me here,” the younger exclaimed, his own annoyance dripping from every word, and it made something small snap within Yoongi’s chest.

“I said I don’t know what happened! Just drop it.”

Yoongi knew he was probably being unreasonable, but he didn’t care. Jeongguk had every right to worry, but if Yoongi said he had no clue what happened then that meant he had no clue. Truthfully, the matter was concerning Yoongi more than he was letting on, and deep down he hoped Jeongguk would ignore his words, but the younger’s pressing persistence was stressing him out. What if there really was something wrong? He could be dying, or anything of the sort and he would have no clue. Yoongi would be lying if he said he was totally calm about the situation.

“I can’t drop it, because what if it happens again?” Jeongguk huffed, and secretly Yoongi was grateful the younger didn’t listen, but he wasn’t about to let that show. “You didn’t see yourself, you were so… distant, Yoongi, it was scary,” he admitted and the words were weaker than before, the fight having faded from his tone.

‘It was scary’. Yoongi felt those words sink into his skin, making a chill follow the nerves in his back. If Jeongguk was scared, then that made Yoongi feel terrified. He didn’t think it was that bad, didn’t think he had acted in a way so different that Jeongguk was actually scared. It made him panic, feeling his defences emerge because he didn’t want to be the reason Jeongguk was fearful, didn’t want to be a cause of even more paranoia.

“You’re just worried I’m going insane,” Yoongi laughed emptily, trying to hide all his concern, because what if he was dying? What then?

“Of course not, love,” Jeongguk rushed, and Yoongi felt even worse when he saw the guilt on Jeongguk’s face at Yoongi’s accusation. He felt bad, but he wasn’t about to tell Jeongguk that he was only acting that way because he was worried about effecting the younger. “Not at all, I just don’t want you to get hurt, that’s it,” he explained, lowering his voice to a murmur at an attempt to soothe the tension in the room.

“Is it?” Yoongi felt fall from his mouth, regretting the words as soon as he said them. He didn’t really think Jeongguk was accusing him of madness, but he couldn’t help the defensive words, because that was the only defence mechanism that Yoongi had.
The bitter words made Jeongguk move, gently handling Yoongi until they could look each other in
the eye, but Yoongi couldn’t stand to maintain the contact. Jeongguk had other ideas, pulling
Yoongi closer until their foreheads were touching, nowhere to look but at Jeongguk himself. It
almost felt like a trap, but Yoongi was also relieved, relieved Jeongguk wouldn’t just let Yoongi
drop the situation. He wanted to know what was happening, and this conversation was one of the
steps towards an answer.

“Yoongi, I promise you,” Jeongguk emphasised, not letting the elder move away. “I don’t think
you’re going mad, insane, anything. I just love you, and want to protect you, and seeing you like
that… I had no clue what to do.”

And Yoongi could see a wetness building behind Jeongguk’s eyelids, the heartbreaking tears that
were only there when the younger was so worried he was overwhelmed, and it made Yoongi want
to cry too. He did this, he made Jeongguk feel like he had no clue what was going on, no answers to
the questions he was dying to know the explanation of. When the younger’s first tear fell Yoongi
felt his own follow, Jeongguk pulling Yoongi’s head into the crook of his neck.

“I can’t help; I don’t know what happened,” Yoongi almost sobbed, feeling useless because he
didn’t know, he didn’t know a single thing that could possibly explain what was happening.

“Did you take anything to eat which was out of the ordinary? Any pills or medicines?” Jeongguk
pressed again, and there was a certain desperation in his words, Yoongi feeling even worse when
he still couldn’t answer.

“I don’t… I don’t think so?” He said as he tried to recall his morning again and again, but nothing
new was popping into his mind, nothing was explaining anything.

“I want you to really think, okay love?”

“I only ate a couple bites of an apple, Jeongguk,” Yoongi answered, certain he sounded just as
desperate as the younger.

“Are you sure?” Jeongguk checked again, and it made another tick in his chest tick, something
larger becoming closer and closer to snapping.

“Yes!” Yoongi exclaimed, bordering on shouting. He hated shouting, hated hearing it, hated doing
it himself, but Jeongguk’s pressing was becoming more and more stressful when Yoongi had no answers to give.

There was a beat of silence, Jeongguk just looking into Yoongi’s eyes before he sighed, pulling him once more to lay his head in the space between Jeongguk’s neck and shoulder. It was a position that normally never failed to get Yoongi to calm down, and it wasn’t failing this time, the tension leaking out of his body and evaporating into the air. He was silly to be so irritable, because Jeongguk was going through exactly the same thing as he was. He needed to just get a grip on his emotions.

“I’ve arranged for you to just get some blood tests done, okay?” Jeongguk told him as the silence calmed into something more relaxed, and Yoongi thought over the words.

“Jeongguk, I really think this is an overreaction,” he muttered, but there was no fight left in his tone, nothing that made Yoongi feel like his argument was trying to overpower the younger.

“Just… please, for me?” Jeongguk asked, and it was the pure, unmistakable pain in the words, the once again present desperation that made Yoongi finally agree.

“Fine, but I want Seokjin to take the sample,” Yoongi requested, closing his eyes and feeling Jeongguk’s chest rise and fall as he laughed quietly, the movement even more calming in a strange way.

“Of course love, whoever you want,” Jeongguk murmured, moving a hand to rub the back of Yoongi’s neck, lightly untangling the two necklaces that the elder hadn’t been bothered to remove.

“And I want you to buy me lamb skewers for it,” Yoongi continued, a yawn fighting through the last words but Jeongguk must have still heard them, the huff that was released from his mouth tickling Yoongi’s ear.

“Anything.”

“And you have to hold my hand.”

“I would happily hold your hand forever.”
Let me remind people again that I'm rewriting bits of the first story, so more information may be added and the word count is extended.
“Yoongi, I need you to stop moving,” Seokjin repeated for what felt like the hundredth time, pulling Yoongi’s hand away from where it was trying to cover his wrist.

The eldest hadn’t even put the needle into the chosen vein yet, but Yoongi wanted to back out. He hated having to expose his arms, specifically the marred skin on the inside of his wrists. Despite the scarring being old, over a few years old by now, Yoongi didn’t feel comfortable when about five guards were in the room with them. He knew they weren’t looking, but the ghosts of glances were making him feel more and more paranoid, constantly shifting until Jeongguk reached over to take his hand.

Like always, Jeongguk knew exactly what Yoongi was thinking, moving until the guards’ view was blocked by his body. It made him feel slightly better, but the scarring was still visible to Yoongi himself, and so the thought was still nagging him in the back of his mind. It was the reason he wore so many bracelets, the silver taking all the attention from the skin, but he had forgotten to put them on this morning and Seokjin needed access to his arm. Overall, it was a pretty unavoidable situation.

“Do you want me to get you something to cover them with?” Jeongguk asked quietly, watching Seokjin prepare a needle.

“If you let go of my hand I’ll kill you,” Yoongi muttered in response, but the words held no threat.

He had felt more tired than usual this morning, but Jeongguk had given him no time to get some of his blessed coffee from the cupboard, immediately pulling him to where Seokjin was waiting in the kitchen. Perhaps it wasn’t the most hygienic location, but the counters were sterilised and the instruments being used were double checked. Yoongi knew the reason they weren’t going out the house to a place like the hospital wing of their company building was because everyone was too paranoid, which was completely understandable. After two attempts, it was seeming less like a coincidence and more like a direct threat, and nobody wanted to test the boundaries.

“Alright, sweetheart, I’m just going to take the sample now, okay?” Seokjin checked as he positioned the needle close to the inside of Yoongi’s elbow.

Yoongi nodded, taking a shaking breath and instantly Jin was carefully pushing the needle through his skin, Yoongi wincing at the sensation. Jeongguk squeezed his hand, distracting Yoongi from what the eldest was doing.
“I was thinking that you shouldn’t eat or drink anything you normally do,” Jeongguk mused, Yoongi raising his eyebrows. “Well, it seems they’re targeting you specifically if this is something to do with what you ingest, and so it would be safer,” he explained, and Yoongi huffed out a breath.

“But I want my coffee,” he winced, Seokjin tutting as he began to shift his arm.

He muttered an apology, immediately focusing back on Jeongguk and nodding his agreement with the younger’s plan, feeling slightly better when Jeongguk looked so happy at the decision, his signature bunny grin appearing. If it would make his boyfriend feel better, Yoongi was happy to sacrifice even his favourite coffee, despite the fact he was fairly certain that at this point he was addicted. Anything was worth that smile.

“Well, that’s that done,” Seokjin hummed, removing the needle from Yoongi’s arm as soon as he had what he needed.

Yoongi watched him put a small pink plaster over the pinprick, a little droplet of blood being squished and leaving a small mark visible through the coloured plastic. Immediately, Jeongguk offered Yoongi the hoodie the younger had been wearing, and Yoongi gratefully pulled it on, happy to cover his wrists again.

“Love you,” he muttered, leaving the hoodie unzipped at the front but pulling the two sides together, wrapping it around himself almost like a blanket.

Jeongguk’s massive clothes often felt like a shield, the items that were already baggy on the younger practically swamping Yoongi. It was nice, and it made him feel even more protected from the world despite knowing the fabric would do nothing to help him in most situations, especially in situations involving assassins and weapons.

“Oh, JK, while we’re here,” Seokjin called, poking his head around the wall he had passed behind to be able to dispose of the needle in the bin. “Do you want me to check over your back again?”

Yoongi watched him hesitate, gaze wandering from Seokjin to Yoongi, seeming unsure. The emotions behind his eyes reflected unease, and Yoongi was pretty sure he knew the reason why. Since the bullet injury, Jeongguk had made an effort to almost hide the marks left behind from the wound from Yoongi, always trying to change with the elder in front of him, or trying to not show his back to him when his shirt was off. At first, Yoongi had been confused, but he was becoming more and more sure Jeongguk either thought he would panic, or he thought Yoongi wouldn’t like
the sight of his vulnerability.

At first it had hurt, the idea that Jeongguk felt he couldn’t show his weaknesses to Yoongi, but now he felt he understood better. It was probably the same as the way Yoongi didn’t like showing Jeongguk his scars, the ones on his wrists, the ones on his thighs. Despite initial reluctance, Yoongi now didn’t care so much if the younger saw them, only feeling uncomfortable with anyone else. He could relate with the thought of Jeongguk feeling like the scarring was ugly, and Yoongi wasn’t about to pressure him into doing something he didn’t want to do.

It strangely was only the sight of the marking that Jeongguk didn’t want him to see. He didn’t seem uncomfortable when Yoongi traced his fingers over the raised skin when they were hugging, or lying in bed together with just the blankets covering them. In fact, Jeongguk seemed to relax when Yoongi lightly followed the scarring with his fingertips, but the same emotions weren’t shared by the elder seeing it with his eyes, not just touch.

“I can just face your front, if you don’t want me seeing,” Yoongi murmured, squeezing Jeongguk’s hand as he looked up at him. “Or I could go outside.”

Jeongguk hesitated, his tongue pressing against the inside of his cheek as it did when he was thinking, or annoyed, but in this case the former. He wasn’t letting his glance fall anywhere near the elder, sight seeming to be completely fixed on the floor, or darting to look at where Seokjin was standing just by the counter. Yoongi could almost hear the thoughts bouncing around his head, every negative and positive being weighed over and over again.

“That would be unfair to you,” he said slowly, words sounding just as hesitant as Jeongguk looked, still refusing to meet Yoongi’s eyes.

“Where’d you get that idea?” Yoongi said softly, moving one of his hands to pull Jeongguk down by his neck, playing gently with the hair which was getting longer than normal at the back, something Yoongi was strangely fond of.

“You show me everything,” Jeongguk said after a moment of hesitation, something Yoongi wasn’t used to when it came to the younger. “And I can’t face the idea of you seeing some scarring on my back,” he laughed humorously, and it made Yoongi frown, bringing his thumbs to stroke over Jeongguk’s cheekbones.

“It’s important, Guk, and I’m not hurt or anything,” he assured him, and Jeongguk finally met his eyes.
Yoongi wasn’t used to the vulnerability and uncertainty in his boyfriend’s look, but he didn’t let that faze him. It was unfair that Jeongguk cared so much about Yoongi’s comfort, and gave almost no second thought to his own. It was often Jeongguk’s selflessness that was one of the root causes of Yoongi’s concern, because he knew that Jeongguk wouldn’t even hesitate before putting Yoongi before himself, and that could cause problems, just like the bullet that had caused the scarring in the first place.

“You’re sure?” Jeongguk checked, and it made something seem to throb in Yoongi’s chest because he should be asking that, not Jeongguk.

“Definite, do you want me to leave?” Yoongi said, making sure the words were clear enough that Jeongguk got the message he had a choice, that he wasn’t obliged to say a specific answer to everything.

“No,” Jeongguk said immediately, and Yoongi could see his determination in his expression, how sure he was of the answer. “No, um, just sit there, in front of me,” he explained, pointing to the chair the younger had sat in before when Yoongi was the one being the patient.

Yoongi nodded, sitting down where directed and waiting for Jeongguk to move, only hesitating for a short second before pulling his shirt over his head, revealing honey skin. There were scars on Jeongguk’s front, nothing as bad as the one on his back, but still there, littered amongst his defined muscles which Yoongi refused to obsess over when his parent was in the room with them. That not only would be awkward for Yoongi, but every single person in the premises, even counting the guards.

“Okay, JK,” Seokjin exclaimed, walking over to where the couple was situated. “To the doctor’s chair we go!” He cheered, making Jeongguk huff as he sat in the directed chair. “I should get a lab coat,” Jin mused as he began to examine the skin, Jeongguk only showing mild discomfort. “I’d look hot in a lab coat, Joon would love it.”

“Jin, too much information,” Yoongi coughed, and he knew he looked as disgusted as Jeongguk did, Seokjin just laughing at their reaction.

“Oh, so you’re allowed to roam the house with hickeys all up your neck but I can’t talk about how I’d be a really hot doctor?” He cried out, making both Jeongguk and Yoongi blush simultaneously, the red painting their cheeks to match.
“Just-shut up!” Yoongi managed to stutter, making Seokjin laugh even louder, the distinct sound making Yoongi smile.

As it turned out, Jeongguk’s back was apparently healing beautifully, the scarring not as bad as it could have been and the tissue still having almost completely all the original mobility. That was a big thing people had been worried about, that there would be some sort of permanent damage to the shoulder which could cause Jeongguk to be unable to do things like fire a gun, or perform certain actions. Hearing it was okay was a relief, not only for Jeongguk but for everyone else. It would have been tough to tell the youngest that he couldn’t join some of the family missions despite him wanting to, and as much as Yoongi would love having him home with him all the time, he would only want it to be on Jeongguk’s own choice, and not being forced by some sort of stupid bullet wound.

All too soon, the family was heading off to various meetings and jobs out of the house, leaving Yoongi alone with the guards. It was becoming a common occurrence, and Yoongi was beginning to become slightly bored of repeated books and movies, his piano and music room being the only saviour. He had written many songs by now in the time he had to himself, lyrics and melodies all stored on his computer and notebooks, and found himself becoming more and more involved in the fascination he had with music just last year, before the stress of school and what happened with Zack Goldcerd made his life pivot.

It was nice to become reobsessed with his old hobby, and he knew Jeongguk was happy Yoongi had reignited his passion. It was a good distraction, and a good way for Yoongi to feel like he was being productive, eager to play Namjoon his songs. Hoseok had also become more interested in music, Yoongi helping him to make new beats for him to dance to, or simply just for fun.

But even though he was only just recently getting back into his hobby, he was already experiencing bouts of writer’s block, days where he was just listening to the same melody on loop. Jeongguk always teased his pout when he came home from work, school having ended a few weeks ago (Yoongi hadn’t noticed until he became confused as to why everyone was at home so much, and Jeongguk explained that it was the last day a while ago with a laugh), when Yoongi was puzzled, trying every different thing until he wanted to just lie on the floor and sleep. He had to regain his skill back to where it was before, but even in the sort time he felt himself improving more and more.

But this was one of the days when Yoongi had no clue what he was doing, staring blankly at a screen as he played with the knife strapped on his forearm. Jeongguk had insisted that he kept both of his knives on him at all times, strapped onto his forearms which was an easily accessible place while wearing one of Jeongguk’s massive hoodies. It was the younger being paranoid after the assassin’s attempt, the same paranoia which led to Jeongguk insisting Yoongi only ate and drank things that definitely belonged only to Jeongguk, with Namjoon’s coffee added in. Perhaps it was overkill, but Yoongi appreciated his worry.
Giving up, he sighed, pushing the office chair away from the desk and pulling himself to his feet, slowly wandering to the ajar door. He wanted to find something to do that wasn’t music, but his mind was blank, and he was regretting not having planned an alternative activity beforehand. In future, he should find a method to persuade someone to stay at home with him, maybe even trying to get Jeongguk to let him tag along with the younger to work (yeah, right).

Deciding to try and find Keopi to keep him company, Yoongi searched the whole house, but he couldn’t find her anywhere. He huffed as he marched to the kitchen, sliding on some of Namjoon’s shoes which lay in a messy heap at the back door. They were only a size too big, so Yoongi had no trouble when he walked to the back door, looking around to check for guards before grabbing the key on the side, unlocking it and passing through without making a sound.

He managed to lose the guards somewhere near to Namjoon and Seokjin’s study, and he was hoping they wouldn’t notice him leaving. As much as he appreciated the extra eyes and protection, Yoongi felt trapped with all the people watching him, a bubble of anxiety ready to pop with the constant surveillance. He had never done well with being watched, and the guards were just always there. Yoongi needed to be alone for a bit, even if he knew Namjoon and Seokjin and Jeongguk would be disappointed if they found out.

“Keopi?” He called quietly, trying not to alert the guards positioned around the garden, some already looking in his direction.

When no cat appeared, he huffed, wandering further on the lawn to the edge of the grass, peering into the bushes which lay around the area. As it turned out, trying to find a brown cat in an area of shaded vegetation was harder than it sounded, and Yoongi was sure even if he did see Keopi he wouldn’t even notice her, even her green eyes would fade into the matching leaves.

As he moved to the next line of foliage, he almost froze as he heard a distinct click from somewhere in front of him, the safety coming off a gun. Trying to mask his panic as much as possible, he peered into the bushes which sounded to be right next to the gun, looking through the darkness until his eyes caught the sight of black fabric. It was becoming more and more difficult to seem nonchalant as an assassin was positioned right next to him, but he managed to calmly turn away, walking slowly and subtly grasping a knife until he made up his mind.

Before a second had passed he turned, trying with all his might to remember exactly where the assassin was as he threw his knife, a pained shout coming from the bushes as well as the sound of metal hitting the ground. Just to be sure, Yoongi pulled the second knife from its holster, throwing it at almost the same place and hearing another shout.

He could hear guards from around the garden starting to run towards where he was, but Yoongi was quicker, dashing towards where the man was hiding in the bushes and pulling a branch out of
the way, revealing the hidden assassin. Yoongi’s two knives were sticking out of their body, one probably bursting a lung and the other probably in his stomach, the silver handles being the only thing visible from outside the body.

By now Yoongi was panicking, and he didn’t even think as he grabbed the handle of one of the knives, vision white as he pulled it out and stabbed it down again and again, dragging the metal through the man’s figure until the white was red, the blood the only thing he could focus on in front of him. The shouts and screams had stopped by now, and Yoongi couldn’t think about how long he had spent carving into the assassin’s body before he felt a hand on his shoulder.

Without thinking, he spun around and tried to swipe his knife at the person who touched him, pulling the other knife from the body behind him to try and defend himself from the new threat. There were shouts from in front of him, but Yoongi’s breathing had been becoming progressively faster and faster as he tried to keep his stance, his head spinning from the lack of oxygen.

Yoongi could do nothing as his body swayed, hands loosening the grip on the knives and allowing them to drop to the floor, almost falling after them if it wasn’t for the hands catching him. Instinctively, Yoongi tried to fight off the people around him, tried to escape their grasp until they let go, leaving him gasping on the floor and probably getting mud over his clothes.

The thought which came to mind as he was coughing and heaving through gasps for air was that the fuzziness definitely wasn’t psychological, because it wasn’t here now as Yoongi lay on the floor, feeling the assassin’s blood on his skin and hearing the shouts of guards around him. After a while, even those sensations faded, and Yoongi found the throbbing between his ears to be the only thing he could focus on, everything else a blur around him.

After what felt like forever, Yoongi felt something being pressed up against his ear, something like glass, and it made him panic and struggle even more before a voice pierced through the panic. At first, he couldn’t make out anything the words were saying, but Jeongguk’s voice always made his mind clear up even just a fraction, letting him focus on something that wasn’t his racing pulse.

“Yoongi, Yoongi, love,” he called, and Yoongi tried to gasp out a poor attempt of his name. “No, don’t try to speak, just listen,” Jeongguk told him, his low tone already working like a sedative. “Just listen.”

Even though Yoongi knew Jeongguk’s voice on its own wasn’t enough, it was making Yoongi focus on something, helping him to pinpoint a certain sound to pay attention to. Jeongguk was amazing at hiding his emotions in his voice when he needed to, and despite the fact Yoongi knew the younger was probably panicking himself his voice didn’t give it away. It was something Yoongi used to ground himself, listening to every word like it was a religious text in a church.
“Hey, love, I’m on my way,” Jeongguk told him, and Yoongi could hear the car’s engine in the background, the driver sounding like they were going much faster than the speed limit. “I’ll be there really soon, okay? You’re doing so well, love, so well,” he reassured him, the words helping to slow Yoongi’s gasps, stop the coughs and the painful attempts his body was making to be sick.

“Gukkie, Gukkie,” Yoongi managed to stammer, and he heard Jeongguk encouraging him on the other end of the call, murmuring compliments.

By now Yoongi was holding the phone in his tightest grip and keeping it permanently attached to his ear, vision clearer but still unable to focus on a single point, eyes darting around the space and not fixing onto anything in particular. It was frustrating, but it was already so much better than how he felt before, the pounding in his head continuing at a much lower volume than previously.

“You’re doing so well, darling, so good,” Jeongguk promised, and Yoongi heard the sound of the engine cut off in the background, and it almost made him sob. “I’m just coming right now, just listen to my voice, you can do it.”

The sight of Jeongguk running across the grass to reach where Yoongi was lying felt like a blessing, his figure coming nearer and nearer. It made a long suppressed sob fall from between Yoongi’s lips, tears falling more in relief than any other emotion, the guards backing away just as Jeongguk fell to his knees next to Yoongi’s head. The sharp contact to the joints must have hurt, but Jeongguk didn’t even hesitate in any sort of pain as he quickly examined the elder, checking for any sort of injury or outward issue.

Gently, the younger extracted the phone from Yoongi’s iron grip which held it against his ear, handing it to the closest standing person without even looking at the recipient, all focus fixed on the elder in front of him. Yoongi just felt so relieved, chest feeling less like it was full of bricks and more like a normal body, a normal heartbeat and pulse echoing in his ears.

“How’s the blood yours?” He heard Jeongguk ask, hands hovering over Yoongi’s body and barely touching him.

The question made Yoongi think, because he couldn’t quite remember whether he had hurt himself at all. Had the assassin managed to? He didn’t think so, couldn’t feel anything that felt like a wound, but his mind was in no condition to think properly, especially in regards to such an important question.
He couldn’t stop the distressed sound which came from his mouth, in confusion and disagreement with the fact that Jeongguk still hadn’t properly touched him. It made the younger gently hush him, finally placing his hands on Yoongi’s cheeks, caressing the skin that felt wet. Why did it feel wet? Yoongi was sure he wasn’t crying, and he was sure it hadn’t rained, so how was there liquid on his skin?

“Do you hurt anywhere?” Jeongguk clarified, making Yoongi shake his head. “Okay, you’re doing so well,” he breathed, before gently pulling Yoongi into his arms.

Yoongi felt his mind settle almost as soon as he was cradled to Jeongguk’s chest, his heart finally deciding that it was safe to slow down. The throbbing he could hear under the younger’s own skin and clothes was as soothing as any lullaby Jeongguk could sing, the rhythm eventually causing Yoongi’s own heartbeat to match. Jeongguk stayed in the same place, just holding Yoongi and Yoongi was grateful, the younger just letting him completely relax.

When he thought he might be about to fall asleep, he felt Jeongguk stand, holding Yoongi like he weighed nothing more than a feather pillow. One hand under his knees, the other cradling his shoulders, as strong as any expensive building foundations. Jeongguk was a grounding point, something to tether Yoongi to Earth. The younger’s voice made his chest vibrate, the barely there movement and sound even more soothing when added to Jeongguk’s presence itself, and it made Yoongi feel better than he had all day. He wasn’t tired, but was just happy relaxing where he was, eyes still open but focused on the collar of Jeongguk’s shirt, how it contrasted against the skin.

“How did this happen?” Jeongguk asked the guards in a cold, demanding tone, restrained wrath painted all over the words.

There was silence, until one of the older looking workers spoke up. Yoongi looked over to where he was, and surveyed his emotionless face, the flash of regret in his eyes like the lasting aftertaste of a strong meal. He looked to be slightly distressed, and Yoongi didn’t blame him. An angry Jeongguk was an intimidating Jeongguk, and Yoongi was so happy he knew his boyfriend would do nothing to hurt him.

“He managed to evade his personal bodyguards,” the man said, not fully meeting Jeongguk’s eyes. “And the assassin was undetected,” he added with a small swallow, now looking more and more uncomfortable.

“Did no one think to stop him from going into the garden, or to send him back inside once he was here?” Jeongguk asked, but Yoongi could tell it wasn’t a question.
Jeongguk was angry, and despite it not even being directed at Yoongi it made him feel slightly more on edge. The younger seemed to notice this, and pulled his arms up slightly to allow Yoongi to hide his face in his neck, the sweet smell of Jeongguk’s cologne mixing with fabric softener. It was like a drug, immediately making Yoongi comfortable again, paying no attention to the waves of heat coming from his boyfriend.

“I’m sorry sir, we just assumed–” spoke up the guard again, but the voice stopped mid sentence, and Yoongi could almost imagine the glare Jeongguk had fixed on the poor soul.

“Well evidently you assumed wrong,” Jeongguk almost growled, voice cutting sharp as a knife. It almost made Yoongi tense again until the younger gently squeezed him with his fingers in comfort, erasing any worry from Yoongi’s mind. “You’re all dismissed to partake in more mandatory training and to be reminded of your job descriptions,” he informed the group of guards coldly, none of them daring to argue.

“Yes sir, of course,” the man from before answered, looking like he highly regretted his choice to become the spokesperson of the crowd of regretful looking workers.

“I don’t want to see any of you again until you have fulfilled at least a month’s worth of extra education.” Jeongguk continued, voice authoritative and leaving no room for debate. “Tell my parents why I made this decision and the errors you all made.”

“Yes sir,” the whole group seemed to answer this time, although they seemed to hesitate after they agreed to the terms, and Yoongi felt Jeongguk huff.

“Then go,” the younger commanded, and the order was followed by the guards hastily moving back in the direction of the house, surely to wait at the front door until Namjoon and Seokjin eventually get home to explain the situation, and until their replacements arrived.

As soon as the guards’ footsteps became silent, far enough away that even the hard, solid soles of their shoes were not able to be heard on the ground, Yoongi felt Jeongguk relax. It was in little tells, like how his face softened, shoulders dropped lower by a millimetre, the hands holding Yoongi becoming more tender than anything else. Yoongi picked up his head, and Jeongguk’s eyes met him halfway, gliding over the elder’s face.

“How are you feeling?” He asked, gently leaning forward to press a kiss at the corner of Yoongi’s mouth, a light brush of his lips.
“I don’t know,” Yoongi murmured in response, closing his eyes as he let his head fall back to the crook of Jeongguk’s neck, his blazer’s padding on the shoulder acting like a pillow.

Jeongguk hummed, starting to walk back to the house, Yoongi not even realising when the younger’s personal guards had made an appearance to surround them in a perfect formation. He said nothing for a moment, just enjoying the silence, until Jeongguk moved his head to peer down at Yoongi, a question written over his face.

“Did you feel zoned out?” He asked, and suddenly the conversation had a much more serious undertone, the inquiry holding the weight of a solid block of lead.

Yoongi thought back as well as he could to the events that had just happened, tried to recount the feelings he had running through his body, and the only thing he could produce was the memory of panic. He hadn’t felt fuzzy like before, hadn’t been able to escape the promised anxiety from the situation, which meant it most likely wasn’t psychological. That was a hard fact to process, because what could it be now? It was getting narrower and narrower, and Yoongi didn’t want to think of the possibilities of what the cause could be. A drug?

“No, I just panicked,” Yoongi told Jeongguk honestly, and he felt the younger pause in his slow steps, the signs of a mix of confusion, worry and agitation appearing all over his body.

Yoongi didn’t know what to say as Jeongguk’s muscles tensed in his arms, fingers lightly squeezing rhythmically. He was as confused as everyone else, and he had as many answers about the situation as Jeongguk, which meant he had almost next to none. It was frightening, but Yoongi was too emotionally fatigued to allow himself to dwell on the situation, still staying silent as Jeongguk resumed his pace.

“Let’s clean you up, shall we?” the younger muttered, and Yoongi did no more than nod his head in agreement.

The constant sway of Jeongguk’s arms was making Yoongi feel like falling asleep despite the fact he hadn’t even felt tired, body automatically recognising Jeongguk as somewhere safe, as somewhere he could be completely relaxed. It was a nice journey, the quietness helping Yoongi to keep a hold on his surroundings, stay aware of everything that was happening. He found himself tracing the patterns of the wallpaper as Jeongguk carried him past, counting the amount of pictures hanging upon the red and cream coloured coverings.

Jeongguk opened the bathroom door without having to put Yoongi on the floor and gently pushed his way inside, a guard helpfully pulling the hanging light switch until it clicked and the room was
illuminated in a soft yellow glow, making it look even more inviting. Yoongi could tell nobody had used this particular bathroom all day, the pastel blue stain from his bath bomb last night still lingering on the white porcelain tub.

As gently as physically possible, Jeongguk deposited him to sit on the side of the counter, ensuring Yoongi was completely balanced and stable before moving to the door, pulling it shut and twisting the golden lock, checking the handle once before he was satisfied that it was completely closed. Yoongi knew Jeongguk would be insanely protective if a guard accidentally entered the room whilst the elder was naked in the bath, and it was better to avoid that situation all together.

Still saying nothing, Jeongguk wandered over to the side of the tub, quietly putting the plug into the drain before turning the taps, double checking the water temperature and tweaking it until he deemed it perfect. Yoongi had every faith in Jeongguk’s judgement skills, so he just watched as the younger gathered soft towels to hang on the radiator and different soaps to leave just on the side of the bath, choosing his own shampoo and conditioner for Yoongi to use.

Eventually, the younger seemed to decide all was now fully prepared, so he turned back to head towards Yoongi. Jeongguk stopped just before the counter, standing comfortably between Yoongi’s thighs, and the smaller couldn’t help but close his eyes as Jeongguk’s hands moved to caress the jean covered skin, nails tracing patterns on the fabric. It was so soft, so relaxing, like everything Jeongguk did with him, and Yoongi was thankful for the atmosphere of nothing but comfort, contentment.

“I’ll get you out of these clothes, okay?” Jeongguk asked, waiting for Yoongi to nod before he carefully pulled him off the side to stand on the floor, feet feeling weird against the ground when he realised he was still wearing shoes.

For a minute, Yoongi imagined the look on Seokjin’s and Hoseok’s faces if they were to see the sight of Yoongi wearing shoes in the house, the general rule being that outdoor footwear was only allowed inside on formal occasions, but a reminder of the situation made him reconsider their reactions. They probably wouldn’t care, but that was due to a mix of worry and slight child favouritism, Yoongi sure he was the only one who could possibly get away with the offence.

As Jeongguk moved him slightly away from the counter, Yoongi couldn’t help but look into the mirror by habit, but the sight that greeted him made him stare. There was red all over his clothes, red staining the fabric, his skin, even smudges and splatters of it on his face. The blood must have been the assassin’s, and it made a weight drop from Yoongi’s throat to his stomach, trying to swallow around his dry mouth.

“Look over here,” Jeongguk persuaded, bringing a hand to Yoongi’s cheek to guide his eyesight back to meet the younger’s, a thumb moving gently across the skin on his face, probably
accidently picking up bloodstains.

Jeongguk’s eyes were as kind and enrapturing as always, and Yoongi felt his thoughts about the metallic stains fade away in an instant as Jeongguk’s doe gaze was staring back at him. It was reassuring, and it made Yoongi try to brave a small smile, Jeongguk returning the gesture with no hesitation.

As if he was unwrapping a collection of glass decorations, Jeongguk gently pulled his shirt off with all the care in the world, dabbing at Yoongi’s skin once or twice with the fabric at places where a pale colour was particularly hidden under red. It felt nice, to have Jeongguk pay him so much attention, even if Yoongi knew Jeongguk cared about him most in the whole entire world. It was reassuring to feel and experience the younger’s affection first hand, and Yoongi couldn’t help the small smile and soft gaze he surely was wearing, completely dedicating the look to his boyfriend.

The jeans were a tad bit trickier, the fabric refusing to peel off as easily as the top, but Jeongguk continued gently until all of Yoongi’s skin was uncovered, hues of red and copper brown painted over his body. It felt liberating to have all the layers off, less like his skin had thickened and become a thousand tonnes heavier, and Yoongi almost fell as he walked over to the bath, Jeongguk gently catching his body and baring his weight.

“Careful,” he hummed, helping Yoongi to sit in the bath before he crouched down at the side, already reaching for a soap to use to clean the elder.

Yoongi let himself just relax, closing his eyes and feeling familiar hands brush soapy bubbles over him, surely making the water around him bleed red. Surprisingly, the thought didn’t bother him as much as it probably should have, the use of so many bath bombs and coloured soaps making him used to water shining an unusual colour. It wouldn’t be the first time he had been in a red bath, but it was one of the first times the water had been this bright without the help of a crimson dye.

Jeongguk gently pushed him further under the water, letting Yoongi’s hair get wet before pulling him up and grabbing the floral shampoo Jeongguk loved so much off the side. The strands were slowly losing their colour, pink fading back into a blond with some dark roots showing, and Yoongi thought to remind himself that he needed it dyed again, probably keeping the same colour. He had become very fond of the pastel rose, and wanted to keep it for as long as possible before his hair was in such bad condition he needed to covert it back to black, but for now the strands were still soft enough to be considered alive.

“Let’s get you out,” Jeongguk murmured after he rinsed the matching conditioner from Yoongi’s hair, the elder nodding with a yawn before letting Jeongguk support him to stand, acting as a guide for Yoongi’s feet to find the floor.
The towel was fluffy, just the right temperature, and the warmth of the room made everything blur as Jeongguk carefully dried his body, pale skin finally its original colour. The bed was just as soft and comfortable, and Yoongi found himself drifting off to sleep almost as soon as his head rested on the pillow, Jeongguk singing a melody quietly just behind his ear.
Instead of feeling lethargic in the car like he normally did, all Yoongi could focus on was the repetitive sounds of the engine, of the tires on the road, the rhythmic clicking of Jeongguk checking his gun. Over and over, the same noises came and went like a loop, slowly driving Yoongi insane. There was the sound of the driver’s hands sliding across the leather every time he turned the steering wheel, the breaths of every person in the enclosed area, guards and family alike.

Trying to distract himself from the overwhelming sounds, Yoongi let his leg bounce up and down, relieving some of the stress built up in his body. He almost felt like he was vibrating, muscles tense and poised to move, even when he knew there was probably no immediate threat present at this second. It was just the apprehension of where they were going, what they were about to find out.

The assassination attempts had really left a mark on Yoongi’s mind that he was only now just recognising, double taking when a person dressed all in black passed, or automatically checking corners and entry points. Jeongguk had assured him that while the younger was there, not a single person would come even close to being able to enact the attempt to kill him, but it was still a lingering anxiety. His position in his family made him the perfect target, especially for someone like Jeongguk who had such an important role, and everyone was on edge just in case something happened.

Yoongi could probably count on his fingers and toes the amount of times he had been inside the family’s headquarters in the centre of the city. Normally, he was nowhere near the high profile building, staying at the house for any sort of meetings he used to attend, but desperate times call for desperate measures, in this case a fully equipped science lab. They were going to find out if anything incorrect had been in Yoongi’s system, the blood test results being affirmed today, Seokjin and Namjoon wanting to be in headquarters for double security.

At this point, they didn’t fully trust any of the workers around them, and it was just too high risk for someone in their family to act as a messenger between the base and the house, even if the result was negative. Yoongi knew that people would try and prevent them from finding the truth if they were somehow within the company, so it was just easier for everything to be contained in one secure room. If there was something wrong, then they somehow had to find out who put it there,
and why.

Namjoon was already at the lab, having completely oversee the process of blood testing the whole way through, watching to prevent any sort of tampering being done to Yoongi’s sample. The elder already knew some things about chemistry, Namjoon seeming to have studied everything at one point or another, so Yoongi was certain the watch was in trusted hands.

The nagging feeling in Yoongi’s head wasn’t letting him concentrate, the small little whispers in his brain not letting him decide whether it was better if they found something or not. On one hand, if there is a substance he had been taking, then they knew the cause of his weird feelings, the fuzzy mindlessness he had been subjected to. It would mean they would have to check through so many things, the food in the house, the water, anything Yoongi possibly could have interacted with that was contaminated. But on the other side, if nothing is found, then the situation becomes much more complex.

It has almost definitely been confirmed that the issue isn’t psychological. After the next attack, Yoongi had felt nothing but panic, and thus it was most likely not just his mind playing tricks on him. What else could it be? Yoongi dreaded the news it could be an illness, or something else just as life threatening they needed to combat. That would probably be the worst case scenario if he thought about it, because his protective family couldn’t shield him from some sort of disease, they would be able to do nothing but get Yoongi treatment. Yoongi would hate that after everything he went through, he could just die of natural causes and an illness nobody could prevent.

“Relax, it will be fine,” Jeongguk spoke up from where he was sat beside Yoongi, putting a warm hand over the still moving knee.

Yoongi stopped the motion and sighed, resting his head against Jeongguk’s shoulder. The younger was always comforting, but the idea that he would be helpless in a situation where Yoongi was naturally sick made him worried. Somehow, Jeongguk would find a way to blame himself even if the fault was all Yoongi’s. Even if it was Yoongi’s own body trying to kill him in the case of something like cancer, Jeongguk would still find something to take the blame for, still find a cause that made the younger responsible.

“All will be okay,” Jeongguk muttered, but Yoongi noticed he hadn’t put the gun down from where he was gripping it in his other hand, finger already on the trigger.

“We’re arriving in three minutes,” Seokjin told them from the passenger seat, making eye contact through the rear-view mirror.
His gaze looked determined, and Yoongi knew he was just as worried about the results as Yoongi and everyone else. It must be nerve wracking to have a child like Yoongi, sickly and needing constant help. Yoongi pitied him, wished he himself was a better person to help raise weight from his parent’s shoulders, but he knew it was hopeless. Even if he showed he could fight the whole world, Seokjin as well as Namjoon would still consider him someone to be looked after. It was the constant curse of that having been his label for almost three years.

The roads were flying by outside the window, and Yoongi was sure that if he checked he would see that the car’s speed was breaking multiple laws, but he didn’t worry about that. A driving ticket would be the last thing on his mind if he was dying, and he was sure his parents could manage to worm their way out of trouble, even if the fine was less than a dent on their bank accounts. Namjoon had a way with words, and Seokjin had a way with body language and emotion, and they were an unstoppable force that never met their immovable object.

A familiar corner of the road made Yoongi realise they were just now approaching the car park, Jeongguk squeezing his thigh before taking his hand away, once again checking the gun he was holding as well as the others littered over his body. It actually made Yoongi feel better, watching Jeongguk be so prepared for anything that could happen, confident that his boyfriend would never let him be in danger. It would also be especially dim-witted for someone to try something so close to the family’s headquarters, a suicide mission that Yoongi knew most people would be too cowardly to take.

There were probably over a hundred guards positioned around the area, the surrounding shops, services and companies all controlled by the Kim family. It was almost funny, how much power Namjoon and Seokjin had over an entire area of land, people happy to do their bidding with no explanation. They were like the kings of the modern day Earth, conquering more and more places until they had the world under their fingers, happy to mould it into whatever shape they wanted. It was no wonder people were so desperate to kill the prime family’s weakest link.

The car pulled to a stop outside the entrance of the main building, men and women dressed alike in black and white suits already exiting the bulletproof glass doorway, posture as straight as a ruler. The sheer amount of people also made Yoongi feel slightly safer, because nobody would try to target them when there were so many armed guards with guns ready to shoot, especially when there were even more people inside the actual building.

A man came forward and opened Seokjin’s door, bowing as the eldest gracefully exited the car to stand at the side of the road, waiting for the others to follow. The door on Jeongguk’s side was opened by another man, who copied the same bow as before, not making eye contact with the youngest as he clambered out the car, standing just a few meters away from Seokjin and waiting for Yoongi.

Staring at the open car door, Yoongi felt his heart freeze in his chest, the blood rushing through his
ears as loud as an aeroplane. He couldn’t get his body to move, even as people waited for him just outside the vehicle. There was a flashing warning sign in his head telling him not to go out, to stay where he knew it was safe.

His hesitation was ridiculous, because there was so much security around that not even a fly could touch him, but there was still something that made him uncertain, fearful. It must have been due to what happened, everything that happened. A nagging paranoia every time they were outside, in a new place, even when Jeongguk wasn’t right by his side. He hadn’t noticed it until now, the pressing sensation on his chest, the feeling of a thousand eyes fixed on the back of his head.

Jeongguk seemed to notice the anxiety behind Yoongi’s expression and he subtly drew forward, leaning his head and shoulders into the car and effectively blocking Yoongi off from the rest of the outside world. Immediately, Yoongi felt his heart almost return to normal, the younger blocking the sight of the pavement and buildings, all the guards and Seokjin waiting for them.

“Are you okay, love?” Jeongguk asked, a small frown on his face as he examined Yoongi’s expression, looking directly into his eyes.

Yoongi felt embarrassed by the question; because technically yes, everything was peachy, but the nagging in his mind made him shake his head, unable to even speak. There was a lump in his throat, not like he was about to cry but like he couldn’t physically make a sound, tongue refusing to move properly and feeling heavy in his mouth. He continued to shake his head as he looked down, Jeongguk’s eyes too genuine for him to tolerate, feeling the guilt at worrying the younger even more than normal also building up between his lips.

“C’mon, let’s get you out,” Jeongguk coaxed, pulling Yoongi forward by grasping at both his hands, leading him to the opening of the car door whilst trying to keep his body blocking the entrance for as long as possible.

He seemed to have understood the situation, because as soon as they were out of the car, Yoongi stumbling out the door as his limbs refused to function, Jeongguk pulled him as close to his side as possible. The arm around Yoongi’s waist was a welcome support, both keeping Yoongi feeling safe and helping him to stay on his own two feet, protected under Jeongguk’s watchful eyes.

There was still the lingering paranoia, but as Jeongguk tucked him under his arm he felt sheltered, Seokjin also moving to walk right next to him as they approached the building’s grand doorway. The guards moved with them, leaving no space for any sort of possible foreign attacker, the enclosed space for once making Yoongi feel better than worse, no panic building in his chest due to the crowd. It was probably because Yoongi recognised most of their faces, knew almost certainly that they were all as loyal to his parents as they could be, both socially and economically.
People were loyal to his parents not only because they paid a pretty amount, whoever said you couldn’t buy loyalty obviously wasn’t paying enough, but also because Namjoon and Seokjin were such genuine people that you would have to have no heart to betray them. Not only were they kind underneath all the needed intimidation, they were generous, happily donating money to charity or causes that needed extra funding. It was why their family was the media’s golden focus, all over the globe people loving every person.

As soon as they were through the door, Yoongi felt something calm down beneath his skin, the beating of his chest slowing and his mind allowing itself to slow. The sounds around him dulled, the footsteps on the hard floor no longer sounding like drums, the opening of the lift and the closing of doors all becoming muted. It was a relief, his mind thanking whoever would listen for the mercy on his ears, which no longer felt like they were trickling blood.

Jeongguk moved his arm from over Yoongi’s shoulder to his waist again, a comforting hand gripping onto his hip. It was both for security and for Jeongguk to lead Yoongi to where they were going; the labs which were slotted into the busy empire homed in the building. Despite having been here before, Yoongi wouldn’t be able to navigate himself to where they were meant to be going, only really knew where Namjoon and Seokjin’s offices were on the top floor.

They approached an escalator which was taking people underground, and Seokjin was the first to step onto the moving metal, most of the guards having stayed by the door. There was so much security in the building that a large personal guide wasn’t needed past the front doors, cameras and even more bodyguards posted in every corner of the building apart from Namjoon and Seokjin’s offices. They were private rooms, no cameras and guards inside, only a constant watch in place outside the entrances and CCTV on the windows. That had been a special request from the pair, the area wanted as a family safe environment, with no chance of surveillance.

As Yoongi followed Jeongguk onto the metal steps, he held on tight partially to the moving handle and partially onto the younger’s shoulder in front of him, the steps making Yoongi the perfect height to use it as a support. He didn’t like escalators for multiple reasons; the main being that if one person fell at the top, they would bring the whole row of people down, and Yoongi didn’t like the idea of falling onto the sharp steps below his feet. He didn’t understand how people could run up the wrong side like how he had seen Taehyung attempt, or how people could slide down the middle like Jimin had one time years ago when they needed to make a hasty escape from a shopping centre, avoiding all the fixed plastic signs and stop buttons.

For the whole decent, he gripped tightly onto the chosen supports, watching as the light in the area became more white and artificial than the gentle rays coming from the sun outside, there being no windows in the underground layers. The walls became plainer, less decorated, and Yoongi could see why he hadn’t been down here before now once they reached the bottom.
At the end of the corridor was a large metal door moulded into the wall, six guards positioned against the side of the space with guns held in their hands. It wasn’t the only doorway in the hall, but it was the most heavily guarded, the other regular entrances only having two people each, the doors themselves being wooden instead of the industrial metal of this one. Seokjin typed a code into a panel, and the door clicked open, two guards coming forward to push the metal panel inwards.

There was a sense of dread building in Yoongi’s head as the heavy door was opened fully, the artificial lights on the ceiling blindingly bright. It looked like something out of those dreadful horror movies Jeongguk and Namjoon watched together, and a chill was settling just beneath Yoongi’s skin, crawling uncomfortably around his body.

There was what seemed like hundreds of glass walled rooms positioned on each side of the wide hallway they had entered, the other three walls almost a glowing white, looking almost like a hospital. Inside the rooms where different people, all wearing bright white lab coats, each seeming to do different things within each unit, different machines and objects littered around. The first room Yoongi looking into almost made him freeze, eyes fixed on what was happening inside. There seemed to be a man cuffed to a chair, expression terrified as person wearing a lab coat approached him, pulling a trolley of tools to the side of where he was sitting. It made something in Yoongi’s stomach drop, nausea building in his abdomen as he watched a white covered arm move, a hand picking what looked like pliers from the metal table.

Before Yoongi saw what happened Jeongguk was stepping in front of the sight, blocking the elder’s view with his body as he coaxed him forward, Seokjin waiting for them further on beside a metal door. For a second, Yoongi tried to make eye contact with the youngest, but Jeongguk didn’t meet his gaze, still leading him along but this time not letting Yoongi’s eyes wander too far.

“What was that?” Yoongi asked quietly, only looking at the floor.

He didn’t want to see what else was happening around him, especially if it was along the same lines as the first sight. Yoongi had had no clue that people were being held literally right in the family headquarters, right where there were even non-criminal business meetings just above them. It seemed dangerous, wrong, and a sense of not-quite-right was lingering in the back of his mind, like a permanent itch.

“You have to understand, love,” Jeongguk said slowly, voice carefully emotionless. “That Namjoon and Seokjin didn’t just build an empire out of positivity and kindness,” he told him, seeming to consider each word.

“But that’s…” Yoongi started, but lost his words before he could say another word.
“It’s business, darling,” Jeongguk shrugged, fingers squeezing at Yoongi’s waist in an attempt to be comforting.

“It’s torture.”

“And that can’t be prevented,” Jeongguk said, trying to seem to reason with the elder. “You killed that man just the other day, and these people are much worse than he was.”

Yoongi didn’t have an answer to that. Jeongguk had a true point, that Yoongi had practically ripped a man apart just for an assassination attempt. He would be ignorant to think that killing was the worst thing people could do in their social ring, and he knew for a fact his parents often fought against people who were serial rapists, kidnappers and human traffickers, paedophiles. It was the majority of the criminal world, but that didn’t mean Yoongi agreed with them being tortured, especially here.

Seokjin waited until they were at the door until he turned to it, typing a code into a keypad, a small dot flashing green before he focused on multiple sensors on the wall. Jin placed a hand on a black panel, and another green light flashed before he moved his head to look directly into a camera, which also flashed green before the door clicked open.

The long security process seemed like overkill but Yoongi knew it was necessary. So many people would try and steal from them or infiltrate their company if the way into everything was easy, and Yoongi knew paranoia was never unreasonable in their line of work.

“The code changes daily, and is randomly created by Namjoon and Seokjin themselves, and they are the ones who choose to distribute it to people,” Jeongguk told him quietly, noticing Yoongi watching the process. “The panel,” he pointed to the black rectangle of glass, “works not only by handprint but by pulse as well, so you have to be alive. The other scanner not only looks at eyes, but at facial structure,” he finished murmuring, Yoongi nodding at the words.

Another long, white hallway lead them to another door, this time looking like some sort of plastic, less daunting than the thick metal they had passed through previously. A familiar bubble of anxiety was floating around his chest, but Jeongguk’s presence next to him was stopping it from popping, nerves on fire as Seokjin opened the door. There was no fancy code, or scanner, or anything of the sort, and Yoongi didn’t know whether that made him feel better or worse as the eldest pushed open the door.
The inside was just as bright white, but the room was immediately made less intense by the dimpled smile Namjoon sent their way from where he was sat at a desk, Seokjin returning the smile with one of his own as he went to greet his partner. Nobody else was in the room apart from a woman, who was scrolling through screens, lab coat pulled up to her elbows.

Jeongguk lead Yoongi to another seat, the chair looking far too comfortable to be in a place like this, fluffy, pale blue cushions lining the plastic base. It didn’t fit in at all with the atmosphere of the place, but Yoongi was grateful for it as he sank into the softness, letting himself relax. It almost felt like a sofa, and Yoongi knew if he wanted to he could easily fall asleep just where he was sat, but that wasn’t what he was here for.

Seeming to come to the same conclusion that they should start to discuss what they were here for, Namjoon cleared his throat, drawing everyone’s attention to him.

“Well, they found a foreign substance that would explain the, as you described it, ‘fuzziness’,,” he began, gathering together a few sheets of paper that were on the desk. “It’s called acepromazine, and it’s often used to sedate animals, too large of a dose being lethal.”

A sedative, that makes sense. It would explain the tiredness and zoning-out that Yoongi had experienced, and explained why he wouldn’t have noticed it. It was a common thing for Yoongi to feel lethargic and sleepy, so any sort of heightened feeling wouldn’t have been a warning sign to him, only something he would put down to his mental health, or what he did in the day, certainly not a drug.

“How would he have taken it?” Jeongguk asked, eyebrows furrowed and looking worried.

“Probably food, or a drink of some sort,” Namjoon explained, eyes darting over some of the typed notes in front of him. “You were lucky,” he mused, voice trailing off at the end until he looked up from the paper. “Because the would-be-assassin either misjudged the dose, or you didn’t ingest enough of the contaminated substance.”

A stroke of pure relief flooded into his head, making him almost high. He had been so lucky, and whether it was because of the assassin’s blunder or because of Yoongi’s rubbish appetite, something had saved him. Whatever it was, Yoongi found himself thanking the universe for the chance, thanking anybody who would listen for the luck in the low probability of the whole thing. Jeongguk and Seokjin seemed to share his relief, the latter letting out a breath of relief; the former taking Yoongi’s hand and kissing his knuckles, letting his lips linger on pale skin.

“So what’s going to happen now?” Yoongi questioned, voice much more breathy once he found
out he was no longer in trouble, at least in this aspect.

His head was almost spinning in euphoria, so many emotions flooding into his head that he couldn’t decide whether he wanted to laugh, cry, or kiss Jeongguk right there and then. The last probably wasn’t appropriate, but the other two were fighting with one another to try and make an appearance, and if he wasn’t careful he’ll be doing both in just a short amount of time.

“Well, you should be fine now because you haven’t had anything else that possibly could have been tampered with,” Namjoon started, and even more relief filled his mind as his health was confirmed to be stable. “I want you to continue to only eat new, packaged food directly from a mainstream shop until we find out who did it. Fortunately, as it turns out, Jimin had small cameras in all of the cupboards to try to find out who was eating all the food he was buying, and he is reviewing footage with Taehyung as we speak.”

Jimin’s cameras were something Yoongi actually knew about, because Jimin acted like he didn’t know it was always Jeongguk who was happily eating all the food the elder bought just to get on his nerves. It was something Yoongi had thought was stupid until now, but in this moment he had never been more grateful for the determined streak that ran through Jimin’s character.

“Hoseok is leading a team of employees to investigate the guards at the house and any links they could have to other organisations, as we suspect this is orchestrated by a larger organisation judging by the amount of attempts that have happened in such a short stretch of time. We should know who did it in a few hours,” Namjoon concluded, and the words echoed in Yoongi’s mind.

A few hours? They’d know the would-be-assassin, the identity of the traitor in just a few hours. Yoongi didn’t know how he felt, apprehension and nerves running through his head as well as the already present relief, creating an exotic cocktail of so many emotions. They might know which company was ordering strikes on Yoongi by the end of the day, would know who to take revenge on. The stones in his ribs were replaced with air almost lifting him off of his seat.

“And until then?” Jeongguk questioned, Yoongi’s hand still raised by his mouth, the younger occasionally pressing his lips onto skin again and again.

“Until then, Namjoon and I have a meeting upstairs we need to attend with a tech company which really couldn’t be rearranged, and you two,” Seokjin began, pointing a finger at the younger couple. “Are going to stay down here until we know exactly what’s going on,” he finished with a pointed look, raising a single eyebrow.

“Can’t we go upstairs?” Yoongi asked, trying not to complain but he didn’t really want to spend his
evening in an unfamiliar lab, even if Jeongguk was right next to him.

Namjoon and Seokjin exchanged a look, one which Yoongi didn’t understand the meaning of, faces not showing a single distinct emotion strong enough to read. His eyes darted to Jeongguk, who also looked at Namjoon and Seokjin with an equally blank expression. One of the younger’s hands was still lying on his gun, but Yoongi was happy to see that the safety was switched on. He didn’t understand why Jeongguk still seemed so on edge, them being in the most secure place Yoongi could even imagine, even if it wasn’t the most homely. It made Yoongi think the younger knew something he didn’t, was in on some sort of life-threatening secret, but it was impossible it could affect them _here_ of all places.

“Now that we know what is in your system,” Seokjin began, Namjoon nodding along with the words. “People may try to assassinate you now in order to just get the job done. We need you to stay in this _exact room_, because only a very limited amount of people can enter and Jeongguk can easily defend against anybody who somehow manages to enter,” he reasoned, and Yoongi was annoyed about how much sense the plan made.

It was very certainly possible that someone would try and rush to fulfil the needed actions once their plans were ruined, the window for a chance getting smaller and smaller with each passing day. Yoongi was sure if they didn’t catch the culprits tonight, Seokjin and Namjoon would just decide to hide their eldest away somewhere so safe that not even the greatest detective could find him. That isn’t what Yoongi wanted to happen, he treasured his freedom and the time he had to do as he pleased, and being locked away like a princess in a tower would make him feel more trapped than ever before.

“Will you stay here?” Namjoon asked, an almost desperate look in his eyes.

“Yeah, we’ll stay,” Jeongguk answered with no hesitation, and Yoongi found himself nodding along.

It was the least they could do in such a delicate situation; the least Yoongi could do to help calm his parent’s own anxieties. It must be nerve wracking to know Yoongi’s life was basically in their hands, but they were both completely capable of solving the situation. Yoongi had no doubt that the problem of his assassination would be fixed; it was only a matter of _when_ that was the limiting factor of the future events.

“Thank you,” Seokjin breathed, sighing in relief, and Yoongi tried his best to send a smile in his direction.
“There’s sealed bottles of water over there,” Namjoon stated as he stood from his seat, stretching out his back from being in the same position for too long. “As well as some sealed food items,” he continued, gesturing to the boxes at the side, and Yoongi had a sneaking suspicion they had planned this whole situation. “Dr. Rieknich can show you to the bathroom down the hall, and don’t hesitate to ask her if you need anything.”

“Okay,” Yoongi agreed, nodding in understanding.

Jeongguk copied the action, slowly wandering over to one of the boxes and smiling as he pulled out a bar of chocolate, Yoongi laughing fondly at the glee on the younger’s face. Namjoon and Seokjin also fixed him with amused looks, and Yoongi was so grateful for Jeongguk lifting the mood, making the situation seem less intense and serious, more like something that could be fun if approached in the right way.

“Alright, we need to go, we love you lots,” Seokjin rushed as he looked at his watch, Namjoon quickly giving both Yoongi and Jeongguk a hug before the eldest did the same, starting to leave through the door.

“Have a nice meeting, love you too,” Yoongi called behind them, watching the door fall shut before he sank back into the cushions behind him.

Jeongguk returned to his side, taking Namjoon’s vacant chair and offering one of the many sugar-filled foods he had found to Yoongi, who could only laugh as he accepted a packet of colourful looking sweets. It wasn’t so bad, once the initial resentment of the situation wore off. There were much worse things than being stuck with Jeongguk in a room, the only thing that made it slightly less ideal was the scientist who was still sat at the table on the far side of the room, Dr. Rieknich if he remembered correctly. It made any sort of intimacy feel slightly uncomfortable, so Yoongi resigned himself to the completely PG situation.

They decided on just playing a game of cards which had also been left with the food, Jeongguk grinning every time he beat Yoongi at the same game. The younger being good at everything was frustrating, and Yoongi felt himself become more and more desperate to win something against Jeongguk, who was behaving like a brat and preaching his own greatness.

“Soon all the skill will fade with age,” Yoongi warned him, but Jeongguk just smiled back.

“You’ll always be worse then, love.”
“You little-”

“You little-” Came a voice from behind them, and Yoongi turned to see it was the scientist who had been at the other end of the room the whole time.

She was clutching a pile of papers to her chest with one hand, the other fiddling with the collar of her lab coat. She looked nervous, and Yoongi wouldn’t be surprised to find out it was because she was talking to him and Jeongguk, the younger specifically. All of the workers seemed at least mildly agitated whenever they had to converse with one of their family members, Yoongi the least nerve wracking judging by previous reactions, but Jeongguk had a certain reputation which lingered around him everywhere he went.

“I’m just going to the main lab area for a meeting,” she said quickly, not making eye contact with either of them. “Um, the bathroom is just out the door and on the right, it has a label, the code is just 060402.”

“Thank you,” Jeongguk said, but his reassuring tone or smile seemed to do nothing to lower her level of nerves.

She bowed, before almost rushing out of the door, the final click of it shutting confirming her exit. The room seemed more muted with just Yoongi and Jeongguk in it, and the elder couldn’t help but feel more comfortable that it was just the couple left in the space. Jeongguk just had a calming atmosphere to him, something that let Yoongi just relax in his own skin, and some anxiety he hadn’t even noticed was there melted onto the floor below him, leaving Yoongi’s body through his feet.

Jeongguk also seemed to relax, fingers finally lingering somewhere that wasn’t on his gun. Even when they were playing cards, the weapon was still laid in the middle of Jeongguk’s lap, in perfect reach of either of his hands. Despite the safety being on, Jeongguk seemed like he had been poised for an attack since they had entered the room, and an element of it puzzled Yoongi.

“You thought she was a threat?” He asked, voice a mixture of disbelieving and confused.

“You didn’t?” Jeongguk returned, sending Yoongi a look.

It was the one reserved for his concern over Yoongi’s wellbeing, the one he sends in the elder’s direction when he did something like forget to eat, or have disregard for his own health. It was a
look Yoongi was used to, but that didn’t mean he liked it.

“She’s small, and cute,” Yoongi stated, trying to send the exact same look at the younger, but Jeongguk didn’t seem impressed.

The scientist did look harmless though. She must have been only five foot, and Yoongi wasn’t used to feeling tall, but she managed to make him seem like a giant. There was no way she could have done anything, especially when Jeongguk had been surgically attached to his gun the whole time they had been here. Sure, she could have potentially been an assassin, but even the most successful killer wasn’t bulletproof everywhere.

“So is Jimin,” Jeongguk shrugged, putting the cards he was holding back down on the table beside him. “And you for that matter, don’t underestimate people,” he finished and Yoongi pouted at the almost scolding tone he had adopted.

“Don’t be mean just because I’m not as completely paranoid as you,” he huffed, making Jeongguk laugh.

“Darling, you’re the one who is the most anxious out of all of us,” Jeongguk reminded him, making Yoongi pout even more.

Technically, that was true, but in this situation Jeongguk had seemed much more on edge than Yoongi. It was rare the younger was more nervous than he was, but he seemed to be achieving that right now, every so often Jeongguk’s eyes darting to the door of the windowless room, to the different room corners. Yoongi would compare him to be a trapped animal if he didn’t know Jeongguk would definitely be the predator, and that the paranoia was a hunting instinct.

“Is something bothering you?” Yoongi asked with a frown, getting up from his chair to wander over to where Jeongguk was seated, sliding onto his lap to straddle his waist.

Immediately, Jeongguk’s hands moved to Yoongi’s waist, pulling him closer until the smaller was practically lying on his chest, faces only a few centimetres apart. It felt like a natural position, Jeongguk’s calming effect on Yoongi even more concentrated now that they were in contact with one another. A fleeting thought ran through his mind that Jeongguk was like a sedative, but Yoongi didn’t want to think of that, what could have happened.

“Not here, no,” Jeongguk answered vaguely, but Yoongi knew by the expression on his face that
he wasn’t going to get a deeper response.

Yoongi just nodded, a small smile on his face as he leant down to brush his nose against Jeongguk’s, making the other release a small grin as well, bunny teeth contrasting completely with the whole situation. He leant forward even more, letting his lips hover over Jeongguk’s gently before the younger carefully surged up, and finally they were kissing. It was slow, smooth, Jeongguk keeping the pace as sensual as it was when it started, even when he slid his tongue against Yoongi’s lips in an ask to be allowed entrance to his mouth.

A sigh escaped Yoongi’s throat, the hands on his waist moving along his body, one resting behind his neck, the other travelling lower and lower until it reached the very top of his thigh. Every touch was fire, Yoongi moving his own fingers to clutch onto anything he could, Jeongguk’s shirt, his hair. It was his life line as he felt his soul leave his body, Jeongguk slowly pulling away to brush his nose against Yoongi’s jaw, slowly travelling down his body.

The first kiss at his neck made his eyes flutter shut, a gasp leaving his lips as Jeongguk gently pulled at the skin with his teeth, the constant attention surely staining pale skin red, promises of bruises to be left. The thought made an even stronger rush of euphoria flood through Yoongi’s brain, almost making him feel dizzy, Jeongguk’s mouth moving lower and lower to kiss over the collarbone that was accessible from his shirt.

Yoongi didn’t even hear the door opening, but in a flash Jeongguk had a gun pointing in the direction of the room’s entrance, moving Yoongi behind him and standing to shield him with his body. The sudden change left Yoongi disorientated, feeling even dizzier than before, having to grasp the chair in order to not topple onto the floor. He watched as Jeongguk’s shoulders relax, lowering the gun to his side until he just slotted it back into his blazer, the movement letting Yoongi see Namjoon and Seokjin in the doorway.

Both of their expressions looked a mixture of disappointed and surprised, Namjoon perfectly arching an eyebrow once he made eye contact with Yoongi, surely noticing his dishevelled appearance. It made a blush crawl over Yoongi’s face, moving behind Jeongguk again to attempt to compose himself.

“Now is not the time for this,” Seokjin warned, and Jeongguk’s back straightened again, muscles tensing. “We could have been anybody.”

“And I would have been prepared enough to kill you,” Jeongguk shot back, Yoongi watching his fingers twitch.
It made the elder reach forward slowly, linking their hands together, squeezing gently. It was no use Jeongguk getting annoyed, especially when their parents made a good point. Had they been another assassin, Jeongguk might not have been able to move fast enough, and it could end with a successful attempt. It was hard to think about, despite being the truth, and Yoongi chose to stay silent as Namjoon and Seokjin continued to stand at the doorway in silence.

“Don’t let your guard down again,” Namjoon commanded before he walked further into the room, putting papers he was holding down onto the closest free surface available.

“It wasn’t down,” Jeongguk insisted and Yoongi knew the older couple wouldn’t like the tone he was using, the words definitely sounding some variation of protesting against their view.

“You’re not in charge here, Jeongguk,” Seokjin warned with a low voice, the youngest finally letting his shoulders fall. “Anyway, we came here with news.”

“We found the man,” Namjoon told them, holding up an image of a face.

It was someone Yoongi recognised from the house, one of the guards that was normally posted just by the kitchen. It was frightening to know that a traitor was right under their nose, in their home, able to access their most personal place. The worst thing was that Yoongi knew he would have found the familiar face comforting if he saw it, the face of his would-be-murderer.

“Funnily enough,” Namjoon continued, voice holding no humour despite the words. “He was stupid enough to think that it would be a good idea to continue with his job after trying to poison you, and we found him with the other guards by the building’s main doorway.”

It was moments like this where Yoongi was curious over the intelligence of people hired as hitmen. The majority of paid killers Yoongi had met throughout his life were lacking in the IQ element of things, the only assassins Yoongi had met that were clever in the way they did it were either female, or members of his family. Jimin and Taehyung were always happy to spill a little bit more blood for some pocket money, Hoseok occasionally joining their stream of thought. Yoongi knew Jeongguk would be happy to do it too, but he also knew the younger would rather spend time with Yoongi than anything else.

“It was your coffee that had the drug in it, mixed in with the grains,” Seokjin added, and everything clicked into place.
So, the man didn’t just have rocks for brains. Yoongi’s coffee was the perfect target for a poisoning, especially due to the fact that it was the one thing Yoongi was sure to ingest in the day, nobody else allowed to drink his own supply. The morning of the day Yoongi had felt the effects was the day he didn’t finish his coffee, the other assassin stopping him before he got the chance.

Well, that didn’t make sense. Why would the same company waste money to try to kill Yoongi twice in the same day? It was a waste of not only money, but resources, everyone knowing that an attempt on the Kim family normally ending in death. Risking two assassins in one day made no sense at all, unless…

“I want to be the one to question him,” Jeongguk was saying, eyes like steel and muscles tensed again, straining the fabric of his black blazer.

“He’s all yours,” Namjoon promised, Seokjin nodding in agreement before a gasp from Yoongi caught all their attention.

“Wait,” he exclaimed, pulling at Jeongguk’s hand where their fingers were still intertwined. “There must be two different companies.”

He was met with silence, until he looked up to see Namjoon staring at him curiously, a searching look in his eyes. It wasn’t dismissive, it wasn’t patronising. He looked to be thinking over the idea, his genius brain’s cogs moving at a thousand kilometres per hour, going over every piece of information. A light was building behind his eyes, a small smile on his lips.

“How come?” Seokjin asked from beside him, looking as lost as Jeongguk did.

“Timing,” Namjoon hummed in understanding, Yoongi nodding along to the word.

“Think about it, the morning of the poisoning, I didn’t get to finish my coffee because there was a different assassin. Why would they try twice in the same day?” Yoongi rushed, and he saw the light flicker on behind the other two’s eyes, matching Namjoon’s across the room.

“Yoongi, you’re a genius,” Jeongguk breathed, turning and pressing a kiss to his head, making the elder smile widely.

“So how are we going to do this?” Namjoon murmured, pushing his jaw out like how he normally
did when concentrating.

“Let’s first wait for the others, and then go from there,” Seokjin decided, Namjoon and Jeongguk nodding along before Namjoon started to walk towards the door, pivoting on his heel at the last minute.

“Don’t say a word about this to anyone,” he commanded, waiting for everyone to nod before gesturing to the exit. “Let’s go to our office.”

Chapter End Notes

Jungkook's hair now is what he has in this fic. I am dying. I love my emo son.
Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

The clock on the wall was ticking repetitively inside the quiet office, everyone silent as they waited for the rest of their family to join them. The hands on the clock-face were moving in perfect sync with each tick, but the whole rhythm seemed wrong, either too fast or too slow, Yoongi couldn’t tell. At exactly the same time, he felt like he had been here for hours, but also just for seconds. If the clock hadn’t been there, he was sure he would be going mad by now, no light from outside able to help aid the estimate of the day.

Every window in the room was covered, the black-out curtains letting not a single ray of light through, causing the whole atmosphere of the grand area to be determined by the diamond chandelier which hung in the centre. It cast the cream walls with spots of light, reflecting off of the gem stones, the occasional rainbow where the angle was just right. Yoongi traced the patterns with his eyes, trying to catch the rainbows which were lying over the table, the colours bright on his pale skin. Every once and a while, his attention was drawn to the dancing dabs of white which moved as Namjoon and Seokjin moved things around their desk, the source of the reflections being the picture frame made of shards of mirror Taehyung had designed, the mosaic housing a family picture that had been there for years, the frame moving as Namjoon and Seokjin rearranged papers.

It was more personal than the copy of the large painting behind them. Where the painting had limited smiles, formal clothes and a background showing the library they had at the headquarters in Seoul, old and antique and showcasing nothing but business, the picture was almost the opposite. Yoongi remembered it being taken, on the one year anniversary of Jeongguk’s arrival. They had decided to stay home; all fitted onto Namjoon and Seokjin’s king sized bed, the picture being taken using a timed camera.

It had been Jimin’s responsibility to click the button, and his precarious perch half on top of Namjoon and half on top of Taehyung displayed the sheer rush of him having to run from the side of the room and leap onto the bed. Hoseok and Seokjin both seemed to be captured mid laugh, eyes facing the camera with open smiles, making the image look like a piece of captured joy. But by far, Yoongi’s favourite part of the picture was Jeongguk. The youngest had Yoongi settled on his lap, but while Yoongi himself was facing the camera and grinning so wide his gums were on show, Jeongguk’s eyes were fixed on nothing but Yoongi’s face, the gentle smile gracing his lips emitting nothing but a painfully adoring fondness.

He loved it, loved the picture so much he had his own copy in his studio back at the house, made a habit of looking at it when he felt like all the energy was drained from his body, when Jeongguk had to motivate him to even speak, or move. It was something precious, and Yoongi was thankful the frame was facing away from the middle of the room and towards the large chair behind the desk. It wouldn’t be good for people to see such a soft side of their family, something so domestic. It was better to stick to the family portrait, which masked all the joy and love with clever brush
A knock on the door pulled Yoongi from his mind, Hoseok striding in with Jimin and Taehyung in tow, face flushed like he had run all the way here. The trio quickly sat in the three available seats, between Jeongguk and Namjoon, and finally their circle was complete. Yoongi was bracketed by Jeongguk and Seokjin, who was sat next to Namjoon’s other side, both positioned just behind their desk, faces looking stormy, thoughtful.

“We’ve discovered a slight hiccup in the operation,” Namjoon started, his whole image looking like the perfect businessman.

Yoongi knew that now wasn’t a time for games, or for nonchalance. They had almost been fooled, almost convinced themselves into a false sense of security that could have gotten them killed. He knew Namjoon and Seokjin wouldn’t be happy, nobody would, but this was one of the first times the elder couple had had the wool pulled over their eyes. For a pair known so widely to always be on top of every single thing, they had almost made the most disastrous mistake of their careers. That wasn’t something that sat lightly on their shoulders.

“Yoongi suggested that there is more than one company involved, and the idea is highly probable,” he continued, and Yoongi found himself blushing with the credit.

It wasn’t often he could help with the whole business side of things, wasn’t often he could be of use in regards to information, strategy. He wasn’t dumb by any standard, but his intellect laid elsewhere, Namjoon normally being the mastermind with Taehyung just behind him. It felt good; to be able to contribute and assist his family, especially when he was the target they were trying so hard to save. It was rewarding, almost as rewarding as the hand Jeongguk lay on his thigh, a squeeze of ‘I’m proud of you’ making Yoongi fight a smile that was trying to grow on his lips.

“How did you come up with that?” Hoseok asked, no doubt in his voice, only curiosity.

It was nice they all believed him, didn’t think he had been fooled, or mistaken. That was something he loved about his family. They didn’t assume he was wrong just because of who he was, how inexperienced he was compared to the rest of them in this world of work.

“Timing,” Namjoon explained shortly, only Taehyung seeming to pick up on what he meant. “Some of the assassination attacks happened in overlapping time frames, why would a company waste money and resources like that?” He explained further, finally everyone in the room on the same page.
“Well then there’s at least two,” Taehyung hummed, a gleam in his eyes making Yoongi feel slightly on edge. “We shouldn’t assume only a couple of companies are out for Yoongi’s pretty head. How many attacks have there been? There could even be four,” he voiced, Yoongi slightly put off by the words but understanding where the younger was coming from.

There was no evidence at all that it was just one, or two, or even three companies. Four was a good guess, but what was stopping the idea that a whole new assassin was biding their time and waiting for Yoongi to be vulnerable again. The thought was scary, that countless numbers of leaders were trying to eliminate the Kim’s weakest link, were paying to have him removed from the scene like an unwanted extra. It was wise; to go for Yoongi first, then go for everyone else once they were already suffering a loss. Less dangerous, but they underestimated how protective the family was over their smallest.

“That is true,” Namjoon mused, bringing a hand up to scratch at his jaw.

“How would we find out every contract?” Seokjin asked the room, but he was met with silence.

It was never an ideal situation, where the enemy technically had a one-up on you. Not knowing the amount of leaders involved really didn’t help to resolve the situation, especially when Yoongi was willing to bet most of the companies had a hunch that this time, the Kim family might have just been caught off guard. It was a delicate situation, one wrong move making everything even messier, but this wasn’t the hardest thing they’d had to face. Yoongi knew, in the end, their family always pulled through, it was just a matter of who was still alive to witness the victory.

“We could use the man we have,” Hoseok suggested, all lingering expressions of his normal happiness absent from his face.

“He may only know one,” Seokjin hummed, and Jimin let out a small laugh.

It was a sound that crawled down Yoongi’s back, the misplaced humour juxtaposing the room’s atmosphere like party music at a funeral. The normally welcomed joy was bloodcurdling in the hollow space of the office, and the lack of happiness in Jimin’s eyes made it even more haunting. There was something dangerous, something waiting in the younger’s pupils, a snake ready to strike at prey that didn’t even know it was there. It was terrifying.

“Then let’s send a message,” he grinned, teeth shining in the light of the chandelier. “Make people think we know, even if we don’t. Fear does wonders to people’s judgement,” Jimin laughed again,
Taehyung letting giggles fall from his own mouth to mix in with the other’s.

The combined melody made Yoongi almost freeze in place, eyes darting between the two. It was the look in their eyes, the thing there that wasn’t normally present, a puzzle piece Yoongi didn’t even know was missing from the picture. Madness, his brain whispered, wary of the sharp smiles, sharp as the darkness pooling even deeper behind their eyes, something more dangerous than the supposed snakes. Madness, he thought, watching Jimin’s fingers twitch in the direction of his knife, Taehyung not looking to do much different. Madness was a dangerous thought.

“Smoke them out like pests in a building,” Namjoon agreed, and Yoongi was thankful he didn’t see a change in the taller’s eyes.

He might have been that way all along, Yoongi’s mind whispered to him again. You wouldn’t know, he might have already fallen, but if that was true, then Yoongi was less worried about what could happen. If Namjoon and Seokjin had always been mad, always had something in their minds Yoongi had just thought was natural, then Jimin and Taehyung wouldn’t harm a hair on his head. They wouldn’t change horrifically into something Yoongi knew they weren’t, wouldn’t become the monsters that plagued Yoongi at night, in the corners of his vision, behind his eyelids.

“Quite literally,” Seokjin agreed, everyone nodding along to the words.

“The man was promised to me,” Jeongguk stated in a low tone, and it prompted Yoongi to look over to the younger.

There was no change in his eyes, something that made Yoongi release a nonexistent breath of relief, but the stone-like quality of his face was just as serious. The youngest looked almost like a predator, staking his claim on a piece of prey that was yet to be killed, baring teeth at any opponent getting in his way. The animalistic expression didn’t seem to be directed at anyone present in the room, but his gaze was darting between who he deemed as his opponents, everyone but Yoongi. He watched Namjoon and Seokjin exchange a pointed look, but the emotion was too difficult to decipher.

“And nobody is taking away your right to have him,” Namjoon soothed, Jeongguk seeming to settle at the verbal confirmation.

The others seemed like they were about to protest, but the look the youngest shot them quickly silenced anything they had to say against the idea. In all fairness, Jeongguk probably did have the first right to dealing with the man, what with him trying to kill his boyfriend and all. It was very, highly unlikely that Yoongi would want to be anywhere near someone like that, foreign assassins
not really being his cup of tea, and that meant Jeongguk was the first in line. Everyone else seemed to agree with that thought, Jimin and Taehyung not looking too disheartened.

“But honey, let us watch,” Jimin whined, like a child wanting to see a cartoon, and as soon as Jeongguk nodded the glint intensified in his eyes.

Perhaps the way he seemed so young made it worse. An insane adult was much less hard hitting than an insane child, and to think of seventeen year old Jimin being so eager to torture someone before he could even legally drink alcohol in America made an odd unsettling feeling rest in Yoongi’s chest. It was the idea that apart from Jeongguk, none of them had had a real childhood. Hoseok watched his mother fall into addiction, Taehyung and Jimin never having parents and a certain childhood to begin with. It was just an obvious thought that Namjoon didn’t have much of a time in his life to play, his father teaching him how to run a company as soon as he could talk, Seokjin coming from a power family leaving him much in the same boat as his partner.

At least Jeongguk had gotten a chance to live a normal life, before his life fell to pieces and he ended up in Seokjin and Namjoon’s care. His parents had only kicked him out in his teenage years, leaving him much opportunity to just be a child. Yoongi had spent his whole childhood in agony.

“The larger the pressure, the more he’ll crack,” Taehyung almost sang, the melody contrasting greatly with the whole situation, the minor key creating an even more haunting aura.

It was just the duo’s effect, making the room seem so much colder, like there was a draught from an open window in the sealed room. Perhaps that was why they were so good at their jobs, so good at making people suffer, wish they were dead when they used to treasure their lives above all else.

If Yoongi didn’t know Namjoon and Seokjin better, he might think the duo were taken in to be the perfect employees, the perfect people for them to have under their thumbs and use when needed. But the elder couple would have taken in the both of them even if they were as useless as Yoongi, their use just a good coincidence.

“Just remember we need him mostly alive for him to talk,” Namjoon reminded them, but nothing doused the fire glinting behind the duo’s pupils.

“Yes, yes, we remember,” Jimin answered, but Yoongi wasn’t too certain about how genuine the words were.

“We’re serious, it’s important he can give us the information we want, and quickly,” Seokjin pressed, and he heard Jeongguk huff next to him.
“Jin, there’s nothing to worry about,” Jeongguk sighed, voice sounding annoyed by all of the reminders.

There were things Namjoon and Seokjin had taught them early on in their careers as budding criminals, rules of sorts that they were obliged to follow. Really, it was more like advice, little tips from the elder couple to their protégées. Don’t trust people you don’t know, always hide yourself from police, and that you needed a coherent person to be able to tell you anything. It was no use trying to talk to a delirious man, you might as well be talking to a corpse.

“Sweetie, you’re not the one I’m worried about,” Seokjin hummed, eyes darting towards dramatically offended Jimin and Taehyung, who had gasped and put their hands over their hearts.

Before they had a chance to protest, Jeongguk was letting out a low growl, almost baring his teeth at the pair. It was probably a move that should have been setting Yoongi on edge, making him feel threatened, or nervous, but in reality it was rather the opposite. Something about it was oddly calming, maybe because it was Jeongguk or maybe because it was a sign of protection, but whatever it was it made Yoongi feel the tick calm in his chest.

“They’re not touching a hair on that man’s head until I kill him,” the youngest snarled, Jimin and Taehyung seeming to accept the words immediately. “He’s mine,” he insisted, still watching the pair warily.

“We won’t, we won’t,” Taehyung answered without missing a beat, raising his hands in surrender, Jeongguk looking to calm at the simple action.

“Promise,” Jimin added, the final strands of added tension draining from Jeongguk’s shoulders.

Even if the duo were notorious for lying and deceit, they never lied to family if they could avoid it. There was nothing to lie about, because no matter what they did, they always would have done something worse under Namjoon and Seokjin’s direction. Sure, sometimes they just didn’t mention certain things, but there were never massive, life, threatening lies like those in action movies. There was just no point, and their family could also be used as human lie detectors, so there was even less reason for it in the first place.

“If you could deal with it in the next hour, then we can start planning future moves accordingly,” Namjoon suggested, already flicking through lists of possible enemies, the deals their allies had signed.
The trio nodded, Hoseok humming an affirmative before they all got up to leave. It was a split-second decision, but Yoongi grabbed Jeongguk’s hand before he could step away, stopping the younger from going any further. It made Jeongguk send him a questioning look, confusion written all over his features, furrowed eyebrows and curious eyes. Yoongi swallowed, throat suddenly feeling as dry as a desert, and he tried to find the words he wanted to say.

“He tried to kill me,” was the sentence he produced, and watched as Jeongguk’s expression morphed to one of contained anger, face hardening as his eyes flashed.

“And I’m going to make him pay,” Jeongguk swore, grip on Yoongi’s hand tightening. “I’ll make him regret it.”

“Let me see,” Yoongi breathed, trying to make himself look determined.

It made Jeongguk pause, eyes looking all over Yoongi’s face, considering the words. It wasn’t that Yoongi liked to watch torture, but he wanted to see the man who almost killed him, would have if pure chance hadn’t interrupted. It was relieving to see the person put in their place, in a way, even if Yoongi did hate the method. It was something he needed to see, needed to watch as Jeongguk eliminated any threat the man posed.

“It might be messy,” Jeongguk warned, but Yoongi could tell he was already close to accepting Yoongi’s wish.

“I need it to be,” he responded, and Jeongguk nodded slowly, pulling Yoongi up from his seat and squeezing his hand, a soft kiss pressed onto Yoongi’s forehead.

It was Jimin that got them to finally leave, his exclaimed ‘honey, we don’t have all day’ to Jeongguk making him nod once, leading Yoongi to the door without an explanation to the others. Jimin must have been picking up habits from Seokjin, recently using more and more pet names to address anyone, and in a strange way it made him even more threatening. Someone telling you it will hurt with a term of endearment was worse than something more distant, the idea they could hurt a friend or family member lingering in the statement (of course, Jimin wouldn’t even think of it). The haunting endearment became even better once Jimin was smirking, pushing a knife into someone’s stomach.

Nobody questioned Yoongi’s appearance as they started to walk towards the private lift, Hoseok pushing the button to go down and making it light up with a white glow. Yoongi wasn’t the
fondest of lifts, but he wasn’t about to make everyone climb down hundreds of stairs, so he waited silently beside Jeongguk, who hadn’t let go of his hand. He watched the number displayed above the closed metal doors increase, from three, to four, to five, until the thirteenth floor was reached, the doors sliding open smoothly.

Hoseok lead them inside the small space, Jimin and Taehyung pushing each other to press the button for the basement, Jeongguk and Yoongi keeping to themselves on one side. The lift’s music was weirdly nice, a classical piano piece Yoongi couldn’t remember the complicated name of but he knew it was by Bach. Taehyung would know, but he was too busy pouting at Jimin because the shorter got to push the button, a mess Yoongi didn’t want to get involved in.

As the levels decreased, an uncomfortable feeling settled in his gut. It wasn’t butterflies, it was so much worse, like a flock of doves had gotten trapped under his skin, feeding on his organs and about to burst from his intestines. Jeongguk noticed, of course he did, but he only offered a small, loving smile, a squeeze of their hands together. There wasn’t much he could do anyway, unless he could somehow wipe Yoongi’s mind of recent events without removing the nice things. He never wanted to forget a single moment with the younger, especially when their lives were so unpredictable.

Despite the simplicity, Jeongguk’s actions downgraded Yoongi’s doves into large moths, the beating of the wings less violent against the inside of his skin, the middle of his abdomen. The screen displaying the present building level was like a sadistic countdown, every decrease sending Yoongi closer and closer to what felt like his doom, or at least what could have been. Two, one, ground floor.

As soon as the lift reached the basement level, the doors opened with a quiet ‘ding’, announcing their arrival to the guards in the first hallway. Almost every single one of them quickly looked to the people emerging from the lift, then immediately focused back on keeping their post. Having the sons of their bosses walking past probably didn’t make them feel better, especially when some seem even more cruel and strict than the bosses themselves.

“Namjoon said cell two-zero-five,” Hoseok informed them, and for a second Yoongi completely forgot that it was necessary to actually know where they were going. “This way.”

It was like any sort of humour from before had been dropped as soon as they had stepped foot into the futuristic space. Despite emerging at a different point, the area looked almost exactly the same as the first time Yoongi had seen it, just with slightly differing scenarios being enacted within each glass room. He tried not to focus on the lady being electrocuted, the man who was dangling precariously over a large container of water. They weren’t the worst sights Yoongi had witnessed, but it was different knowing all this and more was still being carried out every time Yoongi had visited in the past, how many people were in pain throughout the duration of his happy visits.
The corridor seemed never ending, glass room over glass room, torture next to engineering, science, both seeming to not realise what was happening just meters away. At least, Yoongi thought they didn’t know. Had he have worked here, he would have found it difficult to design any sort of breakthrough had he known that a man was getting his teeth and nails removed just next door.

They turned a corner, and suddenly the area was almost deserted, only a few guards and the occasional scientist seeming to use it as a passage to get elsewhere, all of the rooms looking practically empty, or like they were used for storage. It became more and more abandoned as they continued further, until after another turn there was no other soul in sight, only their group of five and their echoing footsteps bouncing off the ceiling, the new now-dark looking glass and white walls.

Yoongi was walking next to Jeongguk a couple of meters away from where the other trio was practically marching to their destination, steps intimidatingly large and assertive. Even Jimin, who was just a fraction taller than Yoongi, had strides to match even Taehyung, who was growing closer and closer to Namjoon’s height. Yoongi knew if he had been walking with them, he would look like a corgi next to a group of labradors, and he really didn’t want to seem shorter than he was, even if Jeongguk wasn’t helping with that. He was trying to space his steps with the tiles on the floor, each one the perfect distance apart to step in the middle of, still gripping Jeongguk’s hand in his own.

The younger was silent, and examining his face Yoongi could see the storms hidden behind his eyes, the concentrated anger badly masked by his blank face. Perhaps to everyone else Jeongguk just looked composed, emotionless, but there was a building wrath written all over his body, tensed shoulders and flexing muscles in his neck, cheeks. It made him look older, and Yoongi almost stumbled as he lost his footing, eyes too fixed on his boyfriend’s face to keep up with the taller’s pace.

His anger was understandable, Yoongi definitely would feel the same if this man had tried to kill Jeongguk instead of Yoongi himself. Especially when Jeongguk had become so defensive and protective after last year, Yoongi didn’t blame him for the fury that was overflowing out of his body, Yoongi almost able to see the waves of heat as they diffused into the air around him.

Looking back to where they were going, he saw that Hoseok had halted in front of a glass room, this time the windows tinted more darkly. Jimin and Taehyung were standing right by the door, a sadistic smile already growing over the elder’s face, teeth emerging from his lips. It was predatory, and paired with the look in his eyes, Jimin looked almost demonic, the space around him screaming danger. Taehyung wasn’t far behind him, sharp eyes already locked on something beyond the glass.
Yoongi slowed his steps as he approached, Jeongguk not asking any questions as he let Yoongi control their speed, movement trailing off as they reached the centre of the glass wall. Yoongi could see himself reflected back in the material, but his eyes were fixed on the figure sitting in the centre of the otherwise empty room, chained to a metal chair not allowing any sort of movement. His head was down, like he was unconscious, slumped in the seat, limbs completely limp.

A flash of panic rippled through Yoongi as the man jerked up, facing the glass and seeming to look straight into Yoongi’s eyes. He already looked dead behind his piercing gaze, and his mouth morphed into a lazy smile, looking like he was trying to bare his teeth, get some control over the situation. It was unsettling, and Yoongi felt the hairs on the back of his neck rise, a chill running down his back and settling in his lower abdomen.

“He can’t see you,” Taehyung almost whispered, and Yoongi felt relief floor through his whole body. “The glass is one way.”

It was better, that the man couldn’t see him. It suddenly made him less threatening, that he couldn’t see a thing other than the empty, blank room he was in, white walls and the surely mirror like side of the glass all that was surrounding him. It meant Yoongi could show how he felt, didn’t need to seem cold, or strong, or try to be indifferent because this man tried to kill him. There was no one here other than his family, nobody who hadn’t seen him at his worst before this.

They stood in silence in front of the wall until the man seemed to give up his stance, slowly slumping forward again and pulling weakly at the chains, like he had already given up. That probably wasn’t unrealistic; everyone knowing there was no escaping the Kims, especially when you tried to hurt one of their own. Yoongi felt Jeongguk tense and relax, his hand squeezing at irregular intervals around Yoongi’s fingers.

After a moment, Jeongguk carefully extracted his hand from Yoongi’s, almost making Yoongi try to grab it again but Taehyung stopped him, offering his own fingers instead. He silently accepted the offer, watching Jeongguk take off his blazer which he let fall to the ground, the fabric pilling on the floor just next to the glass. It displayed the black leather harness around the younger’s body, knives and guns held securely against his white shirt, but Yoongi had a feeling Jeongguk didn’t want to end the man so quickly.

“Wait out here, all of you,” the youngest ordered, fixing Jimin and Taehyung in particular a stern glance, the two of them nodding earnestly.

It seemed they had no plans to get involved, Taehyung still gripping Yoongi’s hand and letting the elder intertwine their fingers. He squeezed the appendage, almost asking a question as Jeongguk paused just before the door, turning around to face Hoseok. The younger held a hand out wordlessly, and Hoseok just nodded, and Yoongi felt confused until the elder reached into one of
his blazer pockets, producing two items.

It was a pair of silver knuckle dusters, Jeongguk accepting them with a single nod before slipping them onto his fingers, striding determinedly towards the door. He didn’t hesitate this time as he entered the room, letting the door close loudly behind him as he marched over to the man, who had completely straightened up in his seat.

For a moment, there was nothing, the rooms having to be soundproof as the man seemed to say something, baring his teeth almost like a threat. In a flash, Yoongi felt time freeze as he watched Jeongguk move, a fist swinging straight into the man’s face. The impact looked excruciatingly painful, the man’s neck jerking back and his head hanging in place for a second behind the back of the seat. As he righted himself again, he smiled, and the gap where a tooth had been just moments before was like a void in his mouth, blood smudged over his lips, chin, cheeks.

He understood why Jeongguk decided to use the silver knuckles, the metal making the strike look even harsher, even more hurtful. The anger which Jeongguk had been hiding all afternoon was bubbling its way to the surface, the younger looking like he wanted to punch him again before he drew back, wiping the weapon on his right hand on his white shirt, making the fabric have a small red stain.

Yoongi heard Jimin let out little exited claps, Taehyung squeezing his hand and Hoseok barking out a laugh, but all Yoongi could focus on was Jeongguk as he rounded the back of the chair, standing behind the man and seeming to say something. Suddenly, the sound from the room appeared in a click, Yoongi darting a look to see Hoseok with his finger on a button. It probably only picked up sound from the one side of the glass, for which Yoongi was grateful, eyes fixing back on his boyfriend.

“-Try again, shall we?” Jeongguk’s sentence started midway, his tone low and bordering on a growl. “Who hired you?”

The man was silent, mouth staying sealed shut and eyes fixed on the floor. That answer didn’t please Jeongguk, and immediately he was making his way back round to the man’s front, hitting his body with enough force that the chair rocked back, a crack followed by a muffled scream echoing around the room. It must have been a rib, the metal over Jeongguk’s fingers providing definitely enough force to break bone.

The sound of pain the man emitted made Yoongi shrink back slightly, not enough for anyone but Taehyung to notice, who gripped at his hand in an attempt at comfort. There was something about Jeongguk beating the man that sent mixed signals to Yoongi’s mind, not being able to determine exactly what he felt. The act was cruel, horrible, and the indifference paired with anger on the youngest’s face made it even more unsettling. Yoongi didn’t like to think of Jeongguk as violent,
but watching him do this made his perspective warp, the cute bunny smile and doe eyes seeming to fade into the stony cold face Jeongguk bore in front of the man who had tried to end Yoongi’s life. Wasn’t the violence a good thing then?

Slamming his metal knuckles into the arms of the equally metal chair, Jeongguk bared his teeth, leaning in so close that theoretically the man could smash their heads together, but Yoongi knew he wouldn’t try. After all, the man had worked for their company for months. He must know that once you enter Namjoon and Seokjin’s custody you were guilty until proven innocent, and the guilty never left the building alive.

“I said, who hired you?” Jeongguk pressed, repeating the same words as before.

The younger grabbed the man’s jaw, forcing their eyes to meet as he squeezed his grip on the bone, the skin surely still feeling sore from the first hit Jeongguk landed. It was the first flash of terror Yoongi had seen from the man, a look which disappeared a second after it appeared, but he knew Jeongguk saw it. It was a crack in the concrete, a weakness to take advantage of. Yoongi felt sorry for the man, the momentary fear probably fuelling Jeongguk’s focused determination.

That was reflected in the next blow, hitting just below the ribs into the abdomen, and the strangled yell that tried to crawl its way out of the man’s throat made Yoongi flinch again, but he still didn’t let himself move. He needed this, needed to see the man getting what he deserved, needed to watch Jeongguk be the one to do it. It was a beautiful image, but so twisted, small little ticks in Yoongi’s stomach making him aware that his mind didn’t like the aggression shown, didn’t like the sight of Jeongguk beating the shit out of someone. Despite that, Yoongi knew this was one of the only times he needed to watch, wanted to witness the assassin’s downfall.

“I suggest you answer the question,” Jeongguk snarled, pulling his fist back again to strike. A yelp of protest came from the man, eyes wide as he looked up at Jeongguk from his chair. It made the younger pause, like he was waiting for the other to speak. “Yes?”

“But-” the man started, eyes looking desperate. “But they’ll kill me!”

Jeongguk just stared at him after his statement, the other gasping shallow breaths, probably because of the bruised and most likely broken ribs. There was a second, two seconds, but at three Jeongguk lunged forward, entangling his fingers into the man’s hair and pulling up, making him groan. They spent a moment just staring at each other, Jeongguk having all the control over the situation and jerking his arm up, making the man let out a loud yelp.

Dropping his grip, Jeongguk let the man slump down into the chair, body seeming to melt into the
metal as if all his bones were removed. Yoongi couldn’t stop watching, Jeongguk slowly rounding the back of the chair, tracing his fingers over the man’s neck. A visible swallow made his throat tense, the skin moving over his Adam’s apple and eyes fluttering shut.

Tan fingers wrapped their way around the man’s neck, the silver metal over Jeongguk’s knuckles looking to dig into skin painfully, making the man squeeze his eyes shut. The skin where Jeongguk was gripping was paling, making the breath released be almost like a wheeze, airways being forced shut. Throughout the whole thing, Jeongguk didn’t let any emotion at all onto his face, his sharp eyes watching the man before him.

“So will I,” Jeongguk whispered quietly, the man’s eyes flashing open just before Jeongguk hit him from behind, forcing one of the man’s shoulders forward.

The blows came quicker and quicker, the metal on Jeongguk’s knuckles making blood splatter from the man’s body to the walls, the floor, cracks audible even through the one way sound system. Each strike made the man shout, but it wasn’t for help. He had most likely given up hope of leaving the room, and Yoongi knew soon he would also give up dying with dignity.

It was Jeongguk’s face that made Yoongi freeze. There was something dark unwinding in his eyes, a look of almost satisfaction building over his features. It made a mixed reaction crawl through his mind, each side of the argument scratching and clawing at each other in a fight for victory. The cocktail of fear and pride was a weird flavour, almost metallic in Yoongi’s mouth, leaving a bad aftertaste.

A particularly harsh blow to the man’s stomach made him almost scream, a sob falling from between his lips, Jeongguk pausing his strikes. The figure in the chair looked broken, blood dripping from his mouth, nose, cuts which were all littered around his body. There was no sign of hope left in his eyes, nothing but agony as he panted, too drained of energy to hold himself upright.

“It was the Madilim Corporation, it was them,” he finally gasped, coughing up blood which stained his lips even more. “They ordered the killing, I was just given the job,” he pleaded, but Yoongi felt no pity.

The Madilim Corporation was a company lead by a billionaire situated in the Philippines. Yoongi recognised the name, recalled seeing the boss at various meeting he was forced to attend back in Korea. The last time he checked, Namjoon and Seokjin seemed to have had a truce with them, until now that is.

As soon as the name was given, Hoseok was pulling his phone from his pocket, noting down
everything the man spilled. Jimin and Taehyung did nothing else but look purely ecstatic at the positive turn of the interrogation, Taehyung squeezing Yoongi’s hand tightly in his own, excitement flowing off his body in waves. It felt weird, to be so happy because of the breaking of a man, be so excited that the pain he was being put through had forced him to tell them everything he knew. Yoongi didn’t know if he felt any better about it when the man looked so pained, even when the man had outwardly tried to assassinate him.

His attention was drawn back to the glass, watching Jeongguk stare at the now-crying man, no sort of pity or sympathy in his gaze.

“Were there other companies involved?” He pressed, raising an eyebrow when the man shook his head frantically, stuttered words falling from his mouth.

“I-I don’t know, I swear I don’t, I only know the company that hired me,” he sobbed, eyes shining desperately.

From what Yoongi could see, the man wasn’t lying, but he also knew he was a trained liar, a master of deceit. After all, it was in the job description, undercover assassins like this one needing to fool people into believing their story, their innocence in a situation they were to blame for. These people weren’t easy to crack, the time spent here proving that. If he was being honest, the man outlasted the time expectation Yoongi had set for him in his head, probably doubled it.

“How do I know you’re not lying to me?” Jeongguk seemed to consider, tilting his head while his eyes were still locked with the other’s.

It made panic rush over the man’s face, cries coming even faster as he tried to plead his truthfulness, like a sinner in confession. But Jeongguk was no man of God, didn’t care for forgiveness, or purity. There was no chance the man was walking out alive, no chance he would live to see tomorrow, and that tilted idea of justice sat weirdly in Yoongi’s stomach. But he deserved it, he did, the man almost making their family fall apart from the inside out. It was the right thing to do, even if the idea of Jeongguk putting the man out of his misery made an unwelcome chill run down his back.

“I swear I’m telling the truth,” the man promised, and Yoongi was sure that if he had been standing, he would’ve dropped to his knees to beg. “I swear,” he repeated, eyes widening even more at Jeongguk’s once again blank expression. “I have the contract at my apartment, just please-”

In a second, Jeongguk was slamming his fist into the man’s cheek, catching the bone and leaving a
cut just below his left eye, which Yoongi knew wouldn’t even get a chance to bruise before the man was gone. The contact seemed to startle him, struggling against the bindings on his arms and legs, trying everything to move, to get away. It was like watching a fish trying to escape its net, throwing its weight from side to side and hoping it did something, anything.

“I told you everything I know!” He almost screamed, finally letting his body slump as he cried.

“Oh, I know,” Jeongguk almost cooed, gripping the man’s face in an echo of his earlier action, digging his nails harshly into his cheeks and causing the man to wince. “But now,” he whispered, gently pushing the man’s head up to meet his eyes where he was standing. “You need to pay for your actions, with kind regards from the Kim family.”

The sentence was finished with a smile, and Jimin and Taehyung took that as their cue to join the youngest, Taehyung transferring Yoongi’s hand into Hoseok’s. The duo eagerly bounded over to the door; like puppies going to their owner, and the way Jimin threw the door open should have been funny if it hadn’t been for the complete fear washing over the man’s expression.

Of course he would recognise Jimin and Taehyung, everyone did, and Yoongi could see on his face that he knew where his doom lay. In a sense, Jeongguk was a blessing in comparison to the duo, much more civil in his actions, merciful when he wanted to be. Jimin and Taehyung, on the other hand, were known to be the worst people to meet, even ranked higher than Namjoon and Seokjin. It was the pleasure they took in pain, the smiles they wore as they ripped you limb from limb, happy to act like nothing more than animals to get what they wanted.

In almost synchrony, they each pulled a knife from the inside of their blazers, grins growing and showing teeth the more the man tried to flee. It was hopeless, but Yoongi knew anything was better than the things the duo probably planned to do, eyes already flashing darkly. They were the perfect characters in a horror movie, the perfect idea of murderers who felt no remorse when they killed, no pity for their victims. It was no wonder they were seen as the devil’s helpers, demons happy to slit your throat as you slept.

It was the first cut of each knife, the wet sound of both the man’s ears falling to the ground that made Yoongi’s stomach roll, throat threatening to close just like the man’s had done when Jeongguk was strangling him. It was too much, too much, and Yoongi didn’t want to see anymore of what his family did, didn’t want anything to ruin the way he loved them, the way he thought they were perfect.

“I don’t want to watch any more,” Yoongi rushed as he turned to Hoseok, who immediately registered the elder’s discomfort, pressing the button to mute the room’s sound.
The silence that fell over the corridor was a blessing; Hoseok’s concerned eyes scanning over Yoongi’s expression. The elder mustn’t have been hiding his emotions very well, because Hoseok seemed to pick up on Yoongi’s exact feelings just seconds after he first looked over, gently pulling Yoongi’s hand to his chest in comfort.

“Do you want to go somewhere else?” He asked as he blocked Yoongi’s view of the room, eyes soft and calculating as they surveyed him, nothing like they had been when watching the torture of the man just meters away.

The change made Yoongi feel even more relief, the familiar warmth in Hoseok’s expression helping him to forget that their three youngest family members were painfully killing someone just a single glass wall away. He was thankful, but it wasn’t enough just yet, his eyes wanting to wander over to the sight just because it was there, not because he actually wanted to see.

“Please,” Yoongi choked, nodding and letting Hoseok led him away, fingers still intertwined with one another.

Retracing the corridors, Yoongi regained his composure, not wanting to show so much emotion to any more people he didn’t know he could trust. While the situation continued and more people weren’t found, Yoongi had no clue which guards really did want to protect him, and which were actually plotting his demise. It was a tough question, their family not feeling they needed to be so vigilant until now. They needed to re-establish their position at the top of the food chain, needed people to fear them just like before, like they had feared Namjoon’s father, grandfather, all who carried on the line.

“Let’s go get coffee from the café-thingy machine in Namjoon and Seokjin’s office,” Hoseok suggested, a happy smile appearing on his face at the thought, making the wound up spring in Yoongi’s chest relieve some tension. “It does the best fucking hot chocolate ever, God I swear.”

As always when he was with Hoseok, Yoongi felt his heart lighten in his chest, footsteps seeming easier as they reached the lift, the younger continuously talking to him about the new dance routine he was working on. For where they were, the conversation felt so ordinary, like a portal to a world where their lives weren’t moulded by murder and deals. It was a nice respite, like a holiday on a deserted island where no one else was even miles around, their own little bubble of existence.

“I’m having a slight issue with the tempo of one bit, because the transition can sometimes take half a beat too long,” Hoseok continued to ramble, miming one of the moves as he entered the lift once the doors were open, making Yoongi laugh.
“I’m sure you’ll figure it out,” Yoongi responded lightly, stretching his back like a cat and letting the joints of his spine click one by one.

“That’s disgusting,” the younger laughed, lightly pushing the button of the thirteenth floor, Yoongi barely noticing the journey before the doors were sliding open, Hoseok almost tripping and turning the mistake into a moonwalk.

He was like a battery in a different way to Jeongguk, Hoseok being like the sun and just radiating energy. It was one of the many talents he had, but Yoongi knew it wasn’t always good, hiding emotions with humour and smiles. It was something Yoongi tried to see through, but Hoseok seemed to become better and better at deceit every month, hiding his every move with a mask.

It almost reminded Yoongi of the way Jimin and Taehyung seemed to be dropping into insanity, Hoseok becoming so detached from his emotions that Yoongi worried he would lose them all together. He would have to have a word with Namjoon and Seokjin, but Yoongi knew the elder pair sometimes weren’t much better. Namjoon almost seemed like stone sometimes, impenetrable and emotionless, the genius finding it easy to make the difficult decision if it benefitted him. Seokjin sometimes seemed the same, even if it was to a different degree, letting the world burn if they were ensured to have rule over the new age.

It was hard to decide whether it was because of their upbringing that they were this way, or because of what happened after Namjoon and Seokjin took them in. Perhaps that was the reason Jeongguk often seemed the most normal, only being exposed to this sort of environment later in life. Someone like Yoongi was bound to be messed up from the day he was born, a destiny of corrupt mental health and emotions. Even if it was the fault of their parents, he couldn’t blame Namjoon and Seokjin for their actions. They only tried to do what was best, only wanted to help struggling children they found on the street, and Yoongi didn’t let any blame for the way he was fall upon them.

Hoseok didn’t hesitate before opening the office door, dramatically holding the handle and gesturing for Yoongi to enter, making him laugh again. The inside was just as they had left it, even Namjoon and Seokjin not seeming to have moved for the entirety of the time their children were away, still pouring over papers at the grand oak desks.

They both looked up as Hoseok and Yoongi entered, flashing small smiles before they both went back to their work, occasionally muttering things to one another that Yoongi didn’t understand without context. Not wanting to disturb the focused pair, Hoseok ushered him to sit on the sofa which was against one of the walls, ensuring Yoongi was comfortable before he wandered over to the hot drink machine which Namjoon and Seokjin had invested good money into. With the sheer volume of coffee Namjoon drank daily, it was probably the saving grace of the people he used to make collect his drink from different cafés, saving both time and energy.
The younger had picked up one of the little pods of coffee beans the machine used and held it up, confusing Yoongi for a second before he realised what Hoseok was doing. The close examination of the packaging was the younger looking for any signs of tampering, checking for any sort of error despite the room being practically impossible to reach by other people. Of course, there was always chance that the manufacturer was being paid by a company to poison the beans themselves, but that was highly unlikely, especially when Namjoon ensured all the food these days was sourced from public sources. Harder to poison, and impossible to know who would buy a specific product.

It amazed Yoongi that someone would be so determined to kill someone as insignificant to business as he was. Sure, he was a good target if you wanted to make the family grieve, but ultimately he couldn’t see how his death would work in someone else’s favour. There would be no gap in business, his role so minimal that his presence wouldn’t be missed if he wasn’t held so dear to his family, so no space for job opportunities or money. His family would be sad, Jeongguk devastated, but it wouldn’t work to cause much weakness. If anything, it would make his family even more dangerous.

With him gone, Namjoon and Seokjin would become even stricter and cold than they were, would probably focus completely on business and world domination to eliminate any other possible threats, would destroy those to blame. Hoseok would mask himself even more behind his veil, behaving like he was fine when he was breaking inside. It was how he coped in grief, but Yoongi feared that a death in the family would finally be the point of no return, the younger never recovering his emotions, always stuck in some sort of manic forced happiness. Jimin and Taehyung would deteriorate even more, falling into insanity like it was their bed at the end of a long day. They were already toeing a dangerous line, and a simple push would be all it took for one or the both of them to completely lose themselves.

The worst reaction Yoongi could imagine was Jeongguk. The youngest member of their family loved so wholly, put everything into his dedication to his family, to Yoongi, that the elder was worried his death would make him break. There was something that lurked behind Jeongguk’s expression sometimes, something that made warning signs appear around him despite not moving a muscle, made him seem like the most dangerous person in the room. Yoongi worried that his death would destroy him, would make him a bloodthirsty predator, stopping at nothing to get revenge. It wasn’t a pleasant thought, and Yoongi was more relieved for the younger than himself that he was still alive. He loved Jeongguk so much, and didn’t want to be the cause of his deterioration into nothing more than an emotionless killer.

“A cup of the finest coffee!” Hoseok exclaimed, making Yoongi jump.

The elder blinked a few times, seeing his surroundings again and noticing Hoseok’s worried expression, the way his eyebrows were uncharacteristically furrowed. It made Yoongi quickly rush to accept the mug offered, holding it in both of his hands with his sleeves acting as a protective barrier against the heat. The frown over Hoseok’s features lessened, but still didn’t disappear
completely, sharp eyes watching him sip at the steaming hot liquid.

“Everything will be fine,” Hoseok promised, a determined look crossing his face, and all Yoongi could do was nod.

Everything would be fine, he was insistent to it. There wasn’t much he could do on the outside of things, but there were changes he could make to himself, things he could do in the future he intended to act upon. Yoongi needed to make himself better to help everyone else, needed to change how he did things. Listening to every order, asking permission to do things, not letting his guards lose him. As much as he hated the idea of being the obedient child, he knew it would be the best way to protect everyone else, the best way to ensure he didn’t cause harm as the weakest link.

“Everything will be fine,” he echoed quietly, Hoseok giving his leg a light squeeze as he sat beside him.

It wasn’t long until the door opened again, the younger trio filing into the room with what looked like new shirts on, blood nowhere in sight. Yoongi was grateful they thought ahead, decided to keep the messy business downstairs. It helped him keep a firm grasp on what was happening now, the people around him and reality. Hoseok had managed to keep him on the good side of okay when he took him away, helped Yoongi to stay calm, and he really didn’t want the day to end in another panic attack, another thing for his family to worry about.

Once Namjoon stood, Hoseok and Seokjin echoed the action, all six of them gathering by the desk with Yoongi still curled up in the corner of the soft, red sofa, warm cup in between his hands. It didn’t seem like the type of conversation he needed to be involved in, his presence enough for his family to know he was safe, but out of the way enough that he didn’t get in the middle of their plans. It would be Yoongi’s first step to being better, not feeling any sort of regret over his decision to leave the company, letting the others handle everything with him just on the sidelines.

“The assassin was hired by the Madilim Corporation, which is based in the Philippines and lead by Nathaniel Santos,” Jeongguk started, Namjoon and Seokjin nodding at the words and writing notes down on different sheets of paper as the youngest talked. “The objective of the man’s job was confirmed to be to assassinate Yoongi,” he said as he grit his teeth, but otherwise showed no emotion to the words.

It was sort of odd, listening to the conversation happening right in front of him and yet not actually being involved, not having an input. In a way, the situation was a relief. Yoongi had no serious responsibility, nothing he could fail in because there was nothing he was charged to do, nothing he had to execute with precision or accuracy. It reinforced how much he had chosen the right option so long ago, how much better it was that he had nothing to do with the business side of their family. In a way, it made everyone else safer too, someone more qualified doing the job Yoongi
was meant to, executing anything with much more precision than he could.

“What do you suggest is our plan of action?” Namjoon asked the group in front of him, Yoongi taking a sip of his cooled down coffee, thankful for the glorious liquid which was warming him from the inside out.

It was nice, how much their parents were involving the younger four, and Yoongi felt almost a rush of pride at the weight being trusted on their shoulders. Of course, Namjoon and Seokjin were both well aware that their four younger children were completely capable of handling a situation like this, knew the protocols and were smart enough to plan everything they did independently. Their supervision seemed more like guidance, suggestions in the right direction, both of the eldest people in the room happy to leave the situation in their children’s hands.

“Is the assassin dead yet?” Seokjin hummed, trying to order some of the random sheets on the table but ultimately failing as Namjoon just seemed to move them again.

That question was one Yoongi was curious to know the answer to as well, Hoseok and Namjoon surely in the same boat. The trio was unpredictable with their treatment of people, Yoongi never knowing what approach they were going to take. The suffering of their tormented prisoner could be long, short, constant or at specific times. There was never knowing what they were going to do, but Yoongi had a hunch that Jeongguk wanted this man’s death to be slow and painful.

“Not completely yet,” Jimin sighed, as if he was talking about something as trivial as the weather. “But will be soon if we just leave him,” he said as he rearranged a knife under his blazer, Yoongi thankful it looked clean.

“So what do you suggest we do?” Namjoon repeated, addressing the question to the four in front of him.

The implied independence seemed to make the four straighten their backs even more, faces serious and attentive. This was such a big situation, and Namjoon trusting them must mean a lot, Yoongi feeling proud as he watched his boyfriend. There was always going to be a day where the four of them would almost become Namjoon and Seokjin’s equals, not only their children but their work colleagues. Yoongi had expected the shift of power and responsibility to be more explicit, but this was better. Putting choice to the four helped build their confidence, and was safer here with Namjoon and Seokjin to review than if the quartet had been by themselves.

“As Jimin said, we need a message,” Hoseok said slowly, humming in consideration of ideas. “Scare everyone, then pick them out one by one.”
There was a moment of silence, everyone thinking of what to do, the perfect solution to the situation they were in. It was difficult, them having limited chances to make a large enough impact to reinstate their rule, prove their untouchability. If the problem didn’t get under control, then there was no way to know what other people may try to do if they thought the Kim family was finally reachable. In a way, their legacy had always worked as a protective shield, nobody dreaming of even talking to them half the time. It needed to be replaced, warnings sent to make a point.

“Why don’t we actually send a literal written message?” Taehyung suggested, Yoongi fixing his eyes on the younger in fascination.

Taehyung, despite initial impressions he left to people, was incredibly smart. Yoongi was sure that in some aspects, he even rivalled Namjoon, but their minds were completely different. While the elder was academic, able to memorise every word on a page in minutes, Taehyung’s intelligence was creative, obscure. He could guess piano notes from thin air, could deceive someone without them suspecting a thing, could think around problems to find a faultless solution. It meant he was the perfect person to think of a plan for how to convey the fact that they were still as powerful as they had ever been.

“How do you mean?” Seokjin asked, not in a dismissive way but in pure curiosity, looking to review Taehyung’s words.

“I could decorate the body,” the younger said vaguely, making wide gestures with his hands. “Write something to convey an actual message,” he finished with a shrug, arms falling back down to his sides.

*Oh*, that was good. A mix of morbidity and art, something unmissable, that people would understand as soon as the name and occupation was announced. If people learned that one of Namjoon and Seokjin’s guards died, and it was actually wider knowledge, then there was a reason people were allowed to find out. For status of a height such as theirs, nothing was known to outsiders unless the couple wanted it to be, the power of money helping them when fear didn’t quite do the job. People would know it was a threat.

“If we put the body somewhere public then everyone will know in hours,” Jeongguk murmured, Yoongi able to see the cogs in everyone’s brains working from where he was sat.

“Exactly,” Hoseok smirked, nodding his head.
“As long as it cannot be traced back to us legally, I’m all for it,” Namjoon approved, making the group in front of him almost beam with delight.

It was always a special thing to impress the genius that was Kim Namjoon, what with him being a notorious perfectionist in everything business related and all. He always checked every factor and was extremely thorough, extremely delicate with the company despite being the clumsiest man alive. An idea getting past Namjoon must mean it was good, perfectly suitable for the situation at hand, and that was enough to fill the four teenagers with an overflowing sense of self pride.

“Good thinking, I’m sure we can leave this in your hands?” Seokjin said as he smiled, writing some words on a piece of scrapped lined paper.

“We won’t make any mistakes,” Hoseok swore, the others agreeing enthusiastically.

“We know, we trust you all,” Jin stated, his smile still gracing his face.

It seemed nice, the approval of both their parents. Yoongi felt a twinge of jealousy, a twinge of sadness escape from his heart where it had been hidden. It was less often that Yoongi got the nod of agreement compared to the others, less often that he was allowed to do what he wanted to do. Sure, he knew the reasons why, was aware of the fact he perhaps couldn’t cope as well on his own, but it still hurt. But if he was better, if he listened and did everything he was told to, maybe they would be as proud of him as they were the others, just maybe.

“Let me get my smaller knife, then we can go,” Taehyung almost bounced, rushing over to a cabinet in the corner of the room where various knick-knacks and weapons were stored side by side.

“If he’s still alive when we get back, we could see which letter he stays conscious to,” Jimin smirked sadistically, making Taehyung match his smile.

It was probably concerning, how used to comments like that Yoongi was, how much he didn’t think the words were odd. Jimin and Taehyung had always said generally questionable things, and by now Yoongi expected it. Perhaps that was why he hadn’t noticed their slow decent into changing personalities, the near-madness which crept into their actions, because to some element it was always there, under the surface.

Concentrating on the duo which was looking through a draw of knives, Yoongi almost missed
Jeongguk coming to join him, a small, fond smile on his face. Something in the back of his mind kept reminding him of the way they younger had acted, the darkness in his eyes that emerged so rarely. The image was almost frightening, until Yoongi remembered context. Jeongguk was defending him, was teaching the lesson that Yoongi was untouchable, was his, and all hesitancy rushed out of his thoughts.

“Are you okay, love?” Jeongguk asked with an affectionate tone, sitting next to Yoongi on the small couch and pulling the elder against himself.

And Jeongguk was so sweet, that he would never lay a hand on Yoongi. The elder was almost stupid to even have thought that his boyfriend had an element of danger towards him, because this was Jeongguk. Jeongguk, who loved anime and Marvel and singing pop songs to Yoongi when dancing under stars, who was always so gentle and considerate and just a perfect human being. There was no element to his character that ever made Yoongi wish he would change, even his protective tendencies sometimes just too sweet, too thoughtful. There wasn’t a single bit of him that Yoongi didn’t love to pieces.

“Yeah, why wouldn’t I be?” Yoongi returned with mild puzzlement on his face, pretending to pout as the younger pulled him practically onto his lap.

“You weren’t there when we came out; I assumed you left because it was too much,” he shrugged, stroking a gentle, bruised hand over Yoongi’s cheek, jaw.

That made Yoongi melt, feel like his bones had just completely liquefied and made his mind turn to clouds. The younger always knew everything about Yoongi, and showed it in such a nonchalant way, not trying to brag or display how good he was as a boyfriend but only using it for his genuine concerns. It just set Jeongguk up on a different level to almost anyone else Yoongi had ever met, because he was so purely selfless, purely focused on the needs of others. It made Yoongi’s heart feel move alive, love dripping from every movement.

“I did,” Yoongi admitted, feeling Jeongguk breathing against his ear. “But I’m okay now, I promise,” he said, sending a soft smile in the youngest’s direction, trying to convey just how much he was in love.

“I’m happy to hear,” Jeongguk murmured, pressing his nose into the side of Yoongi’s temple, pressing kisses to whatever skin he could reach.

The kisses continued for a while, eventually trailing down Yoongi’s cheek, his jaw, rising at the chin to finally let their lips brush over each other, the picture of gentleness. Every touch was slow,
soft, Jeongguk keeping the pace so sweet and intimate that it made butterflies appear in Yoongi’s stomach, wings fluttering almost against his skin.

A hand came up to steady Yoongi’s jaw, thumbs stroking small circles into his skin just as slow as the movement of Jeongguk’s lips, making a sigh fall from Yoongi’s mouth. It was just so natural, the way Jeongguk’s tongue carefully slipped past Yoongi’s own, but still staying almost innocent, nothing about anything screaming lust, or any other questionable intentions. It was just perfect, and Yoongi felt almost lightheaded as Jeongguk pulled away, pressing a final kiss to his slightly swollen lips.

“Jeongguk, c’mon, he might be dead by now,” Hoseok called from the door, making Jeongguk huff as he was forced to gently position Yoongi in the same position as before against the fluffy pillows.

Parting was always harder when their time had been so short together, barely minutes to themselves to relax in each other’s presence. Sure, Yoongi knew the younger would return, would be back by his side by dinner, but there was always a vacant place in Yoongi’s chest when he wasn’t within reaching distance, when he couldn’t just take his hand. For a second, Yoongi considered asking Jeongguk to stay, but he decided against it. There were things the younger needed to do, and Yoongi wouldn’t let him brush off responsibilities from Namjoon and Seokjin just because his boyfriend was feeling needy.

“I need to go,” the taller quietly murmured, standing but staying right by Yoongi’s side for just a moment more. “I love you so much,” Jeongguk promised, taking one of Yoongi’s hands and kissing the knuckles one by one, the skin so much paler than the hands holding them, bruising and scratches on his knuckles becoming more visible.

“I love you too, don’t be too long or get into trouble,” Yoongi couldn’t help but giggle, pulling Jeongguk down buy the black tie looped around his shirt collar.

“I can’t make any promises,” Jeongguk said so low it might as well have been a whisper, one last kiss pressed onto Yoongi’s lips before Jeongguk had to move to the door.

Watching him leave was difficult, but Namjoon and Seokjin softly calling his name pulled him away from his focus on the doorway. The pair still looked to be sorting through millions of sheets, enough paper to look like they killed a whole forest, paragraphs upon paragraphs of words and information. Honestly, Yoongi always found all of the paperwork boring, didn’t envy Jeongguk when he had to stay up and read through documents when Yoongi was starting to fall asleep. Sure, some of it was interesting, but the details of deals wasn’t exactly the most thrilling topic to read about.
“Honey, could you do us a favour?” Seokjin asked, huffing as a page fluttered to the floor as it slid off of a pile.

Despite his loathing of it, the sheer amount of paper was making Yoongi feel sorry for the elder couple, even if it was technically their job. He had watched his family suffer through reviews and data checks, Namjoon and Seokjin in the habit of looking over their general status once a month, but that meant paperwork. The least he could do was help for a few hours, perhaps save them just a fraction of the work.

“Sure,” Yoongi yawned, already uncurling himself from the seat to move closer to the desk.

“Can you just help us look through these? Try and find an error in money transactions, or anything of the sort,” Seokjin asked, Yoongi’s suspicions about the favour right.

He just nodded, sighing deeply as he pulled one of the chairs closer to the side of the desk, gracelessly depositing himself onto the surface. It wasn’t like Namjoon and Seokjin were deluded into thinking that Yoongi adored the work, they knew exactly how tedious he found the small lettering, the constant droning of terms he had forgotten the meaning of right after he learnt it in the first place. But budgeting was something Yoongi could do, the numbers easy enough to read even if he felt more like sleeping.

“Why are you doing this?” Yoongi questioned out of interest, yawning as he picked up the first pile of papers.

The check Namjoon and Seokjin normally did wasn’t this extensive, and Yoongi thought they only did a review just last week, the timing of this one extremely off. There was probably a good reason, but the only thing Yoongi could think of was that he had been staring at the same number for a good half a minute by now. This would prove to take a while, especially when there seemed to be a million sheets on the table.

“We just want to check we aren’t being robbed as well as being stabbed in the back.” Namjoon said as he pushed his jaw forward, eyes fixed on the paragraph in front of him.

Ah, that made sense. Despite security being so complex, what was stopping a treacherous employee from sharing details about wealth, perhaps slipping a code to their boss which led straight to the Kim bank account? It would be highly foolish, if someone tried to steal something from right under their noses, and that sort of event would make Yoongi question whether all the people in their industry were incredibly brave, or incredibly stupid.
“Don’t you have accountants?” He whined, Seokjin laughing humorously beside him.

“Can we trust them?”

And that was the problem, now wasn’t it? Trust, loyalty, fuelled by fear, money, admiration. In a time like this, it was dangerous to think anyone outside their family was completely faultless in their dedication to the company. Even if Namjoon and Seokjin were the best employers imaginable, people could always offer more money, a higher status. Until the situation is resolved, Yoongi couldn’t see himself trusting anyone he didn’t consider family, paranoia racing through his blood.

Shuffling though the papers, Yoongi worked in silence, and actually found himself kind of enjoying the repetitive numbers, the patterns and the rhythms. In the past, he had only ever worked with pages from social deals, the ones which recounted conversations and detailed journalistic reports, which was what he hated. It was the same thing each time, and not in a rhythmic way, but in a painstakingly boring, please-kill-me-now way. However now, Yoongi found the information just slotting into place in his mind, able to read the pages like they contained the A, B, C and not months worth of financial exchanges and economic deals. It was nice, to have something he understood, and he played with the idea of becoming more involved in paperwork in future, able to contribute to the business without being in danger.

Namjoon’s phone startled them all from their work as it pinged quietly, screen lighting up in the indication of a message. He picked up the mobile, and Yoongi saw no hint of what it was about in the elder’s expression, face uncharacteristically blank and emotionless. After just a second, he put the devise back where it was near the edge of the dark oak desk, instead grasping the remote for the television and switching it on, the news coming up immediately.

It took Yoongi’s eyes a while to focus on the screen, but eventually he could watch the woman who was talking, her red dress almost blending into the background of the studio. She looked serious as she spoke, eyes subtly reading from the prompter which must have been in front of her, hands clasped firmly at her sides. The voice coming from the speakers was monotonal, almost robotic as she recited the latest things on her prompter.

“The body found was of thirty four year old John Baker, who had been working as a security guard in the main headquarters of the Kim Company, which had just permanently settled in America a year ago,” she droned, and Yoongi found himself focused on the words while trying to ignore everything else about her. “The body was mutilated by what seems to be a knife, stab wounds found all over the figure as well as signs of beatings, the murderers writing the words ‘you’re next’ in not only English, but Korean as well. This suggests the question of whether this was a message to the billionaire couple and their four heirs, or a threat. Earlier this year, the couple denounced one
of their heirs Yoongi Kim, and there are rumours surrounding the situatio-

Namjoon muted the television with the remote, a smile growing over his face and making his dimples be on full display, although they looked odd when paired with the look in his eyes.

“All let’s watch the infestation squirm.”

Chapter End Notes

On another note,, the first story in this series has reached 4000 hits!!! I'm actually kind of freaking out, thank you all so much for reading my writings!
Immediately the next day over breakfast, Namjoon informed them that they had had multiple resignations just that night, a pleased look decorating his features as he buttered a piece of toast. The evidence of their plan working appearing so soon made Yoongi laugh quietly, mind just filled with disbelief. Did people not think they knew what they were doing? Did they really think they could run?

In fact, the whole table looked very pleased with themselves, everybody’s moods much higher than yesterday, spirits rejuvenated. Jeongguk was humming a low tune as he ate his egg with his chopsticks, occasionally sending smiles in Yoongi’s direction, beaming when their eyes met. The others weren’t much better, Jimin and Taehyung almost knocking over their drinks numerous times because of their pent up energy, Hoseok and Seokjin being even louder and extravagant in their movements.

It was so nice to see, Yoongi being happier about his family’s moods rather than the situation itself. Sure, it was good that they had managed to find people so soon, could further the investigation immediately, but it was the look on Jeongguk’s face which was the most rewarding thing. It was rare that everyone was so happy, situations and deals and tasks all piling up until it was hard to breathe, but now it seemed like there was a breeze of new air in the smaller dining room, fresh and relaxing.

Yoongi found his mood elated throughout the whole time he was eating, the meal not tasting bland or boring like everything had on his tongue recently. The change was definitely welcome, especially when he knew Seokjin had to manage and observe all the food preparation, at least until they finished flushing out the traitors. It was a precaution, and Yoongi knew the eldest wouldn’t absolutely hate it anyhow, cooking one of his hobbies when he needed a distraction from the criminal empire he co-ran. The bursts of flavour against his tongue was something Yoongi didn’t even realise he was being deprived of, the tasteless food almost the norm for him.

“I’m not going to chair a meeting for the situation,” Namjoon said as he put his cutlery down, dabbing at his mouth gently with a napkin.

The statement made Yoongi frown in slight confusion, a weird juxtaposition to how ecstatic to how he felt. Nearly every single thing they did required a meeting of some sort, needed to be checked by others or just reviewed by family members to ensure no stone was left unturned, all possibilities were open. This was arguably one of the most important and threatening situations that they had even been in, and Yoongi expected there to be not one but almost hundreds of meetings to be held to sort out arrangements.

“Why?” Hoseok exclaimed, eyes wide in surprise, the perfect expression to Yoongi’s confusion.
The rest of the teenagers around the table had almost matching faces, surprised but still feeling high from the happy hormones circulating their bodies. It would have been funny had Yoongi also not been so confused, different possibilities running through his mind. At the end of the table, however, Seokjin still looked as content as before, Namjoon must have had run his plan through the elder first before bringing it to the table.

“Well,” Namjoon started, stirring his tea in a steady rhythm. “First of all, we can’t trust any of the board members at this very second,” he explained, and everything was slotting together like puzzle pieces in Yoongi’s brain. “And we need to do this subtly; a meeting would bring too much attention to what we were doing, people may realise what we are planning.”

“Well, what are we planning?” Hoseok asked, tapping his chopsticks lightly on the plate to some sort of rhythm.

There was a moment of silence, the tapping of metal on porcelain the only audible thing echoing through the room. Yoongi didn’t quite know what everyone was thinking, didn’t even attempt to guess Jimin or Taehyung’s thought process, or that of anyone else in the company. He was quite sure of his own thoughts, however, the uncurling scheme winding its way from around his brain to the inside of it, painting a crystal clear image.

These people are here to kill them, kill Yoongi, and they should be treated how they just treated their employers. As much as he disliked it, Yoongi knew the answer lied in pain, in their deaths. It was a lesson that needed to be taught, and Namjoon and Seokjin never got to where they were, their infinite status and height, from showing mercy to people who betrayed them. Even if Yoongi didn’t want to be involved himself, ultimately he knew the score.

“There are three targets,” Seokjin declared, holding up three fingers of his left hand. “All guards, all from different sectors.”

At that, Yoongi watched the others’ heads shoot up like dogs when called, eyes fixed on the raised fingers. Three targets, that was more than Yoongi thought it would be. Three meant there was a possibility that there were three more different companies out for Yoongi’s head, three more that wanted him as dead as a doornail and out of the way. The idea of four differing leaders plotting his demise, almost felt like a compliment if it wasn’t so terrifying.

“Jeongguk,” Seokjin called first, making the youngest’s eyes dart from his fingers to his face. “You take Madeline Abbot,” he allotted, and Yoongi watched his boyfriend nod, expression firm.
It meant he was already in the headspace he gets in when he has a task, the focused dedication he had when he had to hunt down someone, kill or capture them. It was something Yoongi used to find unsettling, but now it seemed just as much of a part of Jeongguk as the rest of him. Yoongi couldn’t help but still love him, love the side of him that loved to watch people suffer, because it was all just a single puzzle piece in the whole picture that was Jeongguk.

“Taehyung,” Jin continued, having lowered one of his fingers. “You take Kaito Tanaka.”

At the words, another finger was lowered and Taehyung echoed Jeongguk with his nod or agreement, already an invisible mask in place over his face. He had the same determination, the same stern look in his eyes, but the difference was that there was something darker, the underlying thing that Yoongi couldn’t deny the existence of anymore, a blood thirsty sharpness of his gaze.

“And Jimin, you take Afik Ambako,” Seokjin finished, his final finger falling down.

Jimin didn’t move for a second, looking like a statue, before a smile grew from the corners of his mouth over his lips, a single slow nod signalling his agreement. The simple motion paired with the half lidded stare of the younger’s eyes made a chill run down Yoongi’s back, small enough that he could conceal it. The smile didn’t leave Jimin’s face as he kept his eyes contact with the eldest, instead it stretched to show a hint of his teeth, which looked sharper in the light than ever before. It wasn’t intimidating, per se, in fact it almost made Yoongi feel better in an odd way, because he knew Jimin would succeed, even if he did it in a way Yoongi would disagree with.

“What about me?” Hoseok asked from where he was sat, eyes curious.

Namjoon seemed to share a look with Seokjin, small little twirks of their eyebrows and lips displaying a full conversation that nobody elder could even begin to understand. It was fascinating to watch, and Yoongi saw Hoseok looking fixatedly at the pair, eyes darting from face to face.

“Hoseok,” Namjoon eventually spoke, turning from Jin to face the others at the table. “We have some things to discuss with you about plans further than just hunting the traitors, which we’ll need to talk about in the office,” he said, and Yoongi watched Hoseok’s chest almost inflate, his back straightening where he sat.

He had every right to be proud of the role. It was an important thing, to be allowed to partake in a discussion that Namjoon and Seokjin would generally either hold with the whole family, or just each other. But Yoongi knew Hoseok had proven himself over and over, was the next in line for a leadership role, especially when he had years’ worth of experience and learning. It would be good for his confidence, to be able to make important decisions with the pair, and Yoongi let the pride
he felt form a smile on his face.

“Yoongi,” Seokjin called, making the younger startle from his pride in his best friend to focus on one of his parents, which looked just as fond. “Is there anything specific you want to do?” He asked, and Yoongi felt his own rush of self-accomplishment.

By them asking what he wanted to do, they were giving him an option. It was a display of trust, in a way, letting Yoongi decide what he was safe to do, what his limits were. There were so many instances where all of Yoongi’s decisions were made for him, where his family tried to dictate what he could do in the name of protection, safety. The question allowed Yoongi to think for himself, and he watched Jeongguk shoot him a small smile, taking his hand under the table and squeezing it in encouragement.

The action was all the support Yoongi needed, a small smile forming on his face again as he thought of what he was going to say. He knew his strengths didn’t lie in what the three youngest were doing, hunting people down not really his thing when it would most likely involve an elaborate chase and fight of wit. Yoongi would be good at the strategy side of things, but not the actual capture, especially if the people were as dangerous as Yoongi believed they were.

However, his time doing the work yesterday has almost seemed to open a new window in his mind. The pages weren’t that bad to sort through, especially when they were so easy to read, and Yoongi couldn’t help liken them to the pages and pages of staves he had in his studio, filled with printed or messily handwritten music notes. Yoongi realised he had been too harsh on the paperwork, realising the boring deal report details wasn’t the only option. It made him feel like he was a part of the family trade without the danger, without his boyfriend or parents being overly paranoid about his safety, where he was or what he was doing.

“Can I carry on going through the papers?” He decided to ask quietly, an uncertain undertone bleeding through the words.

When he had decided to no longer be a part of the company, his family had looked completely over the moon at the choice. Each person had seemed relieved, thankful, like a heavy weight was raised from their shoulders, and that weight was Yoongi. It made him doubt that he would be allowed to become involved again, even just behind the scenes. Rejection wasn’t something Yoongi could ever take lightly, and he dreaded the idea that his parents would refuse his request, that Jeongguk would make him change his mind in that subtle, quiet way of his.

“If that’s what you want to do,” Seokjin began to say, and instead of the look Yoongi was praying not to see, the eldest had a small smile on his face. “They’re all yours,” he assured him, and Yoongi felt a breath leave from between his lips, Jeongguk’s hand squeezing his reassuringly.
“You can come with Hoseok, then,” Namjoon added, a smile on his face to match his partner’s.

A warm feeling flooded through Yoongi’s body, starting at the place his skin made contact with Jeongguk and spreading up his arm, into his chest and then trailing down all his limbs, pooling mainly in his gut. It made his heart seem to beat a little faster, eyes open a little wider and brain become a little more active, fireworks shooting off behind his eyelids as he blinked. He never knew making his own decisions, deciding his own way would feel so good, so rewarding, almost alike to the first time he had kissed Jeongguk, the same sort of euphoria.

Hoseok beamed from where he was sat, and Yoongi felt like there was a warmth on his skin from the sheer brightness of the expression, the smile as shining as the sun. Jimin and Taehyung’s expressions seemed to match, and there was a glimmer of pride behind each of their eyes, a fraction of the amount Jeongguk was sending his way. The youngest looked almost as joyful as Yoongi felt, bunny teeth on full show, looking so handsome it almost made Yoongi forget how to breathe.

“Who would have thought you would be happy to do paperwork,” Jeongguk murmured lightly into his ear, pressing a kiss to Yoongi’s temple.

“I think that maybe an office job is the thing for me,” the elder whispered back, Jeongguk letting a small laugh fall from his lips.

Seokjin cleared his throat, and Yoongi exchanged a humoured look with his boyfriend, but ultimately turned back to face the elder pair at the head of the table. Both of their parents had small smiles on their faces, Namjoon trying to cover his with a cough, looking far too fond for such an important meeting. This was quickly resolved in a few seconds, serious veils once again falling over their faces, but Yoongi could still see the lingering signs of affection in everyone’s expressions.

“Final notes,” Namjoon announced, drawing all six pairs of eyes to himself. “People have to be brought in alive,” he emphasised, sending pointed looks at Jimin and Taehyung. “But definite consciousness is the only thing we need, so don’t hold back when detaining them.”

He received three serious nods of the maknae line’s heads, their expressions emotionless until Yoongi saw a small smirk grow across Jimin’s lips, the corners of his mouth quirking up. They all appeared to be completely focused, eyes watching Namjoon and Seokjin for their dismissal, muscles tense like they were poised to run out the door. The eagerness made Yoongi huff a soft smile, squeezing Jeongguk’s hand which was still grasping his own, making the younger squeeze back.
“Get prepared, then meet us at the office by noon to go over individual plans for approval,” Seokjin waved his hand vaguely in the direction of the door, the action almost teasing. “You are dismissed.”

As soon as the words were uttered, Jimin and Taehyung were bounding out the door, probably in the direction of the armoury down the hall. It made Seokjin roll his eyes, Namjoon huffing a laugh, Hoseok not able to resist the beaming smile which invaded his serious expression. Jeongguk wasn’t as excitable as the other two, sighing at their antics before he kissed Yoongi chastely on the lips, giving his hand one last squeeze as he let go to follow the duo.

As soon as they were out of eyeshot, Hoseok reached his arms up in a stretch, groaning loudly as he let his limbs fall to his sides again. Still smiling widely, the younger jumped up, stretching again and starting to wander towards where Yoongi was sat on the opposite side of the table, letting himself slump down into Jeongguk’s vacant seat dramatically. Namjoon and Seokjin were talking amongst themselves, so Yoongi completely directed his attention towards his best friend.

“You know he’s happy that you’re doing this, right?” Hoseok declared, and Yoongi cocked an eyebrow at him in confusion.

“Huh?”

“Jeongguk, I mean,” he shrugged, straightening the tablecloth. “He’s happy you’re making your own decisions, doing what you want and not what you think people want you to do.”

For a minute, Yoongi was speechless. It seemed like a random thing to comment on, and if he was being honest Yoongi didn’t even consider the idea Jeongguk wanted him to do anything in particular, especially not paperwork. Hoseok must have still noted his confusion, because he smiled as he draped one of his legs over Yoongi’s lap, squeezing the elder’s cheeks.

“He doesn’t want you to be trapped, but he doesn’t want you to be in danger,” he explained, squishing Yoongi’s face to make his lips protrude out. “He’s happy you like what you’re doing, isn’t Gukkie a sweetheart.”

Still lost for words, Yoongi thought over what he was told. Sure, he knew Jeongguk didn’t want him to feel like a prisoner in his own home, but he never knew the younger cared so much about what he was doing. Looking back at it now, it seemed like something so important, Jeongguk always caring for his happiness, his emotions, but he just didn’t think of the fact it applied so
strongly to work, what he did in the company. Of course, it made sense, but Yoongi just hadn’t thought of it.

“Wait,” Yoongi frowned, almost just as confused as before. “How do you know?”

At that, Hoseok shrugged nonchalantly, picking at one of the threads on the tablecloth fabric. Yoongi watched him with full focus, but the younger didn’t even seem bothered by the question, didn’t seem to mind that Yoongi had no clue how he knew the inner workings of Jeongguk’s mind.

“Oh, he told us,” Hoseok said, still distracted. “Asked for relationship advice despite being the only one in a long term relationship, like, ever,” he scoffed, but Yoongi was still looking at him like he had grown another head or something, eyes wide and lips slightly separated.

“He asks you for relationship advice?” The elder spluttered, feeling a blush growing up his neck and over his face.

Yoongi wouldn’t have even guessed Jeongguk talked to the others about them, about him. The younger just seemed so confident and natural about almost everything. Sure, he was slightly timid and shy when he first came to live with their family, but by a month later he and Yoongi were already together, and Jeongguk just always seemed so certain in actions. Yoongi himself consulted Seokjin for advice sometimes, but he would never have even thought Jeongguk needed any sort of guidance.

“And Minnie and Tae,” Hoseok added almost like an afterthought, scratching the skin near his eyebrow. “I just thought I’d tell you, he’s happy you’re happy.”

“Well then I’m happy too,” Yoongi answered, still feeling the skin on his cheeks almost radiate warmth from his blush.

Even if it wasn’t something he had thought about, the notion of it now made Yoongi’s heart flutter in his chest. It meant a lot, that Jeongguk was so concerned about how he felt, what he wanted to do. The feeling was almost rewarding, that he had made the most precious person in his life content, happy. So many decisions Yoongi made in life were in an attempt to please the younger, trying to keep himself out of trouble so Jeongguk didn’t have yet another thing to worry about, to monitor. The fact that he was so overjoyed Yoongi chose to do work, paperwork at that, made a warm blanket swaddle the organs in his chest.
“You two are just adorable,” Hoseok cooed, and Yoongi batted away the hand that came back to grasp at Yoongi’s face again.

“Shut up,” he scowled, but he knew the words didn’t hold any power, Hoseok just laughing.

“Like a basket of kittens,” the younger proclaimed loudly, trying to reach over to ruffle Yoongi’s hair and avoid the soft punches the other was throwing. “Fluffy kittens,” he continued, not heeding Yoongi’s little screams of protest. “With cute, little bell collars-”

At that, Yoongi finally managed to throw the younger’s leg off of his lap, managing to fight off the hands which were attempting to drag him closer. Hoseok was laughing, a sound like chimes, and Yoongi was finding it so hard to fight back the compulsion to let the smile he was trying to resist grace his features, the laughs he was swallowing leave his mouth.

“I’m going to kill you,” he tried to threaten, but the words turned into small giggles as Hoseok managed to get through his defences, managing to pinch Yoongi’s flushed cheeks. “Hey!”

As Hoseok tried to stop the fist Yoongi directed towards his abdomen, he accidently toppled from his own chair onto Yoongi, pressing the elder down even firmer and causing Hoseok to laugh in supposed victory, removing his hands from Yoongi’s face in an attempt to latch hold of his wrists. Noticing what the other was attempting, Yoongi tried to evade Hoseok’s grasp, managing to almost knock his best friend to the floor until he got a better grip on the back of the chair, finally catching Yoongi’s pale arms.

“You two should go and get ready to go,” Namjoon called from the other side of the table, making Hoseok release Yoongi with a huff, his victory short lived.

“Affirmative,” the younger answered, stumbling as he stood up from having his weight on Yoongi, almost causing Yoongi to slide off the chair to the floor.

Gasping a breath in relief, the smaller let himself just relax on the seat for a moment, body almost limp. Eventually, Yoongi pulled himself to his feet, pulling his rumpled shirt down to smooth the creases, unsuccessfully trying to fix his hair even slightly before he left the room. Naturally, he gave up after the same strand refused to go down after the third attempt, huffing in surrender as he bumped his shoulder lightly into Hoseok’s, making the other smile as they both began to walk towards the doorway together.
The walk to the staircase was almost silent, occasionally a huff of breath coming from Hoseok, but nothing past that. The other’s company was nice, and Yoongi was already feeling thankful for his light heartedness in a situation like the one at present, with at least two companies trying to kill him. It was like a time out, Yoongi sure he could concentrate so much more now that the forefront of his mind wasn’t occupied by serious business.

“Don’t tell Jeongguk I told you that he was happy you were happy, he’ll probably bench press me or something,” Hoseok requested as they began to climb the stairs, slowing wandering up both flights in order to get to their bedrooms.

“I’ll tell him if you compare me to a kitten ever again,” Yoongi threatened, rolling his eyes.

Honestly, it was a repeated offence that everyone in the house somehow understood, every family member at least once calling him some sort of feline. It wasn’t annoying per se, in fact at times Yoongi was quite fond of it, but it made him embarrassed. Yoongi’s skin was so pale, any blush on his cheeks showed up as bright as a torch, making Yoongi almost replicate a traffic light.

“But you literally look like-” the younger began to protest, but Yoongi cut him off.

“You don’t even believe in God,” he exchanged, making a burst of giggles erupt from Yoongi’s throat, lightly pushing Hoseok away in the direction on his own room once they reached Yoongi and Jeongguk’s door.

“Just get ready,” Yoongi sighed, ducking Hoseok’s lunge for a hug, quickly entering through the open door.

“Aye aye, Captain,” Hoseok hummed, wandering back down the corridor to where his room was, waving enthusiastically as he entered and went out of eyeshot.

Yoongi sighed at the other’s antics, a smile still refusing to leave his lips as he moved to in front of his own door, turning the handle as it opened inwards. He walked into the room, but froze about a metre away from the hallway behind him, the smile sliding off of his features. Any of the lingering joy from the morning had melted away, pooling at his feet and seeping through the floor, staining the carpet.
The room wasn’t empty like Yoongi thought it was, Jeongguk standing with his back to Yoongi as he peered through the wardrobe, retrieving a white shirt. What made Yoongi freeze was the younger’s bare back, the skin on show perfectly to where Yoongi was standing, and the elder’s eyes were fixed on his shoulder. His once flawless skin was scarred, discoloured a deeper brown, the tissue in almost folds near to the dip where the bullet must have been.

It was the first time Yoongi was seeing it, and realistically he knew what it should look like, had felt the raised skin and seen plenty of gunshot wounds before, but on Jeongguk it was different. It must have been a messy surgery removal, the semi-bulletproof jacket helping to stop the bullet partially but making the entry much messier, skin scarred all around the main entry point. It looked painful, and the sight made a strong pang throb deep in Yoongi’s chest, almost like a bullet was hitting him instead.

As he shrugged on the new shirt, Jeongguk turned, freezing just as Yoongi did as he spotted the elder at the door. His eyes were wide, lips parting as he stared at Yoongi, slowly letting his arms drop to his sides from where they were gripping the sides of the fabric, still unbuttoned. Despite not being able to see it anymore, the image of the scar was ingrained in Yoongi’s mind, flashing as he kept his gaze linked with Jeongguk’s.

Nothing in the room moved until Yoongi slowly walked forward, reaching out to place one of his paler hands on Jeongguk’s cheek, gently stroking the skin with his thumb. He didn’t let their eyes break as the other hand trailed under the other’s loose shirt, slowly moving upwards to graze over where the scar was on Jeongguk’s shoulder. It felt no different, but now Yoongi could imagine the way it looked, knew where the skin was darker, where the scarring completely stopped.

Leaving Jeongguk enough time to protest, he started to gently take the shirt off of the younger’s body, letting the white fabric fall carelessly to the floor, leaving Jeongguk’s top half exposed. Yoongi watched him close his eyes, but he made no protest to stop the smaller from slowly rounding his side, letting his hands linger along his skin before he came before the damaged shoulder.

It was just as he remembered it from moments before, looking no different up close than it did from a distance, only more defined. Tracing it with fingers from one hand, Yoongi heard the other let out a breath, although Jeongguk made no further action to stop Yoongi, or tell him to just leave it. Even though, Yoongi could sense the hesitancy, the slight discomfort.

The elder lent forward, gently pressing his lips to the scar, slowly caressing the skin of Jeongguk’s back until his hands fell to wrap around the other’s waist, moving closer to him in order for Yoongi to rest his forehead on the back of Jeongguk’s neck, closing his eyes. The familiar scent of Jeongguk’s shampoo and cologne mixed together, both floral and making Yoongi feel like he was in a meadow, there with Jeongguk in a time that was easier, where the only thing they had to worry about was the weather.
“You’re still as perfect as before,” Yoongi whispered in promise, breath making Jeongguk shiver slightly.

Jeongguk stayed silent, gently positioning his hands over Yoongi’s, just holding on. His thumbs were dipping below Yoongi’s wrists, caressing the scar tissue that ran on the underside of each joint, just as careful as Yoongi had been seconds before. They must have spent minutes like that, just slightly swaying to a song only they could hear, Yoongi’s hand not leaving the back of Jeongguk’s neck, the younger not moving to pull away. It was peaceful, relaxing, all other thoughts that weren’t directed to the other in love leaving Yoongi’s head.

Almost out of nowhere, Jeongguk pulled Yoongi’s arms gently from around his body, turning to embrace Yoongi from the front, cradling the smaller’s body in his careful grip. Yoongi let his hands rest on Jeongguk’s chest, feeling the faint throb of his heart beneath his skin, letting the younger just hold him. He knew Jeongguk found it comforting, knew it helped him feel comfortable in his own skin, so he just swayed again in his hold, occasionally pressing kisses to the honey skin.

Eventually, they had to part, hearing Jimin and Taehyung talking loudly as they moved along the hallway, most likely in the direction of the stairs. Bending down, Yoongi grasped the discarded shirt in his hand, picking it up from the floor and gently pulling it onto Jeongguk’s body, doing up the buttons slowly and straightening out the collar, making sure there were no creases left, tucking it into Jeongguk’s belt.

“I love you,” Yoongi reminded him in a murmur, pressing a kiss to Jeongguk’s cheek and letting his lips linger on the skin.

Shifting his head, the younger pressed his mouth to Yoongi’s, slowly kissing him sweetly, hands rising to cup Yoongi’s jaw. It was all so gentle, and Yoongi felt every single piece of love he could ever feel point to Jeongguk like an arrow, making his lips heat up where the other was still pressing. The swipe of tongue at his lips coaxed Yoongi to let Jeongguk enter, but it was still so slow, somehow innocent despite the actions, not an ounce of heat.

Moving away slightly, Yoongi let the grip he had on Jeongguk’s shirt fall, once again having to smooth down the creases. From the dresser, Jeongguk reached to grab the dark purple tie he had probably placed there beforehand, Yoongi taking it from him and gently threading it under the shirt collar, tying it neatly and pulling him into one final short kiss.

“I love you,” Jeongguk echoed from before, bringing his hands up to caress Yoongi’s cheeks before he pulled away, moving the small distance to the wardrobe and grabbing a black blazer,
pulling it on over the shirt.

With one last gentle kiss pressed on Yoongi’s temple, he was walking out the door, leaving Yoongi in the now empty room, a bittersweet taste left on the elder’s tongue.
Okay but why is the new ARMY.ZIP thing or whatever trailer reminding me of this fic???? Help????

Namjoon and Seokjin’s office was in a much messier state than it normally was. Both of the elder’s desks were absolutely covered in paper, Yoongi sat behind one while Hoseok and the elder couple were pouring over information on the other, talking to each other in low tones. It would almost seem like they were trying to keep it a secret from Yoongi if he didn’t know that they were all just too engrossed in thinking to even notice their volume, let alone try to hide the topic.

Yoongi’s paperwork was just the same as before, and he found it relaxing to survey the lines and lines of numbers, checking for any irregular changes in the pattern. So far, there had only been one anomaly, but Namjoon quickly recognised the hiccup from the time their deal cut off with the Goldcerd company last year, Yoongi quickly disposing of that particular piece of paper. Perhaps it should have been boring, but all it was to Yoongi was therapeutic, the constant stream of numbers giving him something to do.

Not long ago, the maknae line had made an appearance in the office, all set to hunt down their assigned traitor. Each had a very different plan, Namjoon approving them all with a badly hidden proud smile, Seokjin checking they had the right weapons and resources before they left the building, promising only to come back once they each had their prey.

Jimin had been the first to speak, and Yoongi had been taken aback by his clothing choices for a second. The younger had been wearing a dark red mesh crop-top, his whole upper half visible and not leaving much to the imagination, only further covered by a lacy black robe. His legs had been covered in dark leather, rips so large on the thigh it seemed there was more skin than fabric, Yoongi wondering where on earth all of Jimin’s weapons were stashed. As it turned out, Jimin had found out that his target, Afik Ambako, planned to meet an associate at a strip club in the dark part of the city, and thus Jimin was happy to embrace the role of a worker at the building. It was a surprise to hear that Jimin somehow had four knives and a gun hidden on his body, and Yoongi didn’t even ask where. He wasn’t sure he wanted to know.

As different as could be, Taehyung was dressed like he had just come from a Gucci runway, his clothes black and red and golden in the chandelier’s light, and that wasn’t entirely far from the truth. His target was set to appear at the Gucci showcase which was running that night, and so Taehyung had quickly called up the organisers and managed to get himself booked as one of the models, but Yoongi wasn’t entirely shocked they said yes. After all, the younger was known for his looks worldwide, maybe not as much as Jin but he was getting there. The managers would have
been fools to turn down the offer, especially when it had been Taehyung personally requesting. On that, he had ensured it be kept secret, meaning the poor man he was hunting wouldn’t even have a clue.

Out of all of them, Jeongguk was the most tamely dressed. They hadn’t been able to get any further information on the woman he had been assigned as a target, and thus he was just in a regular suit, prepared for a cat and mouse chase. He planned to search her house, maybe find a lead, and if that failed then he would check security cameras all around the city. It was almost certain she hadn’t left, every exit from the area monitored closely by Namjoon and Seokjin’s men, every airport, train station, road, every possible option all closely watched by constantly changing guards, ensuring there was no way of her knowing if someone she secretly worked with was in a specific place.

As soon as the trio left, Seokjin had immediately grabbed a pile of papers from a shelf, spreading them over his table and starting to pour over them with the other two, Yoongi already happily set up with his own. Up till now, there had been no interruptions, nobody even stirring from outside the office, leaving the family in a concentrated quiet, the only sounds being the other’s mumbling, the turning of pages and swiping of pens. It was actually quite nice, Yoongi enjoying the whole environment, almost as much as the work itself.

The peace was interrupted by the sound of Namjoon’s phone, a text sound making every person in the room look towards the offending object. A second tone seemed to pull everyone from their stares, Namjoon picking up the device to read what was written as a notification on the bright screen, one of his eyebrows rising in what looked like surprise, although he didn’t seem worried which was a good sign.

“Taehyung,” he informed them, Yoongi secretly disappointed to hear that it wasn’t Jeongguk. “And… he’s brought the target, and his… dog?”

There was a moment of silence, everyone taken aback by the statement, but the surprise wore off quickly. Yoongi knew Tae had a love for pets, loved Keopi almost as much as Yoongi, sneaking her extra treats along with Jimin. It was sweet; the normally emotionless or even mad duo paying close attention to the temperamental cat that acted like it owned their house, ensuring she was warm enough, wasn’t lonely. Yoongi had multiple pictures on his phone of either one of his brothers cuddling a shocked looking Keopi on the couch, wide green eyes looking like they were pleading for help.

“How does he even manage things like that?” Seokjin sighed, seeming resigned to the idea as much as Yoongi.

It probably wasn’t a surprise to anyone, really. It reminded Yoongi of the time they had gone on a small family trip to the zoo, before Jeongguk had come to live with them, where Taehyung had
almost begged their parents to let him bring home one of the tiger cubs that were too fluffy for their own good, playfully chasing the butterflies which occasionally passed through the enclosure. Of course, Namjoon and Seokjin had said an immediate no, almost making Taehyung be moody for the rest of the visit until Jimin had found a tiger cub toy, which was equally as fluffy as its real counterpart.

“You know he has a soft spot for animals, him and Jimin,” Namjoon murmured, a small, fond expression being shot in his partner’s direction.

“They’ll kill a man, but refuse to even push a dog,” Hoseok laughed quietly, shaking his head with a smile.

It was funny, to watch the normally murderous pair squeal over a cat they saw in the street, or a dog they passed in a park. They behaved like puppies themselves, bounding over and begging the owner to let them stroke the pet, let them throw a ball or play. In those moments, they both seemed so much younger, happier, nothing like the normal manic facades they possessed. It was nice to witness, and Yoongi wished they were both that happy all the time.

“Will you let him keep the dog?” Yoongi asked, trying with all his might to keep his voice casual.

The thing was, as much as Yoongi loved dogs, they still reminded him of his father. There was the distinct memory of the sound of the snap of Holly’s neck, the lifeless body of the poor poodle on the floor being stained with blood. It didn’t result in Yoongi having a phobia, he didn’t shy away from dogs on the street and even happily petted the ones that approached him, but he was just cautious. He didn’t want another repeat of what happened, really didn’t want the same thing to happen if anyone ever broke into the house, or managed to corner them outside.

“We won’t if it makes you uncomfortable,” Seokjin assured him, of course picking up on Yoongi’s hesitancy. “Taehyung will understand.”

There was no way Taehyung would happily part with the dog, which he had probably already named and bonded with, but Yoongi also knew he would make himself if Yoongi felt too strongly about it. Even if he didn’t hesitate about murder, he was incredibly empathetic about his family’s feelings, sure to find a good home for the dog if he really couldn’t keep it. Although Yoongi wanted him to be able to keep it, wanted Tae to be able to be happy with a pet of his own.

“He’s here in about five minutes,” Namjoon steered them back on course, beginning organise the papers on his desk into a neater pile as opposed to the unorganised mess they were in currently.
“Let’s head to the basement then,” the eldest suggested, making Hoseok stand up just after the pair.

They started to walk towards the door, before Namjoon turned back, walking over to the desk Yoongi was sat at to lean against the chair next to Yoongi’s, making a transparent façade at looking over the paperwork Yoongi had already scanned, pretending to check over it.

“Do you want to come?” Namjoon asked him quietly, a small smile on his face as he reviewed the numbers.

Yoongi took a moment to think, let his thoughts pool in the forefront of his mind so he could sort through all the things rushing in and out of his brain. Even if Yoongi didn’t particularly like watching the torture, he wanted to be there to hear any information relating to the assassination attempts against himself, wanted to know who was responsible for what. Also, another part of his mind wanted to see the pet Taehyung had brought, wanted desperately to like it, feel comfortable with it.

“I want to see the dog,” Yoongi decided, making Hoseok laugh from where he was stood in the doorway.

“Alright then, let’s go,” Namjoon said as he started to stride towards the doorway, Yoongi following right on his heels soon after.

The lift ride down to the lower level was quiet, Hoseok getting into the mindset he always did when they were doing business with others, in this case a traitor. He didn’t change as much as Jimin and Taehyung, and seemed more natural, wearing the same expression he had while dancing, focused and determined on the task. The familiarity helped to ground Yoongi, helped him prepare himself for what was going to happen. Taehyung didn’t shy away from creativity when he was torturing someone, and Yoongi had no doubt he wouldn't tone it down this time.

All the murder attempts had gotten them on edge, the fact people were targeting someone in their inner circle already reason enough for everyone to be angry. In fact, Yoongi was willing to bet that Taehyung had decided to do something especially nasty just because the person had tried to target their family, the only family the younger had ever known. Taehyung was already fiercely protective, and the fact it was weaker Yoongi probably didn’t help things, the younger always seeming like he was worried Yoongi would snap in two if he was pressed even a degree too hard.

Yoongi’s thoughts were proven correct as they approached the same room that was used for the
torture of the first traitor just the day before, the walls cleaned of his blood. The same chair was in the middle of the space, a different man chained down, desperately trying to struggle. Judging by both name and face Yoongi was fairly confident the traitor was Japanese, although that didn’t help with the identification of the company just yet. If someone was skilled enough, they could be hired by anyone, language barriers easily worked around.

Taehyung was stood just outside the room, looking in to the one way glass, his clothes looking slightly more rumpled but nothing major had changed from that morning. As he turned to the others as they approached, Yoongi noticed he was cradling his arm weirdly, for a second thinking he was hurt before he caught sight of a fluffy dark lump in his arms.

The dog didn’t seem like a dog, it seemed more like a puppy. It was a truly tiny Pomeranian, with two little dark eyes looking up curiously, and Yoongi was close to cooing. The dog was mostly black, but he had little ginger lines above his eyes like eyebrows, making him look comically angry at something. He was also ginger by his mouth and tummy, and looked almost like a little teddy in Taehyung’s arms, the animal being swamped against Tae’s broad figure.

“His name is Yeontan!” Was the first thing Taehyung rambled out, thrusting the fluffy puppy in the approaching group’s direction. “Well, no, I named him Yeontan, this piece of shit didn’t bother naming him,” he continued, vaguely gesturing in the room’s direction.

Yeontan let out a small bark, and Taehyung looked enamoured as he pulled the dog back to his chest, a large boxy smile on his face. He held the dog up, and the animal didn’t even squirm, instead seemed quite content with just staying in Taehyung’s grasp. It almost made Yoongi smile when Taehyung leant forward to kiss Yeontan on the nose and the puppy licked his cheek, a quiet shout of joy leaving his mouth.

“Can I keep him?” he asked, trying to make his eyes as large as possible as he looked at their parents, bringing Yeontan back to his chest.

“Tae,” Seokjin said slowly, exchanging a look with Namjoon. “You know Yoongi can feel weird around dogs…” he reminded him, gaze darting from Taehyung to the dog to Yoongi, lips pursed.

Instead of pouting or anything else Yoongi thought the younger might do, he just shrugged nonchalantly, bouncing Yeontan in his arms. It wasn’t that Yoongi presumed Taehyung would have a childish tantrum or anything, but he did know that the other was already incredibly attached to the dog, would feel sad if he wasn’t allowed to keep him.

“Well, I’ll let Yoongi decide while I deal with this,” Taehyung shrugged again, moving over to
drop Yeontan in Yoongi’s arms.

As Taehyung walked to the door of the glass room, Yoongi could only look at the little puppy which looked happy to be held against his chest. He was so tiny, eyebrows twitching occasionally and making him look like a cartoon character, little yelps of joy quietly coming from the little bundle of fluff. Something in Yoongi’s chest melted, and any hesitancy he had about keeping Yeontan faded away in seconds, practically gone when the puppy pawed at Yoongi’s shirt, trying to reach up and see his face.

Yoongi laughed as Yeontan gently licked his face, happy to squirm and climb all over Yoongi’s arms in little movements, legs barely visible under all the dark hair. He really did just look like a spherical ball of fluff, fur tickling Yoongi’s neck and making a large smile grow on his face, Yeontan seeming to let out happy little barks. Yoongi knew there was no way he would want Taehyung to part with the little creature, especially when he was so adorable, Keopi at home also proving to have no problem with the guard dogs which randomly sometimes patrolled the garden, the cat happy to walk alongside the large animals.

No, Yoongi was sure Yeontan would be very welcome in their home. His appearance was different enough that he didn’t see an image of Holly every time he looked at the puppy, but similar enough that Yoongi quickly got attached, wanting to hug the little thing forever. The Pomeranian was finally staying still in his arms, happy to just lie in the crook of one of Yoongi’s elbows, head darting around to look at everything in sight. It was making Yoongi’s heart hurt, and when he looked up he saw Namjoon and Seokjin smiling at him fondly, Yoongi holding the puppy even closer.

A scream was what jolted Yoongi out of his bubble, and for a second he debated looking through the glass to see what Taehyung was doing. He knew the younger would think to do something ungodly, would happily torture the man with no thoughts surrounding ethics, or morals. But this was one of the people sent for Yoongi, one of the people who wouldn’t even think twice about slitting his throat open while he slept. Their suffering was closure, their deaths sealing the idea that another assassin was gone from the Earth.

Taking a breath, Yoongi looked through the darkened glass, not paying attention to Yeontan who started to squirm slightly to get more comfortable. The man was in an identical position to the one Jeongguk had dealt with yesterday, bound so tightly to the chair that even struggling did nothing to let him move. His face was screwed up in pain, gasping breaths from his open mouth, hands gripping tightly onto the arms of the metal chair.

Taehyung stood next to him, face emotionless and completely blank, eyes watching the knife he was holding slide smoothly under the man’s skin. It wasn’t deep, and Yoongi was confused for a minute before Taehyung started directing the knife a different way, the blade eventually emerging from the skin again and something dropped to the floor. Nausea built up in the back of Yoongi’s
throat, his stomach when he realised what the younger was doing as his chosen form of torture.

The traitor was being skinned, tissue falling to the floor and leaving red strips on his body, the man unable to hold back another sound of agony as Taehyung took his time cutting through the layers of skin, occasionally jerking the knife faster in irregular bursts in an attempt to heighten the pain. Watching it made Yoongi’s own skin crawl, like spiders were travelling all up his back, in his blood vessels and muscles. It was unsettling, so unpleasant that after only a moment Yoongi averted his eyes, closing them tightly.

He backed way, Hoseok being the one to notice his departure as Namjoon and Seokjin were dedicating every ounce of their attention to Taehyung’s interrogation, waiting for the man to completely break. The younger looked at Yoongi with concern, but the smaller didn’t have a chance to say anything before the man screamed again, making him flinch.

Deciding to try and block out the sounds, Yoongi carefully put Yeontan down onto the floor, the puppy happy to just run around Yoongi’s legs while he reached into his pocket. Hoseok watched him bring out his earphones, and nodded as Yoongi put them into his ears, turning his music up loudly. It drowned out the man, made a barrier between what Yoongi could hear and what he could see, and he was already more relaxed as he sat on the floor against a plain white wall, coaxing Yeontan over to him.

“You’re so cute,” he crooned at the puppy, and Yoongi assumed he barked by the movement of his mouth, making Yoongi smile. “Let’s find something to play with, huh?”

As it turned out, the sleeve of Yoongi’s hoodie appeared to be the best toy on offer, and Yeontan eagerly tried to wrestle the fabric away from the rest of the item of clothing, pulling with his little teeth. It was an old hoodie anyway, one that Yoongi probably should have thrown away ages ago but he kept forgetting, so the little bite marks in the fabric wasn’t an important change. Yeontan’s dedication to the task was something Yoongi couldn’t help but admire, the little puppy acting like he could definitely win the miniature wrestling match they were having, and it was a sight that just made Yoongi’s heart drip affection.

“We’re going to keep you,” Yoongi whispered, almost like a secret, smiling as Yeontan barked, jumping up and down happily almost like he understood the words. “You can meet Keopi and play with her,” he promised, imagining the cat happily chasing the puppy away from the cushions she had claimed as only belonging to her, or the specific spot on Jeongguk and Yoongi’s bed she didn’t let anyone apart from the pair sit in.

A nudge of a foot broke Yoongi out of his trance, Hoseok smiling down at him from where he was stood. He prompted Yoongi to take out the earphones, so he removed one of the buds from his ear, holding it in between his fingers and playing subtly with the wire. Yeontan was happily barking
away at Hoseok now, pawing at his ankles and making him smile slightly.

“He worked for a Turkish based family who ran the Zafer organisation,” was the first thing the younger said, bending down to pet the demanding puppy. “Funnily enough, we did a deal with them last year within the drug sector.”

“Well they didn’t make a very smart decision then,” Yoongi hummed, watching Yeontan wind himself around Hoseok’s legs so fast Yoongi was surprised he hadn’t collided with anything yet.

It really wasn’t a wise idea to cross their family, especially when they had already made a deal with Namjoon and Seokjin. It meant they knew where the headquarters were already, knew the leader and probably even had their number on each of their phones. It amazed Yoongi that people didn’t always remember that it was safer to work with their family rather than against, and all of this would result in a worldwide reminder.

“No, they didn’t,” Hoseok said whilst distracted by Yeontan finally colliding with his leg, letting out a low whine before happily plodding over to sit next to Yoongi’s feet.

“Is he dead yet?” The elder asked, not really wanting to look to check himself.

Knowing Taehyung, the skinning wasn’t the only thing he did, and frankly Yoongi would rather keep his breakfast in his stomach at this point. There was probably another message carved into the body or something, a message not to try to find rats but to show they’d been caught, let the bosses that hired them know that their plans had failed. It made Yoongi feel a degree of satisfaction, knowing that they still remained in their place in the throne of their business, were still the largest threat worldwide. Fear was a useful tool, and Yoongi knew their downfall would be when that devise failed.

“Yeah, Tae put him out of his misery,” Hoseok affirmed, looking up at something behind him. “Speaking of the devil…”

Taehyung had no visible splatters thanks to his shirt being dark red, black patterns hiding any stains, although there was a suspiciously coloured smudge just under his jaw. The younger always seemed to be able to pull of things like torture with a level of tidiness and grace, which always made Yoongi bemused. You would have thought with his methods that he would cause a large mess of blood and other body tissues, but overall he always came away from a session looking like he had just been on a walk somewhere, or like he had just been at home watching a program on TV. If it wasn’t for the dark look in his eyes, Yoongi would swear he was imagining the younger torturing someone just a moment ago.
“Have you decided?” Taehyung asked as he wandered over, crouching down and happily picking up Yeontan who jumped at his chest, happily yapping and licking Taehyung’s cheeks.

It was adorable, and even if Yoongi felt unsettled by the puppy’s presence he wouldn’t have the heart to say no, make Taehyung part from a pet he seemed already attached to the hip to. It made Yoongi show a small smile, the younger giggling quietly as Yeontan tried to jump from his arms up higher, Taehyung pressing kisses to the puppy’s nose, making him bark even louder.

“Keep the dog,” Yoongi laughed, feeling warmth in his chest when Taehyung smiled so wide it seemed his mouth reached from ear to ear, teeth on show but not threatening.

He looked like a child on their birthday, overjoyed by the gifts and celebrations. In fact, Yoongi was willing to bet it was the happiest he had ever seen Taehyung for a long time, the weight of the world lifted off his shoulders. It would make Yoongi a monster to try and separate Taehyung from his source of joy, especially when the source also looked just as happy.

“Jimin’s arriving in approximately fifteen minutes,” Namjoon called from where he and Seokjin were still in front of the glass room, both on their phones. “Taehyung, if you would deal with the body how we discussed, then join us in front of holding room two.”

The younger nodded, serious again before he handed Yeontan over to an exited looking Hoseok, who squealed loudly at the fluffy dog, making him also bark in excitement. The whole walk down the corridor consisted on Hoseok talking to Yeontan so loudly it made him yap in response, making the whole thing seem like a conversation, Yoongi laughing next to them. It was incredibly funny to watch, especially when Yeontan’s eyebrows were so expressionate, making him seem either comically angry or comically overjoyed.

Rounding one of the corners, Yoongi caught sight of a waiting Jimin, who was examining his nails as he lent on a wall. He looked a little worse for wear, his mesh shirt practically in tatters exposing his chest more than it was in the first place. The black lace robe was hanging off of one of his shoulders, and something which looked suspiciously like a hickey was bruised faintly near the base of his neck, just below the black choker he was wearing. His trousers looked exactly the same, but his laces were undone, trailing before him on the floor where he stood.

When the younger saw them, he gave a short smile, pushing himself off of the wall to stroll forward. Despite his rugged appearance, hair looking like he was caught in a storm, makeup smudged all around his eyes, lipstick uneven, he look more annoyed than anything else as he wandered over. Running a hand through his hair in an attempt to neaten it, Jimin reached into his pocket and pulled out a packet of gum, sighing as he chewed.
“You will not even *believe* the evening I have had,” he groaned, draping himself over Hoseok who carefully passed Yeontan to Yoongi who was standing beside the pair.

“Rough night?” Hoseok huffed, making sure not to stumble as Jimin’s whole weight pressed against him, the younger letting another low groan leave his mouth.

Whilst he was being dramatic, Namjoon and Seokjin approached the room once it was affirmed Jimin wasn’t harmed more than just mildly emotionally, peering into the room at the man Jimin was tasked to hunt. Yoongi also darted his eyes to the sight, and saw that it was exactly the same set up as the other times, bound to the chair unable to move more than his fingers.

“So I was in the club,” Jimin started his story, Hoseok humming along to the words. “Actually having a nice time, when Mr. Genius over there was so enchanted by my beauty he didn’t even recognise that it was *me*,” he complained, gesturing to his face and the man in quick succession.

Yoongi did give it to the man that he wasn’t the sharpest tool in the shed. Someone in their business almost always recognised a member of their family, Yoongi being the only exception to that pattern. It was hard not to, what with their faces all over the news and magazines, people whispering tales of them as their names were announced on a radio, a television show, anything about up-to-date society. It was a marvel that someone who had been tasked to kill one of their family, had even had a temporary undercover job in their building, didn’t recognise Jimin of all people. Yoongi imagined the younger was slightly offended.

“And offered money to sleep with me like I was some cheap prostitute,” he continued, almost sighing with each word. “Which I accepted to get closer to him and everything,” Jimin shrugged, as though pretending to be a prostitute in a strip club was something he did on a daily basis (it was not).

As much as he could behave like it, Yoongi knew Jimin was actually quite picky with anyone he chose to spend time with, especially if the circumstances weren’t platonic. He had been subjected to many of Jimin’s rants about how the guy who asked him out was too dim, had a weird accent, wouldn’t accept the fact Jimin liked to be in control of completely everything. With his appearance, people often thought Jimin would play the submissive one, the one in the relationship that liked his bills paid, chair untucked, door opened, when in fact Yoongi knew it was the opposite. The younger liked to be the one to make decisions, tell people what to do, and it was always funny when Jimin completely shut down anyone who thought he was a simple piece of easily manipulated eye-candy.

“As it turns out,” he huffed, running his hand through his hair again. “He took me to his apartment
and left me in his room so he could get ‘ready’ or whatever in the bathroom,” (at that he scoffed, and Yoongi couldn’t help but agree with the action), “and so naturally I look the initiative and knocked him out against the wall,” Jimin shrugged, standing up straight from his previous position practically on top of Hoseok, stretching his back out like a cat.

“While I may or may not have been stealing everything of worth from his house, I found out that not only is he not single, that he has two girlfriends that don’t know about each other,” he started saying louder, bordering on shouting until Hoseok reminded him to keep the noise level down. “So I spent like half an hour after I detained him texting both of them on his phone and offering gay support,” Jimin rolled his eyes, the complimentary jazz hands at the last few words making Yoongi snort a laugh, startling Yeontan into barking once before the puppy settled again.

“Well,” he said as he clapped his hands, leaning forwards on the balls of his feet. “It turns out one of them was secretly a lesbian, only there because he harassed her, and the other was bi, so they’re now set up on a date with each other courtesy of me.” At that, Jimin looked very proud of himself, chest puffed out and hands now set on his hips, tapping his foot lightly on the floor. “But I also found a really nice necklace which I took in exchange for the fact he ripped my top while we were kissing in the club,” he shrugged like he wasn’t talking about stealing the man’s property, and after all, he was originally a thief.

Every so often, Jimin and Taehyung somehow ended up with something extra if they visited an associate’s house. Nothing big, nothing that would be majorly noticed in a few days concluding that they stole it, but maybe something like a discarded necklace, a ring which was concealed somewhere like in a bookshelf, a journal which had no empty pages but plenty of secrets. Yoongi only noticed because the duo would randomly offer him things, randomly put things on display that they somehow came into ownership of. Namjoon and Seokjin didn’t bother to interfere, the kleptomaniacs probably unable to resist the impulse to take anything that looks like it has worth.

“I was thinking I should let him fuck me,” Jimin told Hoseok, and Yoongi almost choked on the air he inhaled at the same time he heard the statement, trying not to accidentally crush Yeontan to his chest while coughing. Honestly, it wasn’t even that odd to hear something like that from the younger, but it was the casualness of the statement that made Yoongi feel shocked. “You know, just before he gets tortured and killed, but honestly he was a bad kisser so I had my doubts about the whole thing, so I just brought him here having not been laid despite being in a strip club,” he threw his hands in the air as he exclaimed, finally looking over at the puppy Yoongi was holding.

Jimin’s entire body seemed to change, his exasperated expression and annoyed body language being transformed in a blink to a look of child like wonder, a genuine smile beaming from his face as he rushed over to directly in front of Yoongi, peering at Yeontan adoringly. The sudden conversion almost gave Yoongi whiplash, and it made him laugh when Jimin looked so innocent now when he had been talking about sleeping with a man twice his age just minutes before.
“Is this Tae’s dog?” He asked as he bounced on his toes, eyes not leaving the puppy’s face. “Can I hold him?”

“Yeah, he’s named him Yeontan,” Yoongi said fondly as he immediately handed the fluffy creature over, Jimin letting out a squeak as he held the puppy to his chest.

It was an adorable sight to see, Jimin smiling like he had been given the best gift on Earth, gently bouncing the puppy in his arms like a baby. Just like with Taehyung, Yeontan’s presence just seemed to take a weight off of Jimin’s shoulders, the younger laughing as he tried to move his eyebrows in imitation of the dog, giggling as Yeontan barked loudly. It seemed almost like therapy, like Jimin’s complex problems were being solved one by one, just by the little dog he was now rocking back and forth.

After a particularly enthusiastic yap, Jimin held Yeontan out and slowly started running around the area of the wide corridor, almost like he was fooling a baby into thinking it was flying. Yoongi was even happier seeing this about his decision to approve of the dog, the little creature worming its way into every single person’s heart, not only Taehyung’s. Jeongguk loved dogs, and Yoongi was sure he would adore Yeontan just as much as the others.

“Jimin, we need you to interrogate your target,” Namjoon called from just in front of the large glass wall, a scratch down the inside of the window which Yoongi didn’t want to wonder the cause of.

Pouting, Jimin gave a final kiss to Yeontan’s little nose, handing him to Hoseok beside him and gracefully spinning on the ball of his left foot. It was like he transformed into another person, cheerfulness being swiped off his face and replaced by something emotionless, like stone apart from the dark in his eyes. It was a wonder, how Jimin had so many expressions, each for specific people, specific situations. It made you wonder which was the most genuine, the sadistic killer or the affectionate brother that baked you cakes and gave you hugs.

“Of course,” Jimin almost sang, already a hint of danger in the up tone of his voice, the elongated letters.

Immediately, without any sort of hesitation Jimin reached for the door handle, letting himself into the room like he earned it. He walked right up to the man’s restricted feet, staring at the unmoving figure, waiting until he looked up to meet his gaze. The smile that was now painted on his face was one Yoongi was coming to find familiar, even if it was not the one he preferred by a long shot. The younger’s teeth were glinting in the white, artificial light, eyes unnaturally relaxed for the type of smile it was. That was how Yoongi saw the distinction, the real Jimin, the Jimin he knew, had such a beaming eye smile that it could make anybody around him also grin from ear to ear, eyes scrunched up in joy. This Jimin’s eyes were almost wide, and staring directly at his prey.
“Hello again, honey,” he said, his voice sultry and smooth, like melting chocolate. “Do you want to have fun with me now?”

It was Hoseok that pulled him from watching the show Jimin was bound to perform, already the flirting a bad sign. Nothing ever ended well for the victims Jimin seduced even while they were already in his control, and Yoongi already felt pity for the poor soul, despite him probably being here to kill Yoongi in some shape or form. There was reasoning behind tales of Jimin and Taehyung being sirens, the elder especially able to put anybody under his spell, have them looking at him lustfully as he silt their throats.

“Do you want to just play with Yeontan again?” Hoseok asked as Yoongi dragged his gaze from one brother to another, holding the dog up in his arms almost like an offering.

The question made Yoongi hesitate, thinking over the options presented to him. He could just choose to not watch any of it all together, leave all the horrifying sights and sounds to his imagination and not to his actual eyes and ears. Although the thing was, ignoring it brought no closure. Even if Yoongi watched one second, he could reaffirm that the man was going to be dead by at least tomorrow morning, reaffirm that Jimin had complete control over the traitor. It was what he needed to see, evidence of his assassin’s downfall.

“Dependant on what Jiminie wants to do,” he decided, nodding along to his own words.

And it really was dependant on the method, response. He could watch Jeongguk beat a man to death, but Taehyung’s more than brutal skinning made his own body crawl, unable to watch more than a single minute. It wasn’t even a matter of blood; it was just how Yoongi would imagine it would feel, the phantom pains creeping up his spine. That was the problem with empathy in someone like him; he watched so much pain and couldn’t stop the illusion of the same suffering washing over his own body.

“Yoongi, he’s a sadist, it won’t be any less cruel than Tae,” Hoseok reminded him, making a small shiver run up Yoongi’s spine.

“I’ll have to see,” he responded, but Yoongi knew his own tone didn’t sound as confident as before.

There was apprehension bubbling in Yoongi’s stomach as he watched Jimin stalk closer to the detained man, watching the younger keep fixed, intense eye contact as he gracefully slid onto his
lap, the other struggling against the bonds. Once he realised he wasn’t moving, the man just
glared, Jimin throwing his head back in laughter, the golden skin of his neck glistening in the harsh
lighting.

“I didn’t realise that the Kim family associated themselves with people like you,” the man snarled,
spitting each word like an insult.

It made Yoongi almost brace for impact, because people that said that sort of thing to Jimin never
survived. Even people that respected his power but reached a bit too far lost their hands, any
fingers that ventured too far over his skin without his consent. He was a deadly mix of seduction
and murder, people becoming addicted before they even realised what was happening to them,
what they had become. Jimin made people dependant on him, then happily took over their lives,
leaving their body in the garbage outside.

“Oh, you don’t recognise me?” Jimin smiled, rolling his hips once on top of the man’s, making
him take a deep inhale.

“Oh, you don’t recognise me?” He choked, fingers twitching.

With another grind, Jimin pulled himself off of the man’s thighs, trailing a hand to his chest from
his shoulders as he circled the chair. The man had a slight bulge in his crotch, barely noticeable,
but his cheeks were lit up red in embarrassment. It was just the effect the younger had on people,
the constant control of their bodies which made Jimin like a puppeteer, pulling strings and making
others do his bidding. Where he was stood behind the man, he had the perfect vantage point to
wrap a hand around the man’s neck, starting to grip his fingers tighter

“Well, honey,” he murmured, voice heavy, nothing like his normal angelic tone. “You could say
I’m rather widely known around here.”

Jimin grinned, tightening his fingers for a second before he pulled them away, the man gasping for
breath. In the small amount of time, the man’s ‘problem’ had disappeared, Jimin huffing in
disappointment as he rounded to the front of the chair again, yanking the man’s head upwards by
the hair. Instead of the fear Yoongi expected to see, the man still seemed ignorant to Jimin’s
position, smirking as he tried to get the upper hand.

“Have all of them had a taste of you?” He taunted, making Jimin release his hair. “And I thought
the two Kims were faithful to each other,” he said, voice full of venom.
It made something visibly snap within the younger, head jerking slightly to one side, a smile growing on his face again paired with the look in his eyes. At last, the man seemed to realise that he didn’t exactly have the best odds in this situation, and after his insult to Namjoon and Seokjin, Yoongi felt no sympathy when Jimin pulled a knife from beneath the waistband of his tight, leather trousers.

“You see, you’ve got it all wrong,” Jimin said in mock surprise, dragging the blade lightly over the man’s shirt. “My name, sweetie, is Jimin,” he whispered, so quietly in the man’s ear that Yoongi almost didn’t hear.

Every sign of alive colour washed from the man’s face, eyes widening. It was a given that he would recognise the name, everyone did, even people so new to the scene they couldn’t fire a gun. Everyone was warned of the name at least once, and Yoongi felt satisfaction to watch the man seem to shrink in his chair, become less of a mountain and more of a molehill.

“Ah, recognise me now?” Jimin smirked, knife trailing over the man’s Adam’s apple, which bobbed when he swallowed. “I was surprised when you didn’t,” he sighed, leaving a small scratch of red behind with a flick of his wrist.

The fact the man didn’t know who he was at first still was almost amusing to Yoongi, especially when it was the man’s job to kill someone in their family in the first place. The man was a guard, for heaven’s sakes, probably even saw their family once or twice somewhere even if he didn’t work in the house, so the whole situation was almost laughable.

“You’re Jimin Kim?” He gasped, and Yoongi heard Hoseok let out a snort from where he was standing next to him.

Looking at their parents, even Namjoon and Seokjin seemed to be holding back smiles. It wasn’t every day that a target was this purely entertaining, especially when the older duo normally barely worked outside their offices. It supplied something for them to find funny, especially when they all were waiting for Jimin to make the man pay, the show getting even more exiting for the others. Yoongi just found this first segment golden, and was happy he wasn’t just listening to music with Yeontan, the puppy by now almost falling asleep in Hoseok’s arms.

“Actually,” Jimin tutted, bringing Yoongi’s attention back to him fully. “I prefer Kim Jimin. You Americans, always thinking you’re right,” he rolled his eyes, tracing the knife over the man’s lips.

“As in…” the man struggled for works, making Jimin giggle.
“The son of Namjoon and Seokjin?” He suggested, blade now following the man’s cheek. “Heir to the company? Killer of men?”

“You…”

The man still seemed taken aback, eyes still comically wide. It confused Yoongi as to how it was that much of a shock. Jimin behaving every inch the heir to a criminal organisation, so much so that Yoongi would happily bet he could convince someone he was the ringleader to the whole operation. It was probably more of what the man and Jimin had done together before, Yoongi not wanting to think of what happened between the club and his apartment, the mentioned ‘kissing’ and maybe more. Jimin always tread the line, liked to test more boundaries that he should.

“Oh, so you thought I was just some common cheap whore?” The younger now spat, cutting the man’s cheek at the final words before drawing the blade higher, resting it over an eyebrow.

“But…”

A devious laugh fell from his lips, knife falling from his forehead down to his neck, travelling lower and lower until it rested just above his crotch, teasing the fabric. There was terror in the man’s face again, which was quickly hidden by a false confidence, deep breaths hiding panic. Yoongi knew it was about time, but he still didn’t want the entertainment to end, didn’t want to see the next part when Jimin was probably fuming.

“Oh, honey, you’ve got it coming now,” Jimin giggled, but there was no warmth or amusement in his eyes, only dark fire and danger. “I was thinking of just cutting you, you know?” He sighed; removing the knife from over the man’s groin and making his shoulders fall in relief. “Classic stuff. But now…”

The silence was more than just a cause of apprehension. It was a promise, a threat, a message to tell the man that he messed up beyond repair. Yoongi watched as the man realised what he had done, the tensing of every single muscle in his body as he waited for Jimin to announce what he’d do. Another method of power play, Yoongi realised, Jimin having the man at his mercy, waiting for what he was going to do to him. It was an effective way of keeping the control, keeping one step ahead.

“You don’t scare me,” the man said in a shaky voice, not doing a good job at asserting the words.
“I should,” Jimin grinned, half lidded eyes fixed directly on the man’s sweating face, droplets running down his temple.

The man was struggling to keep his face, keep calm, and for good reason. Despite Jimin having put away the knife, he was still a threatening figure, the man finally realising what he was capable of. The younger had killed people with much less than what he probably had now, had a reputation of being able to suffocate you with his hands tied behind his back, blindfolded.

“All bark, no bite,” he tried to laugh, but all that came out was a nervous chuckle, too high pitched to be taken seriously.

In a way, Yoongi admired the face the man was managing to maintain. He must realise he was in a hopeless situation, but he was still trying to keep to the attitude he entered with, tried to stay cocky and confident. It was a herculean task, and in a way Yoongi almost found it sorry to watch him suffer, but then again he was probably another trained assassin. At least he would die with honour, Yoongi supposed, a small degree of it once he broke and told them exactly who hired him.

“I assure you, I don’t need to bite when I can poison you instead,” Jimin promised, the man gulping. “Now,” he said with a flourish, spinning on his heel to face the door. “On with the show,” he murmured, striding towards the doorway.

“Leaving so soon?” The man called, panic crawling into his voice more and more.

“We haven’t even started,” Jimin laughed, sending one final glance behind him before exiting the room.

Yoongi wasn’t quite sure why the younger had left, but everyone waited until the door was completely sealed to ask questions. There was probably some elaborate scheme planned out in Jimin’s head, every step completely thought out. He was a perfectionist, after all, more so than almost anyone else Yoongi knew out of his family, even rivalling Namjoon and Seokjin at times.

“I need something I don’t have,” Jimin stated immediately, pulling knives from the waistband of his tight trousers, Yoongi wondering how he didn’t see them before.

“What is it?” Namjoon asked, watching Jimin pull a final knife from his boot, dropping it to the side of the hallway.
The younger tilted his head, thinking, before he started muttering to himself, looking from the man in the glass room to the wall on the other side of the corridor. It was one of the distinctions Yoongi was able to make between Jimin and Taehyung, the constant planning. While Jimin blueprinted everything until the very last step, Taehyung was happy to just jump into a situation, making it up as he went along. Yoongi wasn’t sure which was more dangerous, but both were just as threatening with their promises of pain.

“Something maybe acidic, or toxic,” Jimin hummed, finally facing Namjoon again. “Strong,” he added as an afterthought, bringing his hand up to run his fingers through his hair.

“There might be some in the labs,” the elder murmured, looking around to see if there were any guards he could summon, but the hallway was still just as deserted as before. “I’ll check if you tell me what you want,” Namjoon finally told him, giving up on getting someone else to do it for him.

“What type of stuff are you thinking?” Seokjin asked, voice just sounding genuinely curious.

Yoongi wanted to know too, in actual fact. Something like acid wasn’t really Jimin’s normal style, if what he normally did could even be called a style. Generally, when it came to the actions of the duo, there was blood which was guaranteed to be involved. They loved blades, guns, loved causing body hard in general ways but making it ten times worse. But acid was new, didn’t spill blood but ensured a slow and painful session, probably what Jimin wanted after how much the man disrespected him.

“Venom,” the younger smiled, a glint in his eye.

“Any particular type?” Namjoon enquired, an eyebrow raised.

It was new, Jimin not having done anything like this before to Yoongi’s knowledge anyhow, but Yoongi knew he probably planned exactly what he was doing. In such a delicate situation, there was no room for error, but Yoongi had every faith that any plan would work. Jimin hadn’t failed before, even when drunk or high he could pull of every single thing he wanted to, this seemed simple compared to that.

“Snake venom, mixed with something corrosive,” he decided, the smile never leaving his face.

“I think they might have something along the lines of what you need,” Namjoon said as he started
to walk down the hall, probably in the direction of the lab area Yoongi had been in what felt like years ago.

“Thank you,” Jimin called, his fingers once again running through his hair in a repetitive motion.

As the elder disappeared out of eyeshot around a corner of the hall, Jimin moved to stare directly at the unknowing man, who looked more defeated since the smaller had left the room. He seemed to be thinking, eyes gliding over the man’s body until they focused on his head, watching him slouch even lower in the chair as time went by.

“He really didn’t recognise you?” Yoongi asked, moving forwards to almost lean on Jimin’s side, the younger moving even closer by himself until their arms touched.

“Apparently not,” he replied quietly, eyes never leaving the target.

The moment felt like the calm before the storm. Jimin was like a statue, seeming unmoving even to breathe, but there was still a glint of human in his expression, the slight downturn in his lips and eyebrows. It was reassuring to know that the younger still seemed sane enough, could still stand comfortably close to Yoongi and be fixed on his task, careful to only direct his rage at the presented target.

“What are you going to do to him?” Hoseok asked, moving to Jimin’s other side in much the same way, all three of them just staring at the person trapped inside the room like an insect under a glass.

“I’m going to bite him, of course.”
They didn’t have to wait long until Namjoon’s footsteps were appearing from the end of the corridor, as well as the sound of wheels. Yoongi turned to see the elder leading a group of four people in lab coats, who in pairs were moving large metal vats, hazard signs printed on the sides. They were moving carefully, Namjoon talking to one of the scientists too quietly for Yoongi to hear, but the gestures every so often to the containers gave an impression of what the conversation was based on.

Finally reaching where the others were stood, Namjoon thanked the quartet before they were dismissed, the elder watching their white lab coats disappear around the corner. Once out of eyeshot, Namjoon smiled at Jimin, who walked forward to examine the solution which was sitting in the large containers. It was colourless, but something about how harmless it looked made it seem even more threatening, easily mistaken for something as simple as water.

“This is a mix of hydrofluoric acid and blue coral snake venom,” Namjoon informed him, Jimin’s eyes unmoving from the liquid, hypnotised.

“How potent is it?” the younger asked, voice airy and distant.

He seemed like he was almost in a trance, just staring at the vats of what looked like perfectly safe water. Yoongi had to agree with the idea that something about it was captivating. The liquid wasn’t even moving, but he could imagine it swirling in endless patterns, hypnotising in the circular container, round and round like a carousel. It was so tempting to try and reach your hand into it for pure curiosity’s sake, Yoongi wanted to know what it felt like to touch, whether it would burn or it would sting, how long it took to eat through his flesh.

“This acid is highly corrosive when concentrated,” Namjoon explained, gesturing into the open lids. “It destroys living tissue on contact, can even decalcify bone, and can be fatal in quantities as low as 100 millilitres.”
more dangerous, undeniably seductive. At this point, Yoongi was fairly certain the younger didn’t even know he was doing it, a stare so intense that it almost knocked the air out of Yoongi’s lungs.

“The snake venom is more complex,” Namjoon continued. “The acid allows it to get through the layer of skin, and it triggers all the body’s nerves to act in one motion, causes extremely painful muscle spasms, paralysis and eventually death. However, in the concentration present here, the effects are limited to a point, and speak will not be effected, only minor spasms.”

“Does it burn?” Jimin murmured quietly, eyes trailing slowly from the liquid to fix onto the man behind the glass, starting to walk slowly towards the door. “Will he suffer?”

“Like fire,” Namjoon promised, making the smile on Jimin’s face grow even more, his eyes staying heavy lidded.

“Perfect.”

Jimin beckoned without even looking behind himself, and bent down to pick up one of his knives off of the floor, still just staring at the unknowing man who would become his next victim. Almost like he was savouring the moment, he reached as slowly as he could for the door handle, twisting it as slow as his patience would let him, and Yoongi saw the moment the man realised he was returning.

A flash of panic ran over the man’s face before he was able to put the same mask on as before, trying to act both emotionless and confident. At this point Yoongi figured it was probably a coping mechanism, a way of distancing this miserable human’s life from his mind, and Yoongi couldn’t blame him. From what he knew now, Yoongi knew he wouldn’t be able to watch the whole session if Jimin intended to go on as he was acting now, slow and controlling.

Jimin stepped into the room gracefully, walking further in before he was followed by the vats of the deadly concoction, the man looking apprehensive of the containers before he focused on Jimin, a shaky confidence in every action. They stood there for a second, both waiting for the other to make the first move, until Jimin stalked forward, resting some of his fingers lightly over the man’s cheek, rings glinting as he stroked the skin.

“Now now, handsome, don’t look so worried,” Jimin whispered, leaning forward to brush his lips over the top of the man’s ear, Yoongi watching a shiver run up his back. “I’ve decided I won’t bite you, but something else will,” he teased, voice dripping caution.
Yoongi knew it would be wisest for the man to keep his mouth shut, to stop saying the stupid things that got him in this situation. He was either incredibly brave or incredibly stupid, because he let out a laugh, albeit a nervous one, Jimin smiling at the action.

“You think I’m scared now?” He asked, trying half-heartedly to escape the chair’s bonds.

“I think you may be smart enough to have some common sense to be,” Jimin answered, trailing his fingers over the man’s jaw, tilting his head upwards.

“You thought wrong,” the man smiled, looking like he thought he was somehow getting the upper hand, but Jimin just replaced his seductive gaze for an innocent one, staring with clear eyes into the man’s soul.

“Then I gave you far too much credit for your value,” he mused, fingers dancing lower and lower until they dragged lightly over the man’s shirt, even unbuttoning one of the fastenings and training lower and lower over warm skin.

It made the man choke, swallowing shakily and making his chest heave, attempting to escape the wandering fingers. Yoongi knew he was already a goner, a dead man, the look fixed from Jimin one that Yoongi only saw when there were screams. Not for the first time, he was thankful any of Jimin’s rage wasn’t directed towards him, that they were family. Yoongi wasn’t sure he would last long if it were Jimin interrogating him.

“Stop that,” the man tried to order, but it sounded only like a choke, the words too dry to get out of his mouth.

“What?” Jimin replied, still watching with innocent eyes as the man tried to escape his touch.

His hand drooped even lower, resting just above the man’s crotch, playfully unbuttoning the top of his trousers. Realistically, Yoongi knew Jimin had different lines he didn’t cross, and rape was one of them, but the symbolism was there. He was completely at Jimin’s mercy; his life depended on the way the other thought, acted. Yoongi had no doubt that even a royal would bow to the younger, would happily place their own crown on his pretty, pretty head.

“Fl-flirting with me,” the man stuttered in response, clearing his throat after the mishap.
It made Yoongi raise an eyebrow just as Jimin did, sliding himself back onto the man’s lap like before. He straddles the man’s legs, strong thighs resting in the gap of the armrests and the chair, circling his hips teasingly over the other’s, making him stutter out a noise of objection. Jimin was a dancer, and just from pure observation, he knew Jimin knew what he was doing. The cracks in the man’s façade were widening, Jimin smirking wider with every shatter, a final grind of his hips making the man moan.

“Why, honey?” He whispered, fingers dancing over the man’s shoulders.

The man opened his mouth to respond, but nothing but air came out, leaving him gasping like a fish. It was funny, and Yoongi couldn’t resist the giggle which fell quietly from his mouth, making Hoseok nudge him fondly, laughing himself. Jimin’s effect on people was always amusing to watch, the falling over feet and words. He just played the role of seducer so well, captivated people to every degree, their hearts wrapped around his little finger.

“Because, because I’m not into guys,” he finally stammered in response, making Jimin raise his eyebrows again in surprise.

“You looked pretty into guys when you ripped my shirt off,” Jimin scoffed, rolling his eyes as he pinched the man’s neck between his fingers and thumb, making him gasp a breath.

“I thought you were a prostitute,” he spat breathlessly, jerking up and trying to escape the bonds. “Pretty enough to be an average replacement.”

That made the smile slide off of Jimin’s features, face becoming cold. The hand curled around the man’s throat began to tighten again, Jimin’s knuckles turning white from strain as the man gasped, eyes bulging wide. For a moment, Yoongi thought Jimin was genuinely going to kill him, waste their link and his opportunity to torture him.

Namjoon made a move towards the door of the room, his fingers on the handle about to enter when the younger pulled his grip off of the man’s red stained throat, making him gasp and choke to get enough air into his lungs. There was a storm in Jimin’s eyes, which were like slits glaring at his target, mouth holding none of its normal present shadow of a smile. Yoongi couldn’t decide if this serious Jimin was scarier than the one that would happily seduce you into jumping off a building.

“Well then, you made quite the blunder,” he murmured quietly, not moving from his perch and staying still as a statue. “Preying on pretty young boys and girls isn’t a very healthy pass time,” he tutted, but there was no humour in his eyes, his expression. “Who do you work for?”
It wasn’t Jimin’s normal method of questioning, normally making his victim scream at least once before he asked for the first time. It seemed that for once, a captive had managed to get on Jimin’s nerves, make him want to get answers as soon as possible. Yoongi wasn’t sure what it was that made his patience snap, what made the normal fire in his eyes die to an empty rage, but it must have been something close enough to home that Jimin was so affected.

“I’d rather die,” the man swore, staring right down Jimin’s glare.

“Well, you’d have no use then, sugar.”

In a single movement, Jimin picked himself off of the man’s lap, marching over to the containers with a cold face before he turned back to him, showing no smile or normal signs of teasing. Yoongi could tell nobody knew Jimin would react like this to anything, Namjoon and Seokjin exchanging concerned looks while Hoseok just looked confused, still cradling Yeontan like a child in his arms.

“I hope you enjoy hell, I’ll meet you there,” was the last thing he said before he grabbed some of the tubing that was taped to the side of the first vat, pulling it as it unravelled.

He stalked forward, clipping the clear plastic duct to the man’s shirt so that the end was positioned just over his crotch, the man unable to move it. Saying nothing, Jimin walked back to the container and twisted a small lever, which was just by the part of the tubing which actually attached to the acid store. Instantly, a stream of clear liquid begin to creep along the inside, only visible by watching the start of the trail.

As it got closer and closer to the man, Jimin nodded to himself, turning on his heel to walk out of the room, the first choked grunt of the man not even making him pause as he practically ripped the door open, letting it slam shut behind him. The liquid was dripping onto the man in slow drops, already burning through his clothes to make contact with skin.

Yoongi didn’t have the chance to see the man react to it before Jimin passed by, walking towards the end of the corridor, not responding to Namjoon or Seokjin’s calls for him to wait. There was something uncharacteristic about his pace, normal graceful movements short and choppy, and with one glance to his family Yoongi immediately ran to catch up with his brother, who had just turned the hallway’s corner.

There were still no guards in sight as Yoongi ran around the bend, pausing as his eyes tried to find Jimin’s figure. The white walls looked just as identical to the last ones, empty glass rooms or
spaces just used as storage lined in perfect symmetry. A level of it made Yoongi’s head hurt, the building like a maze, but he had a task to focus on. For a moment, he was sure Jimin had managed to escape from his search before he saw a figure sitting against one of the walls, slightly hidden by a trolley full of what looked like microscopes.

Crouched almost in a ball, Jimin’s face was buried behind his knees, hands gripping the fabric lining some of the rips in his leather trousers, making it lighten in colour slightly under the stretch. From not seeing his face, Yoongi couldn’t tell if Jimin was crying or whether the shaking of his shoulders was from the cold, the younger’s top half still only covered by the transparent lace robe, which didn’t even reach around to cover his chest.

Wordlessly, Yoongi slowly approached Jimin’s side, sliding down the wall to sit right next to him, their shoulders touching. Jimin wasn’t crying, Yoongi could see now. Instead his face looked like a contortion between completely emotionless and agony, twitching between the two different states. A shudder rocked his shoulders, and Yoongi carefully moved away to pull his hoodie over his head, draping it over Jimin’s visible skin on his back and chest.

“I’m not a prostitute,” Jimin said quietly once Yoongi was settled at his side again, bringing his head up to face Yoongi.

It was a small relief to see a hint of fire glowing behind his pupils again, only a small candle but a flame none the less, and it made Yoongi send him a small smile. He didn’t want to see Jimin like he had been ever again, looking like he was lifeless. Sure, Jimin could be serious, could be cold if he wanted to be, but how he had been just moments ago was nothing like that. The only comparison Yoongi could think of was the way Jeongguk acted towards the first assassin he was told to interrogate, ice spreading over his expression.

“I know,” Yoongi murmured, taking one of Jimin’s hands in his own and interlacing their fingers.

Immediately, Jimin squeezed their point of contact, breath shuddering out of his mouth. He wasn’t shivering as much anymore, the fabric must be doing its job as an insulator of heat, but his breath still occasionally shook. For another few seconds, neither of them said anything more, just sending reoccurring pulses between their hands, repeating rhythms.

“I wouldn’t have slept with him if he paid me,” Jimin said louder after the pause, still not much above a murmur, but the change in volume made Yoongi try and observe his expression in more depth.

“I know you wouldn’t-"
At that, Jimin turned around to face Yoongi completely, eyes wide and glimmering. The tears were what made Yoongi fall silent, the alien wetness looking uncharacteristic on Jimin’s normally smiling face. The younger cried so rarely, Yoongi was sure he could count the amount of times on just one of his hands. When he was upset, Jimin normally was consoled by Taehyung, and appeared again as good as new with no evidence of liquid anywhere on his cheeks. He hid his sadness with his care for others, often fussing over Taehyung or Yoongi as a distraction, and they just let him, Yoongi never sure what to do.

But as the first tear dripped down Jimin’s cheek, Yoongi found himself reacting instinctively; moving his other hand to the younger’s jaw to circle the skin with his thumb. It made Jimin pull in a shuddering breath, louder than last time and the exhale sounded suspiciously like a sob, Yoongi electing to ignore that. He quietly hushed him, wiping wetness from honey skin.

“But I did, Yoongi,” Jimin sobbed, like a dam was broken in his mind.

The words confused him, his lost ‘huh’ sound making another, louder cry fight its way out between Jimin’s lips, cheeks flushed red. He was the picture of misery, makeup starting to run from the corners of his eyes, mascara smudging to make dark clouds on his skin. An element of it was beautiful, Jimin still looking almost completely breathtaking as he let his tears fall freely, water dripping onto his lap.

“When I was with Tae,” he began to explain, voice croaking on the younger teenager’s name. “Sometimes, we couldn’t steal enough, and you should have seen how thin he was, almost as thin as you were,” Jimin said with a sniffle, bringing his free hand up to wipe at his eyes.

Yoongi hadn’t seen the duo when they first arrived, only met them over a year after they had first started living with Namjoon and Seokjin. There weren’t many pictures either, so before now Yoongi didn’t really know what he was expecting to hear about that time. It definitely wasn’t that Taehyung, who probably looked like one of the healthiest in their family, was practically skeletal. Even now, Yoongi couldn’t imagine the younger without his thighs, the tummy he had that fluctuated between toned and purely squishy, that he always announced his own love of. The thought was almost impossible, and it made a pang travel from Yoongi’s heart around his chest.

“There were people around, people would pay to do horrible, horrible things,” Jimin continued, a shudder of his shoulders accompanying the words, neither from the cold nor from the tears.

“You were desperate, Jiminie,” Yoongi murmured in comfort, dabbing at the younger’s face with the sleeve of the hoodie, the fabric’s colour deepening. “That’s not your fault,” he told him, trying to make the words as strong as he could.
Jimin’s tears were lessening, the sobs less violent and frequent. Yoongi just continued his motions, still tracing the soft skin of his face, quietly hushing him when he hiccupped. For it being one of the first times Yoongi comforted the younger, the actions were coming weirdly naturally to him, not even thinking about leaning forward to wrap his arms around the younger in a tight embrace.

The contact seemed appreciated, Jimin not moving away completely when he pulled back, settling so that both of their sides were leaning on each other, like weights on a balanced scale. Something about it was strangely comforting to Yoongi as well as the other. Perhaps it was the purely human emotions Jimin was letting out, the human weaknesses and pain reassuring Yoongi that the younger wasn’t completely detached from the world. It was good, and Yoongi felt his heart lighten as Jimin seemed to be almost calm again, only the occasional snuffle breaking the silence.

“I know,” Jimin shrugged, sniffing again. “But I still did it, still whored myself out,” he spat, his voice almost breaking on the last words.

It was an almost sudden change, sadness morphing into anger before it reverted back to sadness again, the younger’s eyes confused. It almost made Yoongi move away, before he got a hold of himself, just bringing a hand up again to run it gently through Jimin’s hair. The action always seemed to calm him, and it didn’t exclude today, Jimin exhaling a breath and closing his eyes as he leaned into the touch, seeming to savour it.

“That was in the past, it’s not now,” Yoongi whispered, Jimin nodding slowly, his eyes still shut.

“I know,” he muttered, eyelids fluttering open. “I know and I’m so thankful,” he said genuinely, a small smile painted over his features, looking oddly angelic with his tear tracks and smudged makeup. “I think that’s why I crave control,” Jimin hummed, a pensive look over his features. “Why I need to be able to act on my own.”

Yoongi hummed in response, making Jimin clasp the hand Yoongi had in his hair, intertwining both their sets of fingers together. The squeezes were prompting Yoongi to smile, and his mouth morphed to match Jimin’s own soft expression, eyes fixed in mutual understanding of one another. They didn’t need to say anything else, happy to just relax with one another against the wall. It was one of the most normal things Yoongi had done in a while, and it was nice, nice to just be able to live for a second, close his eyes and rest his head on the younger’s shoulder, who seemed just as happy.

Yoongi wasn’t sure how long they stayed like that, simply being, but footsteps brought them out of their bubble and back to the uncomfortably sterile and bright hallway, the floor seeming to become harder below them. It was Hoseok who was approaching them, Yeontan still held in his hands,
making Hoseok seem a bit lost about what to do. The puppy still seemed to be asleep, and Jimin let out a little giggle at the expression on Hoseok’s face, the minor panic and confusion.

“My arms are numb,” he whispered loudly, trying to subtly move his hands to try to regain some feeling.

It made Yoongi laugh along with Jimin, Hoseok’s face paling as Yeontan stirred momentarily. It was adorable to see him so concerned about the dog’s wellbeing, and Jimin seemed to agree, releasing Yoongi’s fingers and gracefully standing, sweeping Yeontan from Hoseok’s hands. As soon as the puppy was someone else’s responsibility, Hoseok let his arms just fall to his sides, the limbs flopping like his bones had disappeared in seconds. It made another laugh fall from between Jimin’s lips, genuine and making Yoongi smile, even if the happiness wasn’t exactly stemmed from the same reasoning.

After a while, loud humming announced Taehyung’s arrival, his low voice easily swooping down to reach the deepest notes of the song Yoongi didn’t recognise. As soon as he became visible, his face lit up like a Christmas tree, wandering forward to join the trio which was sitting on the floor in a circle. He let himself fall in a slump between Hoseok and Jimin, cooing as he scooped Yeontan from Jimin’s hands, waking the puppy up from his sleep.

Immediately, Yeontan yapped in joy, licking Taehyung’s face and making him press kisses to his small fluffy head. It was an adorable sight, the dog attempting to jump up to reach Taehyung’s face even when he set him on his lap, all four of them laughing at the show the puppy was putting on. It was refreshing, a break away from everything that had happened in the day, and Yoongi was thankful.

They must have spent hours like that, just all sitting in a circle and playing with Yeontan, talking about the most random things. Not once did a scientist or guard pass through, and Yoongi had a hunch that Namjoon and Seokjin had some sort of impact in that, wanting their kids undisturbed. It also took Yoongi’s mind off of the fact that Jeongguk still hadn’t called, and it must have already been the early hours of the next morning, Jimin bringing his man in just before eleven o’clock.

Of course, Yoongi wasn’t overly concerned. Jeongguk’s mark had been the most complex to track, after all, and it was expected that he took a longer time than the others. It was probably better that they didn’t hear from him, in a way. If he called after only a few hours, it would most likely be because something was wrong, and that Jeongguk needed support, but Yoongi wouldn’t be lying if he said he wouldn’t appreciate a news update, or even just a simple ‘I’m fine’.

It was Seokjin that eventually came to fetch them, a fond look on his face as he wandered over to where they were sat, Yoongi smiling back at him. The eldest didn’t look troubled, so Yoongi figured he had no reason to be either, Hoseok welcoming the adult into their circle like he was just
another teenager. Seokjin normally had quite good parental feelings, and if he wasn’t too concerned over Jeongguk’s absence then Yoongi wouldn’t think about the idea something was wrong.

“Well,” Seokjin announced as he crossed his legs, leaning in like he was gossiping to friends. “We know a third company we can eliminate.”

The announcement made a chorus of sounds come from the younger people surrounding Seokjin, Yoongi himself letting out a little gasp. He was expecting that there were only two companies involved in the whole debacle, only two that tried to kill him. News of a third changed things, especially when they still had one more person to catch and interrogate.

“Who’s the lucky winner?” Jimin asked, copying Seokjin’s actions and leaning his body towards the centre of their ring, eyes wide and mouth slightly open.

The whole image made Yoongi cover up a giggle, trying to match his expression to Hoseok’s faux serious one with no use. Taehyung was doing much better, able to change his expression from laughter to complete stone in milliseconds, something Yoongi was almost jealous of. His consolation was that Yeontan didn’t seem to get the memo, the puppy bounding in Taehyung’s arms before jumping to the floor, running with his little legs in the space before all of their crossed feet.

“It’s the Amademoni group, based in South Africa,” the eldest grinned, fixing one of his blazer’s buttons on his sleeve. “They were also responsible for the attack which stopped the coffee plot,” he elaborated, making people let out sounds of realisation.

So Yoongi was right then, the assassination attempts didn’t make sense because the different leaders had no clue that each other were trying to achieve the same thing. It was sort of a pity they didn’t collaborate with one another, saving both resources and time. Then again, it was probably better for Yoongi himself that they did what they did, their foolishness letting him live for much longer. After all, he could credit one of the companies for saving his life when he didn’t manage to drink his coffee.

“Wait, I missed who the first target was working for,” Jimin said, gesturing in Taehyung’s general direction, making the younger smile.

“He was from the Slava group, in Serbia,” the younger explained, Seokjin nodding along to the words. “They were responsible for the garden attack.”
More sounds of agreement, Hoseok saying a loud ‘ah’ as he clapped his hands together, his enthusiasm making Yoongi smile. The fact that each assassination attempt was carried out by a different company made something in the back of Yoongi’s mind tick with anxiety, the fact so many people were trying to kill him. It meant there were most likely also other leaders thinking of ordering strikes, who wanted to pick Yoongi off as the weakest link, theorising people would be distracted in mourning, wanting the Kim family to seem more human than the god-like status they had now. It was dangerous, because as soon as people realised you could kill a member of their family, suddenly people would want to try themselves.

“But then, aren’t all the assassinations accounted for?” Hoseok asked, a slight frown draped over his face.

The younger made a fair point, that everything that happened had now been given a source. That meant the last person being hunted had multiple different possibilities of their presence, which they would have to narrow down. They might be from the same company as one of the others, of course, two sets of eyes being better than one, especially in a domain as big as Namjoon and Seokjin’s. Perhaps they were from a leader that just hadn’t ordered a strike yet, or that it was planned to happen, they were just waiting for the perfect opportunity that never came in the time frame.

“Well,” Seokjin hummed, and Yoongi didn’t like the glance the eldest sent him. “There was the attack at the meeting,” he suggested, making Yoongi’s stomach drop. He didn’t want to think of it, refused to let his mind open that door. Images of that night still haunted him, Jeongguk on the floor, he still sometimes could see flashes when he blinked, Jeongguk covered in blood. It was terrifying to even have the suggestion that one of the people that worked for whoever hurt his boyfriend was so close, hidden right under their noses. It scared him, a cocktail of fear and shock running through his veins, and he pushed back the illusions forming before his eyes.

*Jeongguk on the floor, Jeongguk covered in blood.*

“You think they have a spy?” Yoongi managed to force himself to ask, eyes fixed on Seokjin, watching his expression, his lips when he talked.

There was a faint buzzing trying to block his ears, but Yoongi didn’t let it spread, ordering it to back off. It wouldn’t help to panic, especially now Jeongguk wasn’t present, even if Yoongi had no doubt the younger would sprint back if he even had the feeling Yoongi was panicking. He refused to ruin this for his boyfriend, ignored the fire threatening to burn his heart alive.
“I wouldn’t say it was impossible,” Seokjin said slowly, seeming to be cautious around Yoongi, his possible reaction. “Or, this last person could just be a double up from an already accounted company,” he said quicker, the others nodding just as swiftly.

“Either way, they’d still be valuable,” Hoseok supplied, but Yoongi still felt small unpleasant tingles crawl up his spine.

He couldn’t decide whether it would be a good or bad thing if the person Jeongguk brought back was one of the original assassins from the night in London. On one hand, it would mean that they could finally find out the people responsible, the last interrogation had Taehyung and Jimin too fuelled by emotions to properly control the amount of pain they put the man in. Jeongguk would be able to extract revenge, and they could put the whole thing behind them once the business was destroyed. The problem was, Yoongi wasn’t sure he wanted to ever know who was responsible.

The images of Jeongguk haunted him, and he worried that putting a name to the actions would make the events even more prominent in his head, make them even more real. There was already a permanent scar left from what happened, the one that marred Jeongguk’s back, never to fully fade. Were more scars necessary, even if they were just psychological? Yoongi didn’t want to ever have to think about Jeongguk being shot again, but if the person was involved in those attacks, Yoongi was sure he wouldn’t be able to get through it.

“That’s right, they might know more information,” Seokjin continued, ignorant of Yoongi’s inner conflict, how much his own head was fighting itself.

“Has there been any word from Guk?” Yoongi asked before anyone had the opportunity to speak, not wanting to admit that even to his own ears he sounded meek, quiet.

Of course, there was nothing wrong with him missing Jeongguk, craving his love, touch. The only thing was that Yoongi was trying to make his family realise he could do some things by himself, didn’t need Jeongguk supervising him like a child. If he did want to take on a permanent job involving the company’s admin, then he had to prove he was independent and responsible enough to take on the role, complete the work. It would hinder the youngest’s life if Yoongi was deemed too attached, Namjoon maybe making Jeongguk stay while Yoongi wrote details down, limiting his freedom.

Realistically, he knew his family were well aware that Yoongi could hold his own just fine, as long as his mental state was fit enough to take it. Their parents would never make Jeongguk do something he didn’t want to do, but the younger may even volunteer to stay by Yoongi’s side, ask to be placed there. Yoongi didn’t want the collapse and waste of Jeongguk’s potential to be his
fault, didn’t want the younger to sacrifice everything just to watch Yoongi’s door. He needed to establish his strength, and an extremely shy exterior really didn’t help that.

“I’m sorry, there’s been nothing,” Seokjin answered, seeming to ignore Yoongi’s tone and just send him a sad smile, no pity in his eyes like Yoongi thought there would be.

“Do we know he’s okay?” the smaller asked, slightly more desperately, choosing to overlook his own tone of voice in the mission to get answers.

Yoongi couldn’t remember a time when Jeongguk had been silent for so long when on a mission, if he ever had been. The younger was always mindful of Yoongi’s paranoia, knew he should not stretch the limits of Yoongi’s mental state. The abnormality of the current events wasn’t exactly a surprise, Jeongguk’s reasoning for being practically a ghost was to be expected, but Yoongi would appreciate some sort of sign that showed the younger was still in one piece.

“I’d say there is no point getting worried at this time,” Seokjin dismissed, waving a hand gracefully through the air, but despite the dismissal Yoongi could also tell the elder was getting twitchy. “His target hid themselves very well,” he rushed, nodding to his own words. “I’ll call him in the morning.”

That did nothing to calm the nerves which Yoongi was trying to swallow in his throat, feeling his airways narrow and narrow. Choosing to ignore the butterflies attempting to explode from his stomach, he directed all his attention to the others, trying to use his stubbornness for his own benefit for once. It was somewhat successful, centring his emotions and thoughts elsewhere, but there was still the nagging feeling in his gut.

“What time is it now?” Taehyung asked with a yawn, stretching his arms up over his head.

As soon as the younger asked his question, Yoongi suddenly became aware of the fatigue which set in his body like cement. It was like a tonne of extra weight was added to his neck, shoulders, making him sway slightly on the spot. It had been a long day, and Yoongi could see everyone around him starting to blink, probably realising their own tiredness from the hours spent awake.

“It’s currently around three thirty,” Jin answered, and even he seemed to realise the exact time, his arm falling to his side like it was heavier than usual.

“Is there any more to do tonight?” Hoseok asked, and Yoongi could tell he was almost praying for
a negative answer, to hear that they could rest.

“Not tonight, no,” Seokjin said with a small smile, everyone else sighing in relief. “Tomorrow, or even later this morning, one of you can write a message on the body,” he said dismissively, making Jimin raise his head higher from where it had been starting to droop.

“He’s mine,” the younger said firmly, for a moment showing no sign of fatigue before a yawn invaded his mouth a second after.

It made Seokjin laugh quietly, Yoongi smiling as well at the ruined attempt of determination, making Jimin roll his eyes. It was good to see that the younger was feeling better, and Yoongi was sure he would be excited to see the state of the man’s body after using the concoction, especially when he had been so downright unpleasant. In all honestly, Yoongi was surprised the younger didn’t stay to just put the man through hell, make him suffer, but then again he had to remember that despite his façade, Jimin felt emotions too strongly for his own good sometimes.

“Alright,” Jin smiled, pulling himself up surprisingly gracefully with the wall as his support. “Other than that, there’s nothing I can think of until we know everything,” he shrugged, making Taehyung let out a quiet sound of joy.

“Can we sleep?” Hoseok asked hopefully, Seokjin looking fondly at all of them as he helped Taehyung to his feet, who dramatically stumbled down the hallway.

“Come upstairs and you can nap in the lounge next to the office, okay?” the eldest offered, making Hoseok nod enthusiastically in agreement.

Jimin draped himself over Taehyung as he picked himself off of the floor, just as graceful as he was when well rested, making the younger almost fall to the floor. As Taehyung regained his footing, Hoseok also clinged onto him, making Jimin laugh. It made a smile spread onto Yoongi’s face despite the aching of his cheeks, the tiredness that made him want to just let his body go limp on the floor, limbs feeling like they doubled in weight.

Wordlessly, Seokjin offered his hands, helping to pull Yoongi up from his seat on the now-warm tile. In an almost perfect replica of Taehyung, he stumbled forward, and probably would have fallen if it weren’t for Seokjin’s hands catching his waist, supporting him on his feet. Letting out a small laugh, the elder arranged himself so that one of his arms stayed around Yoongi’s abdomen, helping to steer his fatigued body in the direction of the lift.
“If Jeongguk says anything, can you just let me know?” Yoongi asked, sure his voice was slurring
from the sleep that was making his vision lag. “Even if I’m sleeping,” he added, moving his head
to try to face the eldest.

His attempt at a head on conversation almost fell flat in a literal sense, his decision not to look
where he was walking resulting in him stumbling again, Seokjin once again catching him as he
knees buckled. With a sigh, the elder carefully set Yoongi back in place, wincing slightly as he
heard a large thump from ahead of them, Taehyung loudly groaning in pain.

“You’ll be the first I tell,” he sighed, beginning to walk again with Yoongi’s whole weight
practically leaning against him, making his way towards where Jimin and Hoseok were dragging
Taehyung across the floor.

“And just,” Yoongi started, pausing in his sluggish footsteps, prompting Seokjin to wait. “Tell him
I miss him,” he said as he began to walk again, ignoring the way his heart scrunched up painfully
in his chest.

“I’ll make sure of it,” Jin answered quietly, holding Yoongi just a bit closer as they watched
Hoseok pull Taehyung off of the floor, looping the younger’s arm over his shoulder, Jimin doing
the same.

The lift ride was like a blur of movement, Yoongi so tired he barely remembered a thing from the
time he was waiting for the metal doors to open until he was being carefully lowered onto a sofa by
Seokjin. He was pretty sure he let out a whine prompted by the lack of contact, and almost
immediately he felt a body lie next to his, not muscled enough to be Jeongguk but familiar enough
to help Yoongi’s mind settle, letting the larger body’s chest press up to his back, arms winding
around his middle.

“Night,” he heard Taehyung murmur in his ear, breath tickling the hairs on Yoongi’s neck.

The elder was fairly sure he hummed in agreement, feeling himself drifting away even as
something small was placed onto his side, Yeontan yapping happily as he settled on top of the
small gap between Yoongi and Taehyung’s bodies. He heard the other behind him hush the puppy
quietly, but frankly Yoongi was too tired to be bothered by the little barks Yeontan was letting out,
happy to just relax in his brother’s arms and try to forget the fact he didn’t know where Jeongguk
was, or if he was even alive.

Chapter End Notes
I'm just saying that I haven't done any chemistry for a while, and even if I did well in the subject at GCSE level I can't remember half the information, so if my descriptions are wrong please correct me!
Twenty Five

Chapter Notes

Getting closer and closer to the end...

It was the shrill sound of a ring tone going off that roused Yoongi from his sleep, making him let out a low groan. He didn’t open his eyes, just continued to lie in the warmth that surrounded him, the arms around his waist making him feel even more safe and sleepy than he did before. It must have been far too early in the morning; the faint beating in Yoongi’s head telling him it had barely been a few hours since he had first been set on the sofa in the first place, not yet caught up on sleep.

He could hear voices somewhere in the room, words too quiet or his mind too tired to make out the words spoken, deciding it mustn’t be as pressing of a matter to keep him awake any longer. Almost on cue, Taehyung hugged him closer to the taller’s chest, Yoongi happily melting into the contact. For a moment, he felt his mind drift, barely hanging on to consciousness before a hand gently shaking his shoulder pulled him from the dark, eyes fluttering open.

It was Seokjin, face shadowed by the low light and features barely visible, Yoongi’s vision also blurred with sleep. The elder had a small smile on his face, and once he realised Yoongi was awake he moved his hand to stroke through his hair, careful to not wake up the younger teenager sleeping behind him. As much as Yoongi’s mind was filled with cotton, he didn’t allow himself to fall back asleep, forcing his eyes to open again when they fell shut.

“Hey sweetie,” Jin whispered, Yoongi humming back in acknowledgement. “Jeongguk just called.”

At that, some of the fuzz cleared from Yoongi’s head, thoughts becoming clearer and less abstract. The small ticking nerve he had in the back of his head was dimmed by Seokjin’s continued smile, the likelihood of bad news becoming less and less probable. It was a relief, and Yoongi felt his eyes flutter shut slightly before he forced them open again, trying to keep them fixed on his parent that was leant over him.

“Guk?” He slurred, making Jin let out a small laugh, careful to not disturb the others in the room.

It was a slightly less pressing worry, especially when it was Taehyung who was the closest. When the younger knew he was safe, he was capable of sleeping through a police siren, even if you held it to his ear. Yoongi thought it was a miracle that he was managing to wake with Jimin to do
morning yoga recently, because he probably needed quite the impressive wake up call. Jeongguk used to be the same, but he had become more and more paranoid when he slept, waking at the quietest sound he could hear when he used to require Yoongi literally pushing him off the mattress.

“Yeah, Guk,” Seokjin confirmed, still gently untangling strands of Yoongi’s hair. “He’s just tracking down his target’s final location, won’t be home for a bit but he’s completely okay,” he told him, making Yoongi blink.

“’S okay?” Yoongi checked, already feeling relief bleed through his body.

The simple vocal confirmation already made Yoongi feel ten times better, the muscles he didn’t even realise he was tensing were now relaxing and making him practically melt into a puddle. The world could be ending but the knowledge that Jeongguk was okay would make Yoongi already feel calm, ready to face anything. It really was some of the best news Seokjin could have given him, only made better if the younger had been coming home already, but this was enough.

“Yeah honey, he’s okay,” Jin repeated, affection seeping through the words.

Yoongi couldn’t help but smile, letting his eyes flutter shut as he relaxed again in Taehyung’s strong hold, Yeontan wriggling slightly before he settled. The news was probably made better by the fatigue still hanging about Yoongi’s mind, making the thought of Jeongguk feel even more euphoric, the fuzz heightening all emotions and ideas, making them almost seem dream-like.

Even now, the darkness was threatening to invade Yoongi’s head again, little spots appearing at the sides of his vision as he forced his eyes open again, trying to keep his gaze from rolling. Jin seemed to see his struggle, laughing quietly and bringing his hand down to caress Yoongi’s cheek, the contact acting as a grounding point.

“’S good,” Yoongi manages to say, sluggishly nodding along to his own words, hearing his own dialect force itself into his tone.

“I told him you missed him,” Jin murmured, starting to get back onto his own two feet. “And that he’ll really love Yeontan,” he continued, standing in a way that he didn’t need to remove his hand from Yoongi’s face just yet.

The prolonged contact was nice, especially when Yoongi was already surrounded by the younger behind him and his habit of cuddling anything in reach when he was asleep. It made him feel less
vulnerable, less exposed to the world, like a barrier was implemented between him and anything that wanted to hurt him again. Yoongi used to dislike constant contact, but it had become something he craved more and more, happy to just let himself rest in someone’s grip.

“Guk likes dogs,” Yoongi agreed with a yawn, feeling his eyes slide shut but not having the strength to open them like last time.

“That he does,” the elder agreed, finally letting his hand fall to his side as he straightened his back. “Go back to sleep now, you still have plenty of time,” he whispered, moving to walk away to where Yoongi could see a dim lamp was on, the other probably doing work as he watched over the four teenagers.

“Thank you, dad,” Yoongi slurred, not even thinking about the words that were falling from his mouth, just letting his mind become blank and peaceful again.

“It’s my pleasure,” he heard Seokjin say, but the sentence barely registered in his brain before he couldn’t remember a thing, everything fading back into the dark.

It only lasted what felt like seconds before he was jolted awake, feeling his chest constrict uncomfortably as he breathed, feeling his racing heart slow down gradually. It must have been a bad dream, but Yoongi didn’t remember a thing, only the panic that had lingered from the illusion. It wasn’t the first time, and he had actually been expecting something like this happen, especially when Jeongguk wasn’t by his side. Yoongi thanked the fact he hadn’t panicked more once he woke, that he was in control of his lungs and thoughts, able to get enough air.

He was still in the room connected to Namjoon and Seokjin’s office, the one with three sofas and a rich red colour scheme, a weird mix of antique and modern as the room itself looked only recently made, which Yoongi knew to be true. Looking around the grand lounge, he was met with Namjoon’s concerned stare from the couch opposite the one he was previously lying on, paper strewn all over the coffee table and the vacant seat next to him.

“You okay?” He checked, looking almost poised to jump out of his seat and come to Yoongi’s aid.

The smaller waved him off, letting himself fall back onto the plush cushions below him, huffing as he looked up at the ceiling. He still felt like he could sleep for years, but his mind was too alert now to let him rest any longer, the fatigue there just not at the surface. It was frustrating, but Yoongi was familiar with the heavy tiredness hidden behind his eyelids, knew how to act like he was full of energy even if he was ready to drop.
It was then that he noticed that apart from the elder, there was nobody else left in the room, even Taehyung had managed to worm himself out from behind Yoongi to go somewhere. That was an indicator to how genuinely tired Yoongi had been, not even waking when one of his brothers literally had to climb over him. It probably should have been concerning, but their whole family was under incredibly large amounts of stress right now, so Yoongi understood why his body decided it wanted to just rest for years.

After a moment, he forced his body to sit up vertically, turning ninety degrees to the side so that his back was against the cushions, letting himself become acclimatised to the new level. After the rush of blood to his head, Yoongi waited for the white spots to fade from his vision, blinking until there was only the fuzziness of fatigue left at the edges. He was thankful the room wasn’t horrifically bright, only gentle light coming from the lamps and chandeliers, windows covered with thick curtains.

Namjoon was moving from paper to paper, rearranging piles and orders. He was muttering, but Yoongi didn’t try and make out any words, sure they only made sense to Namjoon himself, and maybe Seokjin on a good day. The pages weren’t all in Korean, Yoongi able to see English, Japanese, and some languages he didn’t recognise but was sure Namjoon spoke, the elder a genius at easily picking up different tongues and dialects.

“Where is everyone?” Yoongi eventually asked, yawning after the last word and covering his mouth with his sleeve.

Jimin must have somehow put his hoodie back on, and Yoongi only now realised just how much he must have been out of it last night, not even able to recall a single moment with the other. The relief was that he was still in his jeans, meaning he hadn’t been so tired as to completely forget being changed into pyjamas, making him have slightly more faith that he wasn’t just a sleepy blob left for the others to deal with.

“Well,” Namjoon hummed, writing a note in what looked like Spanish on a piece of paper. “Seokjin took the others to deal with the two bodies from yesterday about-” He moved his arm to check his silver watch, “two hours ago.”

“What time is it now?” Yoongi frowned, stretching his arms out over his head.

He didn’t think he had slept for that long, his bones still feeling like lead under his skin, but the fact Seokjin wouldn’t have taken the others so early when they only got to lie down so late indicated that it might be much later in the day than Yoongi thought it was. That thought was almost confirmed by the fact Yoongi couldn’t see evidence of a coffee cup anywhere, Namjoon not
normally parted from his precious caffeine before eleven o’clock.

“It’s noon,” the elder stated, raising an eyebrow at one page before he turned it around, a sound of realisation leaving his lips.

“Is Jeongguk back?” Yoongi asked quieter, trying to seem nonchalant by peering over the mess of paperwork on the table, not meeting Namjoon’s eyes.

The other was probably waiting for him to ask, so the question shouldn’t hold any extra embarrassment on Yoongi’s part, but he didn’t want the pity he could possibly receive. People seemed to just think that Yoongi was entirely dependent on the younger, needed him by his side twenty four/seven, but really it was just a preference. He missed his boyfriend so much while he was gone, but wouldn’t die every time they parted; he didn’t need his parent’s sympathy.

“He called about an hour ago to say that he was chasing his target just outside the city,” Namjoon said, too distracted by the work to focus his emotions in Yoongi’s direction. “I’m expecting a call soon actually,” he hummed, slightly frowning as he pressed his phone’s lock button, the screen showing up with no new notifications.

Both Namjoon and Seokjin had two different phones, vastly different from each other in almost every way. Work phones had plain wallpapers, plain generic phone cases, formal contacts and barely anything that could realistically be traced back to the phone actually belonging to the owner. It was a safety precaution, their work numbers changing periodically to make them almost impossible to track, to identify. Personal phones were a completely different matter, evident from even just when you turned the screen on. Both Namjoon and Seokjin’s lock screens were of their children, different pictures but the same sort of vibe, happiness and something just simply domestic. Home screens were each other, both pictures taken by their significant other when they didn’t realise the image was being captured, making it have a sweet authenticity to it, something too personal for most people to see. There were no work numbers, and instead was just full of domestic things like pictures of family celebrations, calendars marking any of Jimin’s cheerleading rallies or the football matches Jeongguk was set to be included in next year.

It was Namjoon’s work phone which was perched on the edge of the desk, the monochromatic blue gradient of a lock screen painfully blank, especially when it was Jeongguk who was meant to be calling. It just showed how important this situation was for the company, that it was classified entirely as work and not anything personal, even when they were family.

“He’s still not here?” Yoongi asked, trying not to pout at the fact Jeongguk was still absent, even if he knew he was okay.
Just because he could live without the younger, didn’t mean he wanted to. Yoongi practically absorbed energy through the younger’s affection, could be fuelled only by the fondness held in every single one of the other’s actions. Jeongguk was like a battery, one of those Duracell AA batteries he saw advertised on television in London with the pink bunnies as the logo, helping their devices to be powered for hours more than the regular batteries you could buy.

“His mark has presented themselves to be quite the complex person to catch, but he should be home by tonight.” Namjoon explained, making Yoongi huff.

“Has he slept?” he asked, letting his eyes fall back onto the sheets when he realised he wasn’t going to get a reaction from the elder at all, the other barely moving away from his work to respond.

It was understandable, of course, and Yoongi could relate when he made music that it was hard to simple leave something you were invested in doing, something that required every single bit of attention. So he didn’t really mind that Namjoon wasn’t really focusing on him, the paperwork probably of great importance and relating to everything they were doing these days with the external and internal threats. Deciding he wanted to be of some help, Yoongi started grouping the papers into what he could see their uses were, finances on one side, deal details somewhere else. He guessed with the languages he didn’t know, but Namjoon still shot him a grateful smile, making Yoongi’s chest warm with pride.

“Not yet, no,” Namjoon answered, making Yoongi frown.

It wasn’t good that Jeongguk hadn’t rested, especially when the operation seemed to be of such great importance. He wasn’t Yoongi, couldn’t function long term with only a few hours sleep and some caffeine, and for his boyfriend’s sake Yoongi hoped he caught his target soon. It would be no help if Jeongguk was tired and sluggish, and it would be even worse if he got shot again just because he was too disorientated to move out the way of the line of fire.

Namjoon didn’t seem as concerned, probably knowing that Jeongguk was fine up to about forty eight hours and that the chase wouldn’t go on for much longer, a fact which made Yoongi feel slight relief from his concern. If Namjoon wasn’t worried, then he would try not to be himself, especially when the elder knew much better what Jeongguk’s actions entitled and what his status was. He would just have to trust that Jeongguk was okay, and that he didn’t need an emergency help of any sort just yet, something he was grateful for.

“But he’s okay?” He double checked, the elder smiling again at the pressed question, writing down a single line next to a change in numbers on a page.
“He’s fine,” Namjoon promised, looking up from his work to gaze straight into Yoongi’s eyes.

He knew he wouldn’t find any other information out, not because he wasn’t being told but because Namjoon didn’t physically know anything else about the youngest, so Yoongi made himself drop the question. Asking more and more would probably both annoy Namjoon and end up making Yoongi feel even more on edge about Jeongguk, both being something which he ideally wanted to avoid. An annoyed Namjoon is no fun, especially when he was probably slightly preoccupied thinking about Jeongguk despite his own recognition about the fact the younger was safe. Yoongi would be no help making everyone just as nervous as he was.

Determined to be of use, Yoongi focused on actually reading some of the papers which were in Korean, scanning the information until he understood most of what Namjoon was doing. Of course he couldn’t help with the pages which were written in languages he didn’t understand, but now wanted to learn. If he was going to pursue a position within the business side of things rather than the directly criminal side of things, he needed to do everything he could to help himself be the best, even if it included learning a handful of new languages.

Before he could bring up the idea of lessons in language or business, the phone on the table vibrated, the screen lighting up with just Jeongguk’s name displayed. The sight made Yoongi’s heart jump, feeling a lump in his throat as the mobile gyrated against dark wood and the corner of a page which was in Japanese, moving across the table by millimetres. Yoongi couldn’t tear his eyes away from the glowing screen, already able to imagine his boyfriend’s voice at the other end of the line.

He followed where his eyes were fixed when Namjoon finally picked up the device, holding it to his ear once he accepted the call. For a second, Yoongi felt a sinking feeling in his chest, all he could hear being Namjoon’s breathing. The elder was careful to keep his volume low on calls to ensure people weren’t eavesdropping, but it backfired now when all Yoongi wanted to hear was Jeongguk’s heavenly words, his painfully familiar tone.

“That’s good to hear,” Namjoon said after a moment, eyes flickering from the table to Yoongi’s own stare, the smaller still gazing longingly at the phone in his hand.

There was no point hiding the fact that he really wanted to talk to Jeongguk, because Namjoon definitely already knew. It wasn’t hard to guess, especially with how close the couple were on a daily basis, barely liking to leave each other’s sides unless it was really necessary. When they were apart they felt like magnets, pulled in two different directions to be separated, but ultimately being reunited because the two poles were so attracted to one another they eventually pulled themselves into a pair.

Namjoon already knew Yoongi longed to talk, interact, do anything with the younger, everybody
knew that. He would be able to relax so much easier if he heard his voice, could dedicate his time to work once Jeongguk’s good health was confirmed first hand. The problem was the time frame, whether the younger had a minute to spare before he needed to do something else, deal with the person he had been hunting down.

“Okay, we’ll prep a room for you,” Namjoon spoke again, and Yoongi didn’t need to be a genius to understand that the room mentioned was to interrogate Jeongguk’s target.

But that meant Jeongguk had finally caught who he was tasked to find, could start his journey home with his mark in tow, mission finally completed. It was something Yoongi was absolutely ecstatic to hear, feeling almost just as great as he imagined Jeongguk to feel, relief and success fluttering through his veins.

“He’s fine; he’s fine, just here actually,” the eldest hummed, eyes finally staying in their place of meeting Yoongi’s own, a small smile on his face as he spoke.

That made a fuse in Yoongi’s stomach burst into flame, rope burning up his blood vessels to his heart, finally making butterflies explode in his chest. He may be able to speak to Jeongguk before he had to rush off to do things, might be able to just hear his voice briefly, like a dose of a drug he was addicted to, his needed fix. It would take pressure off his chest, he knew, would make him less nervous, less like his cells were on fire in his body. He was putting all his effort into keeping calm, trying not to seem too eager and embarrass himself, even if Namjoon had literally seen him almost at his worst.

“Yeah I’ll pass you over,” he said, making Yoongi’s chest flash with a blaze of warmth again, the prospect of getting to talk to Jeongguk making his heart skip a beat. “Jeonggukie just wants to say hello,” Namjoon smiled, lowering the phone from his ear.

He tried not to snatch the device directly out of Namjoon’s outstretched hand, making himself slow his movements and just carefully accept the offered item. The elder’s eyes were sparkling, just like he knew exactly Yoongi wanted to do, a small smile on his face. As soon as he had the phone just in his own grip, he pulled it up in a flash, feeling his eyes widen as he waited in anticipation for Jeongguk to do anything on the other end of the line.

“Guk?” Yoongi asked quietly, straining his ears to hear any sign of the younger’s voice.

The second of almost static silence between voices felt something like years of Yoongi’s life, days upon days of nothing. The anticipation felt almost deadly, a slow knife digging under his skin, making his bones ache. He knew realistically that Jeongguk was definitely on the other line, knew
the younger was just about to answer, but every millisecond was a whole lifetime, passing in a blink.

“Yoongi, love,” Jeongguk finally spoke, and the sheer familiarity of it almost made Yoongi’s eyes water, the yearning he had almost semi-replaced with all the love he directed to the other. “How are you?” He asked, and Yoongi could just imagine Jeongguk’s concerned facial expression, tongue pushing into his cheek.

“I’m good now,” Yoongi told him, a small laugh falling from his mouth in joy. “But I’d be even better if you were here,” he confessed, visualising Jeongguk’s smile in his own head.

The elder knew that Jeongguk loved being needed just as much as Yoongi loved having the other next to him. Jeongguk found purpose in helping Yoongi with life, liked to feel helpful and do something constructive as opposed to being spoon-fed things. Sure, the younger could be a brat, but he liked to be the one to pour affection, to dote on Yoongi’s every wish and dream.

“I’m coming home now, darling, I’ll be there soon,” Jeongguk promised, the words sending spikes of euphoria through Yoongi’s whole body, almost making him shudder.

Just the idea of being in Jeongguk’s arms was making his spine tingle, little fireworks bursting under his skin, painting the dark in colour. All Yoongi wanted was to be held, let the younger coddle him and whisper sweet nothings into the space just behind his ear, tracing fingers and wandering lips. He was addicted, he knew it, even if he could survive a short time without the other he knew that long term, he was hooked, destined to always have him by his side.

“You’re okay?” Yoongi asked, trying to keep any worry out of his voice, but he realistically knew Jeongguk would hear it anyway.

“I’m completely in one piece,” Jeongguk responded, making Yoongi sigh in relief, his exhale of air probably audible on the other end of the line. “Look, baby,” he said quieter, some of the happiness draining from his voice. “I’ve got to go, but I’ll be with you really soon,” he swore, and Yoongi felt a bittersweet tang wash over his body.

It was such a short moment, only lasted just over a minute, and already Yoongi’s heart was pleading for more, more, more, something that couldn’t happen. It was like ripping out the centre of his chest, a piece carried off somewhere else to never be seen again. The phone had almost turned into an extension of his body, his soul travelling through the devise in its circuit of his body, Yoongi almost sure he could hear the screen throbbing with his pulse.
Thinking about the call ending made his heart drop, all his blood sinking to his feet onto the carpet, pooling under his soles. Jeongguk needed to end the call, Yoongi knew, *God he knew*, but that didn’t make anything even remotely easier. It was like being told someone would die, you’re never really prepared for the impact, have never planned enough to deal with the drowning sadness.

“I love you,” the elder said, trying to not sound too disappointed with the length of their conversation, especially when he knew the younger would sacrifice his time right at this second to just talk about anything that came to mind.

“I love you too,” Jeongguk answered immediately, voice as genuine as ever. “So much,” he added, making Yoongi’s heart rise just a little bit more.

As the call ended and Jeongguk hung up, Yoongi lowered the phone from his ear, placing it into Namjoon’s outstretched palm. As much as he loved the elder, he wished he was alone, wanted to just let himself fall down into a pile of limbs until Jeongguk came back to stitch him together once again, adding more stuffing and mending any holes in the fabric. He knew Namjoon would send him a look of concern, of pity, and that wasn’t something he wanted, didn’t need anybody else to see him like that apart from Jeongguk, who was the cause of it anyway.

He forced himself to completely bounce back to the work in front of him, ignoring anything he felt to pick up another page, read through another set of information. It should have been the type of work Yoongi excelled at, but every word was fluttering off the page, spinning around his head tauntingly. Nothing was staying in his mind, passing in through one ear and out through the other, like Yoongi wasn’t there in the first place.

It was after he read the same passage three times that he finally put the page down, staring into the small, empty space just between Namjoon’s arm and the wall, catching a glimpse of the sky outside, nothing but plain, grey clouds. Everything seemed to be monochromatic, and even the colours inside the room were fading, their brightness disappearing into thin air.

Perhaps it was the result of Jeongguk’s distance, or maybe it was just the situation they were in. Until they interrogated the last person, managed to communicate a strong threat to anyone else who dared to face them, there was still danger. It would probably be a bad idea for Yoongi to even be outside, who knows how many people lay in wait for him to be vulnerable enough to act. It was something terrifying that Yoongi was trying to blatantly ignore, procrastinating any thought surrounding the sheer danger he was in. Of course, he was safe for now, Namjoon and Seokjin’s floor being so secured that there weren’t even spiders in the ceiling corners, but nothing could last forever.
“Why don’t you try and sleep for a bit more?” Namjoon suggested, jolting Yoongi from where he was lost in thought. “You had a late night last night, and it may help pass the time,” he said, eyes soft as Yoongi met his gaze.

By now, the lingering anxiety from the nightmare had almost completely left his body, the adrenaline disappearing from his system. It let the fatigue finally seep through his bones, and blinking his eyes made Yoongi realise just how sleepy he was again. Talking to Jeongguk must have helped, the reassurance he was okay like a cue for his body to just drop, and now resting was the only thing on his mind.

Namjoon seemed to have realised this, smiling as he stood and rearranged some of the pillows on the sofa Yoongi was sat on, getting the younger to lay back. The blanket draped over his body enclosed the warmth from the room around him like a cocoon, and Yoongi felt surrounded by soft bedding as he let Namjoon tuck the covers even closer around him. Pressing a kiss to his head, Namjoon wished him a good sleep, and Yoongi’s eyes were fluttering shut before he even registered that the other had gone back to work.

He woke up just the same as he had the last time, struggling to throw the blanket off of his body in panic. He felt surrounded, trapped, and none of his limbs would move as far as he knew they could, like they were held down. It made nausea crawl up Yoongi’s throat, breath stuttering as it fought to pass his lips. In his clouded mind, there were hands holding him down, maybe to kill him, maybe to do worse, ripping his body apart and doing whatever they wanted with the pieces.

His eyes flew open, the sight of the ceiling helping somewhat to ground him to his surroundings, but there was still part of the blanket tangled around his feet. Yoongi’s kicks were desperate, and he felt like he was fighting an invisible foe, the battle lasting for years and years with no end in sight. He was about to start to sob, felt it build in the back of his throat before he felt a hand carefully unlatch the fabric from where it was weaved around his feet, allowing Yoongi to quickly discard it to the floor.

Rolling onto his side, Yoongi curled up into the smallest position he possibly could, wrapping his arms around his legs and trying to hide his face. There were tears dampening his clothes, liquid absorbed into the fabric and leaving a cold patch against Yoongi’s face, but he couldn’t bring himself to move, didn’t want to see the room around him, far too big and not familiar enough to bring the comfort he needed.

As a sob wracked his body, he felt a hand being gently lowered onto his back, fingers dancing until they decided to draw little circles into his clothes, the actions soothing. It made it easier to breathe, and Yoongi thanked his lucky stars he wasn’t agitated enough to forget how to inhale completely, focusing all his energy into the simple task.
The contact from the other person moved lower, from the centre of his back to the area just above the hem of his sweater, gentle hushes being almost whispered into the room. It was so normal that Yoongi didn’t even think to question it, crying as he let himself be comforted. There was a presence in his mind that was nagging him to remember something, something particular, but his brain was far too addled to even guess at what it might be, until the person spoke.

“Hey, hey, love, calm down,” a painfully familiar voice said softly, making a jolt run through all of Yoongi’s nerves. “You’re okay, you’re okay,” Jeongguk promised, slipping his fingers under the hem of Yoongi’s hoodie to caress the skin below it.

It was like he had been drenched in ice cold water, from head to toe, body not understanding how to function anymore. He was almost frozen, at least mentally, mind buffering like an old computer. It took at least five seconds for Yoongi to realise who it was that spoke, who the blatant owner of the hands were, which were dipping between the joints in his spine rhythmically.

“Guk?” He choked, forcibly wrenching his eyes apart to search for the familiar face his ears promised.

There was no failure on his sense’s capabilities, and as soon as Yoongi cast his desperate gaze on his boyfriend he was already moving, practically throwing himself into the younger’s arms. You would have thought they hadn’t seen each other in weeks, months, years, but the embrace was so tight and warm that Yoongi couldn’t bring himself to care about how desperate he must look, digging his fingers into Jeongguk’s blazer, still careful to avoid the exact location of the bullet wound even in this state.

“I’m here,” Jeongguk whispered into his ear, clenching his arms even harder to press Yoongi as close as possible to his body, letting him cry into his neck. “You’re safe, I’m here.”

They were like the magic words Yoongi needed to hear, his cries morphing into something less panicked but more desperate, his whole body shaking. With great effort, he managed to wrap his legs around Jeongguk’s waist, the younger leaning back to sit on his knees on the carpet as he held Yoongi as though he was a child, the weight surely no good for his knees.

“Missed you, missed you,” the smaller stuttered, fingers causing the fabric of Jeongguk’s blazer to bunch up as he gripped at it, close to ripping seams.

In a way, Yoongi didn’t even realise how truly desperate he had been for the younger’s company, his affection. It was like a drug, his addiction rushing over him as soon as he caught sight of his desired pill, willing to do anything it takes to be able to dose on the offered substance. Jeongguk’s
very real arms around him made Yoongi feel almost high on euphoria, head spinning and vertigo becoming even worse as each sob pushed him more and more off balance.

“I know,” the taller crooned, moving a hand to support the back of Yoongi’s head. “I missed you too, love, so much,” he promised as he pressed his nose into the crook of the elder’s neck, nudging at the skin.

It made a watery laugh, almost hysterical with his gasping breaths fall from his lips, making Yoongi choke. Jeongguk just hushed him quietly, lightly patting his back when he coughed; murmuring things Yoongi didn’t hear and yet still found comfort from. It was hauntingly cliché for them, hauntingly similar, but Yoongi didn’t know if he would ever be able to break out of this vicious cycle he found himself in. He could only hope that the conclusion of the assassination attempts would help to bring him peace of mind.

“Don’t go again, please don’t,” Yoongi whimpered, feeling Jeongguk exhale a warm breath into his skin, shivers travelling up his back.

Realistically, he knew he couldn’t request Jeongguk to make that promise. His job, after all, partially revolved around meetings and doing things away from home, and asking him to stay was cropping his wings. Especially when the younger had been so accepting of Yoongi’s interest in working within the intel side of things, still in the company Jeongguk wanted so desperately for him to sit out of, not complaining was the least Yoongi could do.

Jeongguk seemed to share the same thought, not agreeing to anything but just continuing to hush him quietly, whispering reassurances and sweet, sweet nothings. If Yoongi hadn’t been crying, it would almost have been cute, but there were still gasping sobs and breaths leaving his lips, the younger gently rubbing his back.

“You’re okay,” Jeongguk murmured, pressing his mouth just behind Yoongi’s ear. “I just need you to breathe then you’ll be okay,” he promised, Yoongi choking slightly as he tried to relax himself.

It didn’t take much longer, the blend of comfort and security easily working to soothe Yoongi’s head, limbs almost dropping in fatigue. He felt so tired, despite his sleep having been so long, his body feeling like it just ran a marathon. There was a mix of mental and physical need for a break, everything that was happening around him too fast, too complex, the attempts too unpredictable for him to feel completely okay.

The stress on his body made everything worse, and it just occurred to Yoongi that he couldn’t remember the last full meal he had, thoughts directing to breakfast yesterday. It wasn’t good for his
health in the first place, but now there was such high risk his bad habits were emerging three times as bad, lips bitten and nails bruised from constant strain from Yoongi’s teeth. Even his weight seemed to be suffering even more, any progress he had made in years all dropping away, muscle and fat bleeding off his bones. Yoongi almost looked skeletal, and he knew he would just get worse if nothing changed.

“I just want everything to stop,” he whispered, voice dry and scratchy from the sobs, his throat sore as he swallowed.

Jeongguk hummed quietly, one hand still supporting Yoongi’s head, fingers tangled in hair as the other moved soothingly up and down his back, surely feeling his spine stick against the skin. The younger said nothing, just started to rock back and forth, smoothing out the tangles in Yoongi’s strands of hair, the roots emerging black next to the faded pastel pink.

“It will be over soon,” Jeongguk eventually said, pressing light kisses around the side of Yoongi’s head until he pulled back, pressing sweet kisses on his lips.

And with all his heart, Yoongi hoped the words were true. Any longer, and he wasn’t sure if he could cope. It wasn’t like the threats in the past, the general targets and attacks which weren’t individually aimed at him. The elder could cope with that, could deal with people trying to hurt their whole family, because it meant there were people capable of taking care of themselves being targets. But the isolation of Yoongi as the sole victim was harder on his mind than he could describe, the responsibility to not get hurt resting on his broken shoulders even if people were watching him left and right.

It made another sob, this time dry and loud, burst from his lungs, and immediately his body was once again pulled into a tight embrace. The emotions running over Yoongi’s body almost made him want to cry even more. It was stupid, how he couldn’t even cope with a small amount of stress, especially when his family dealt with things which were so much worse on the daily. His low threshold for strain made him reconsider so many things, his want to be a part of work again, his need to not be entirely dependent on people.

If he couldn’t deal with pressure now, what did that mean for the long term? Any work came with demands, deadlines, pressure from people or even the work itself, and would that mean Yoongi would be unable to cope with anything he was asked to do? Maybe it had been a bad idea to try to involve himself in business again, maybe he wasn’t up to the standard Namjoon and Seokjin needed, would never do anything right. After all, the reason he left in the first place was because he wasn’t enough, why would it be different now?

“But I need it to be now, Gukkie, now,” his voice cracked, and he felt Jeongguk tighten his arms.
“It’s almost over,” the younger swore, not releasing his hold. “It’s almost done and you’re being so brave, I admire you so much,” Jeongguk said, and it almost made all the doubts disappear from his mind, Jeongguk’s words meaning the world.

It was everything Yoongi needed to hear in the moment, the other practically feeding him all the right words, right thoughts. If Jeongguk didn’t doubt his capabilities, then how could Yoongi? Especially when he knew the younger liked him to be sheltered, that he would probably advise Yoongi against the role as soon as he had an inkling that something could go wrong. Jeongguk’s faith was all he needed, his approval all the motivation he required.

“I love you,” Yoongi managed to choke, body jerking as he tried to keep his cries from escaping his mouth.

“I love you too, darling, but I need you to calm down,” Jeongguk murmured, not letting go even as Yoongi moved against his arms, keeping him safe and sound.

Listening to his boyfriend’s words, Yoongi tried once again to take a deep breath, body shuddering and shivering while pressed up against Jeongguk’s chest. It wasn’t as difficult as before, the air seeming to have thinned enough in order to not get completely trapped in his throat, allowing Yoongi to breathe. The younger just continued to rock as he got control of his lungs, hands grasping weakly at Jeongguk’s back to ground himself.

Despite his regulated ventilation, Yoongi’s body continued to almost vibrate, shivering so harshly he thought he was having a seizure. The taller just held on, just let Yoongi find his bearings and footing again, not stopping the hands moving long his body, in his hair. Small, wet hiccups were occasionally bubbling out of his mouth, making his body jolt periodically, tears only starting to dry on his pale skin, most likely leaving tracks of pink.

“What, what time is it?” Yoongi managed to say through gritted teeth, shudders making his mouth chatter.

He needed to distract himself, needed his body to be given the time and space to relax. It was uncomfortable with the continuous movements, and Yoongi could see Jeongguk becoming more and more worried as the shakes continued, the elder’s reaction to a panic attack never normally this strong in the aftermath. In most examples, Yoongi would just be tired once his body decided to function properly, falling asleep immediately, but this time there evidently was a differing plan.
He forced his mind to centre on nothing other than Jeongguk, almost restraining his own limbs as they tried to shiver even more violently. Gritting his teeth harder, he buried his face in the crook between Jeongguk’s neck and shoulder, lightly biting the material of his blazer in his mouth. It almost helped to make him feel more human, being somewhat tied to a presence, and it only helped that the fabric smelled exactly how Jeongguk did when he decided to wear newly washed pyjamas in bed.

“Almost eight o’clock,” Jeongguk answered his question quietly, seeming almost hesitant to move how he had Yoongi positioned on his lap, shifting underneath him to try and redistribute pressure.

Realising just how much he was leaning on the other, Yoongi moved to slide off Jeongguk’s lap, but toned arms tightened around his body to halt the process. It made him feel thankful, hands still visibly gyrating against Jeongguk’s back, trying to hold on to his shoulders. The younger still seemed concerned, trying to whisper for Yoongi to calm down, but the shakes refused to leave his bones. After a moment, the smaller just decided to ignore the uncomfortable movements, focusing on their conversation.

“In the evening?” He asked, resting his head against Jeongguk’s shoulder as he released the blazer from between his teeth, eyes flitting between being wide open and scrunched shut.

It was kind of worrying, that his muscles were continuing to shudder so much, body starting to ache. All he could think to do was to try and ignore it, hope it would go away. With a particularly strong spasm, Yoongi pulled his arms in, Jeongguk wrapping him up completely in his own body as the elder gripped at the shirt over his chest. It was probably just as anxiety inducing for the other, and Yoongi admired the fact Jeongguk hadn’t commented on it yet.

“Yeah, I got back at around one,” the younger said slowly, Yoongi feeling his body sink once the immediate shivers had declined in strength, letting out a held breath.

“So you’ve dealt with your target,” Yoongi clarified, words starting to sound heavier even to his own ears, accent coming through the faulted Korean.

He felt Jeongguk take a breath, a moment of silence as he gathered what to say. It was most likely a mix of both not wanting Yoongi to hear about torture and still being preoccupyingly concerned over his present state, trying to think of what to say when there were so many more things they could discuss. Jeongguk had restarted his movements against Yoongi’s back, the slow strokes of his fingers seeming to somewhat help the violent shudders decrease in power, becoming less and less frequent as the conversation went on.
“Yes,” he said after a while, sounding cautious. “She’s dead.”

Somehow, the news felt both rewarding and draining, a bittersweet feeling sinking in Yoongi’s chest. The last of the targets was dead, the last of the discovered subjects. Perhaps both of the feelings were linked to the relief that flooded through his system, like layers of metal were removed from his heart, lungs, brain. His body seemed to just give up, slumping pathetically when another wave of shudders travelled along his nerves, Jeongguk holding him in place. Finally, the weight of the spies’ presence was gone, evaporating into the room around him like a halo.

“Yoongi?” Jeongguk asked, voice sounding slightly more worried than before, hands moving faster along his back before they went back to their original rhythm once the shorter hummed in acknowledgement.

“What did you do?” He managed to slur, feeling much more than hearing the sentence merge with itself, sounding like a word in a new language.

The hands on his back seemed to glitch for a moment, almost buffering before they resumed like nothing happened, not stopping again. It confirmed Jeongguk’s reluctance to talk about the topic, but the younger didn’t seem like he was going to outright refuse to answer Yoongi’s question. It was in the way that there was a quiet hum almost with every breath he let out, every exhale lightly vibrating in his throat.

“Yoongi, I-” he started, but immediately stopped when he heard Yoongi’s sigh of displeasure, Jeongguk's nose lightly dragging over the elders’ neck.

“I just want to know,” Yoongi promised, and if anyone had asked him then he would tell them he almost sounded defeated, weak and feeble.

The whole situation was making him feel more tired than almost ever before, no energy to fight. It had gotten past the stage of simple sleepless nights, knocking on the door of constant fatigue. It was getting more and more difficult to have hope for an end when Yoongi barely even remembered the start, wouldn’t be able to pinpoint the exact time his life had become so much more dangerous than before.

“All I did was shoot her until she talked, I’m not as creative as the others,” Jeongguk sighed finally, the elder gently nodding along to the words.
Jeongguk never had been as sadistic as Jimin or Taehyung, even Hoseok sometimes getting pleasure from other’s pain. He had always just handled things professionally, doing what he had to do, no more, no less. In a way, it was a quality Yoongi was thankful for, Jeongguk seeming so much more human than their other kin, but it must be then difficult for him. The younger never was as eager to spill blood as everyone else.

“What did she say?” Yoongi asked, happy that Jeongguk finally wasn’t hesitating in his answers, finally was sharing everything equally.

“As it turns out,” he sighed, shifting in his seat underneath Yoongi’s weight. “She was from yet another organisation, the Zafer Company based near the border of Europe and Asia,” Jeongguk recited, the name ringing no bells in Yoongi’s head. “She had been an informant for almost a year.”

Almost a year? That made a chill settle over Yoongi’s conscience, icicles digging their sharp points into his brain. A year meant that this intruder was there when Yoongi got kidnapped, was there throughout the stressful recent times with everything that had happened. A year was a long time for someone to be undercover, and resentment was bubbling in his head, curses directly aimed at the traitorous woman. They had trusted her, most likely, given her roles and this was the thing they got in return, betrayal?

“Was she behind any attacks?” Yoongi questioned carefully, because he knew all assassination attempts were accounted for, but one.

It was the one that Yoongi wouldn’t mind staying anonymous, the one that still made him wake up in a cold sweat. What happened in London was exactly the type of thing Yoongi needed to avoid thinking about, especially now when he had just come down from an anxiety attack. The source of his terror was the video inside his head, which was happy to replay over and over again on loop as soon as Yoongi showed any vulnerability, let his mind relax. Jeongguk on the floor. Jeongguk covered in blood. It was every moment, feeling the bullet hit, trying to understand why his boyfriend was falling, all nightmares which appeared unpredictably while Yoongi was asleep.

“They…” Jeongguk started, and his tone already said so much. “The London attack, at the meeting,” he confirmed, and the once-relief providing sinking in Yoongi’s gut suddenly made him feel sick, like a rock was forced into his stomach.

The thought made him scrunch his eyes shut as hard as he could, a shiver running up his spine as images of red stained his imagination. This wasn’t the time for this; there never would be a time to come to terms with what happened, the what ifs. More so than anything else in the world, the events which happened would scar him for his whole life, more than what happened with Zack Goldcerd, even his father. It was probably because of the fact it was Jeongguk, the most precious
person in Yoongi’s life, who was hurt, who was shot. Yoongi ultimately could deal with his own suffering, but not Jeongguk’s, never Jeongguk’s.

“You mean…”

He couldn’t finish the sentence, the idea that this woman was spying on them for the people that could have potentially killed the youngest in their family. The lump in his throat was too thick to speak through, too large to swallow down. Even the simple notion made him feel sick, that someone had been inside their defences for a year, able to collect little pieces of information over months and months.

“Yes, that’s exactly what I mean,” Jeongguk said in an indistinguishable voice, almost completely monotone to Yoongi’s ears.

And Jeongguk being the one to confront her, it must have been tough on him, brought back feelings he didn’t want. Yoongi knew the younger had hated everything that happened, the fact he had gotten hurt and hadn’t been able to protect Yoongi for the whole evening, that he felt useless as he was bedbound in first the hospital, then the hotel. If there was anything in the world Jeongguk despised, it was being unable to do things to the best of his ability, being unable to complete things for himself to the highest standard. The time he had to spend out of action had had an effect on the younger, his dedication increasing even more in the recent times past.

“Anyway,” the younger dismissed, pulling Yoongi closer with a soft grasp. “She was the last of the discovered traitors, so we need to plan our next steps,” he sighed, Yoongi finally pulling back enough that he could look the other in the eye.

Something about the words made Yoongi pause, gaze gliding all over his boyfriend’s features, his body language. The purple rings falling under his eyes were like bruises, hair slightly unkempt and greasy. He looked tired, seconds away from collapsing, and it made Yoongi’s heart crack, rifts appearing in the red tissue. It was the faint lines in his skin, the small cuts in his lips where he had obviously been biting at them. Every detail just made Yoongi want to kiss the fatigue away, try and make everything better, even if he knew it was impossible.

The fact that his family hadn’t already micromanaged and planned every next move was surprising, and Yoongi couldn’t stop his eyebrows from rising, lips quirking. In every other occasion, meetings were called as soon as humanly possible, even if it meant missing out on sleep, or meals, or something else of the sort. Especially with the situation being this delicate, Yoongi would think Namjoon and Seokjin would want to get all the information and scheme as soon as Jeongguk was back, as soon as he was confirmed to be completely okay.
“You haven’t done that yet?” Yoongi asked in disbelief, watching the younger’s face morph into something almost resigned, a warm hand coming up to stroke Yoongi’s pale cheek.

It was so ordinary, so domestic that it made Yoongi’s body melt into a puddle, leaning heavily into the contact. If he really was a cat like the others claimed, he was sure he would be purring loudly, content with the point of warmth he could rest his head on. In return, Yoongi trailed his hands from where they were trapped in Jeongguk’s shirt to his neck, fingers lightly brushing the hairs at the back of the skin.

The younger had changed, his hair getting longer than it ever had been before, and Yoongi was certain he would attack anyone who brought a pair of scissors anywhere near his boyfriend’s head. Paired with the dark colour of the strands, the dark earrings he wore and the black clothes, it made Jeongguk seem perfect, like the person everyone had a crush on in school, leather jacket and all. If he didn’t know the younger watched anime and cried when pets died in movies, then Yoongi would think the younger was much more fearsome and intimidating, his soft side the only barrier.

“Yoongi, you’re in the centre of this mess.” Jeongguk murmured, leaning forward to gently push his forehead against Yoongi’s own, noses almost brushing. The elder swore he felt Jeongguk’s eyelashes blinking, barely a centimetre away from his own. “You’ll be present at the meeting; it’s affected you the most.”

*Oh.* That wasn’t what Yoongi was expecting the reason to be. He would have said that maybe they were thinking over the facts, maybe trying to review everything they knew before they made decisions, or even that they were allowing Jeongguk a short rest before they proceeded on resolving the matter. Being told it depended on him, *Yoongi*, almost made his heart explode.

Anything he thought about not being good enough for the job disappeared without a trace, chest inflating with a cocktail of self-pride and joy. They had waited for him, *him*, he was an important person in the decision, not one of the others, or another board member, or even different specialists. It was *Yoongi* they waited for, and it made bubbles fly up his throat, fireworks in his stomach.

“You guys waited for me to wake up?” Yoongi almost laughed, a sweet scented candle sparking alight behind his eyes.

Jeongguk’s lips, though chapped and bitten, curved into a smile, his teeth appearing in the millimetre gap of his mouth. He looked just as ecstatic as Yoongi felt, and the younger’s agreement made him feel even better, that everyone had faith in him, his input, *everyone*. It was euphoric, this time the disbelieving laughs actually bursting from his mouth, Jeongguk smiling even wider.
“Of course,” Jeongguk crooned, lips brushing so close Yoongi could almost taste the younger, breath falling against his lips. “I needed a rest myself anyway,” he excused, but the glimmer in his eyes answered every question Yoongi had revolving around the subject.

It made his love for his family skyrocket so high Yoongi couldn’t even explain, heart throbbing and pounding. No matter how much he appeared weak, or struggling, they always gave him chances to prove himself, let him pursue anything he wanted. They could have easily dismissed him, easily just left him in a room with a source of entertainment and handled everything themselves, but they didn’t. Yoongi was so thankful for each and every one of them, would love his whole family until the day he died.

“So when will we have the meeting?” Yoongi enquired, energy slowly bleeding back into his body like he had just drank a litre of pure coffee, a buzz in the back of his mind.

“Tonight, probably,” Jeongguk hummed in answer, hands rising to gently cradle Yoongi’s jaw. “Do you know what you want to do to the companies?” he murmured, thumbs tracing small circles against pale skin, leaving trails of fire in their path.

Yoongi couldn’t explain how much he craved the younger when he was absent, how much he missed the little pinpricks of affection that lit themselves up every time fingers danced over skin. It made Yoongi try and lean even closer, lips almost touching but not quite, the space oddly tense. It was like a blanket had fallen over their heads, suddenly enclosed in their bubble with nothing else in the world, hands wandering much more innocently than both of them really wanted.

Jeongguk shifted, one hand dipping down to trail slowly across Yoongi’s side, fingers dancing from his chest to his lower back, threatening to fall even lower. Without thinking, it made the elder gasp a small breath, shakily exhaling directly onto Jeongguk’s lips. Rearranging his hands, Yoongi tilted his head to the side, lightly brushing their noses together.

“Shouldn’t everyone else decide?” Yoongi toyed, a smirk painting his face in a smile, the corners of his mouth curving upwards.

“I think Namjoon and Seokjin are letting the choice be yours,” Jeongguk told him, words sounding weirdly intimate against Yoongi’s pink lips. “So what do you want?”

What did he want? The question was oddly relevant as Yoongi finally pressed forward, Jeongguk tightening his grip on his lower back and jaw. Their lips met in a heated kiss, and it was almost like the younger was trying to devour him, leaning heavier into the contact until Yoongi was practically being pushed back. It made a rush of adrenaline race through his veins, every touch of lips and
hands like a dose of a drug, Yoongi addicted for life.

A bite at his neck made him moan, the sound more breath than noise, but it seemed to coax Jeongguk to work even harder, sucking and biting at the no-longer porcelain skin. Every sensation was heightened, until the only thing Yoongi could focus on was the fire in his chest, on his skin, and suddenly he loved the feeling. With gasping breaths, he pulled Jeongguk’s head back up to connect their mouths, moving to the younger’s ear to whisper his answer to his question.

“I want to watch them burn.”
So close to the finish now...

Yoongi didn’t always have dreams. Albeit, dreamless nights were rare, but sometimes he was blessed with a rest of silence, body just recovering itself from the world. Nightmares were on a different level of status to dreams because the latter experience was something good, a nice image that made you smile, whilst Yoongi’s nightmares were never pleasant in any variation of the word. They left him drained, left him more fatigued than he was before he slept, eyes burning and limbs like lead hanging from his body. But dreams were always special, the hallucinations of an ideal world uncovering a strong pull of want in Yoongi’s head.

He hadn’t had a real dream for what felt like years, nights haunted by terrors of his past, present, all up until the night before the final strike was planned to happen. That night, it seemed like there would be nothing, until he looked up to see an unfamiliar room, the area around him new but somehow recognisable.

Yoongi found himself sitting on a couch, the fabric velvety and soft to the touch, a deep scarlet colour with gold details. There were multiple pillows, all just various hues of red and gold, scattered not only over the couch Yoongi was on but the one positioned opposite him, matching the blood coloured walls. Each sofa had a dark wooden boarder, gold patterns imbedded in endless swirls and curves, matching the dark wooden coffee table in front of him. Nobody else was in the room with Yoongi apart from the tortoise-shell cat which slept upon the opposing couch, body slowly rising and falling as Keopi breathed in her sleep.

The surface of the table was completely covered in papers, letters and pages of paperwork obscuring the wooden material, piled in uneven stacks and bunches. Most of them looked to be about deals, different transactions and agreements all recorded in small black writing, signatures scribbled at the bottom of each sheet across dotted lines. A mug of coffee was also on the table, precariously close to the edge, sitting on top of a red and black glass coaster.

There was a grand fireplace to Yoongi’s right, made up of deep maroon tiles and lined in gold, a metal screen half covering the flames. It cast a heat on one side of his face, produced more light in the dim room, combining with the diamond chandelier which hung from the patterned, painted ceiling. Eyes straying, Yoongi admired the ornaments lying on the top of the fireplace’s structure, casting shadows on the large painting behind them. There were red roses in a glass vase which Yoongi automatically just knew were from Jeongguk, pictures in dark intricate frames and little glass sculptures of miscellaneous figures, all glinting orange in the light.
A metallic patterned wooden frame encased the large image on the wall, Yoongi staring into the eyes which belonged to both Jeongguk and then himself, emotionless faces perfectly transferred from flesh to canvas. Both the figures wore golden Hanbok, Yoongi holding a fan in his hand whilst Jeongguk had a traditional Korean mask propped on his lap, the black and white lines making the face look more animated than the two living people in the image. A pair of curved swords were crossed over each other behind their intertwined fingers, the blades leaning against the sides of the grand thrones the couple sat upon, red jewels shining in a golden mould.

The picture gave Yoongi a power rush, heart beating faster in his chest as he admired Jeongguk’s features, the lines of his jaw and the curves of his eyes casting his age to be years in the future, black hair hanging across his brow. They looked like they ruled the world, the map of Korea at their feet emphasising the hold they held over the country, parchment disappearing under their clothes.

It was a knock on the door that pulled Yoongi’s attention away, the dark wooden panels sliding open to reveal a guard, dressed in a full black and white suit, a gun at his hip. His expression was almost just as emotionless as the painting hanging from red wallpaper as he bowed, rising and resuming his frozen in his stance in the open doorway, waiting for his cue. Behind his body, Yoongi could see more of the place he was in, wooden floorboards and veiled windows, all casted in dim light in a perfect copy of his own surroundings.

With a small gesture of his hand, Yoongi felt like the whole world was holding its breath before the man spoke, the atmosphere of the room oddly stagnant. It was as if the universe revolved around Yoongi and Yoongi alone, waited for his command for the Earth to even spin, oceans falling silent and all life pausing as it waited for his decree.

“Mr Kim has returned and will be here shortly,” the guard informed him, voice monotonous and face unchanging.

As soon as Yoongi nodded, the man bowed again, leaving the room and carefully shutting the doors behind him, the panels closing with a quiet click. Almost like he was on autopilot, Yoongi turned back to the work on the table, picking up a sheet and reading the first passage written. The Russian translated itself into Korean inside his head like second nature, the injected Arabic and French notes also materialising in his mother tongue, as if his mind had become a library of dictionaries. The pages were so captivating that Yoongi wasn’t jogged from the sentences until there was another knock on the door, panels of wood opening immediately.

With a smile adorning his face, Jeongguk strode into the room, directly aiming for Yoongi and taking his hand as he sat next to him. The contact was warm, and the kiss pressed lightly to his lips was even warmer, his own fingers trailing from a piece of paper to Jeongguk’s blazer, the page
falling to rest on top of the table with the others. This older image of Jeongguk was just as gentle as Yoongi always knew him to be, the hand not gripped in Yoongi’s own grasping at the smaller’s waist. The familiarity in the actions could have fooled Yoongi into believing this was real, but the harder shape of Jeongguk’s face against his fingers reminded him something wasn’t quite right.

“Good evening, my love,” Jeongguk murmured, breaking their kiss to press his lips slowly atop of Yoongi’s cheek, bringing a blush to his skin.

“How was it?” He found himself asking, not too sure what the question was about, but Jeongguk seemed to understand.

“It was good,” he smiled, leaning back against the sofa cushions, one hand still intertwined with the other’s. “Brilliant, even.”

Eagerness and excitement bled through the words, so much so that the energy in the sentence was practically transferred to Yoongi’s own body, a light buzzing in his mind. Jeongguk was always a big influence of his emotions, and even in an illusion this didn’t change, able to convert Yoongi’s mindset to something different in under a minute.

“So he’s excelling?” Yoongi said with a grin plastered over his features, Jeongguk’s bunny teeth making an appearance as he did the same, even when he looked years older.

“More so than any of his cousins,” the younger bragged, and the image of his peeved brothers made him feel even better.

“Of course he is, you’re the one who’s teaching him,” Yoongi murmured, hand moving to stroke at Jeongguk’s cheek, but a bang sounded outside along with a loud apology.

At that, a body came barrelling through the door, stopping right in front of where Yoongi was sat. It was a child, a boy with dark brown hair and eyes, delicate features painted over his face. His skin wasn’t quite as pale as Yoongi’s, but it was lighter than Jeongguk’s, and his flushed cheeks were heated with excitement, eyes looking just as bright.

“Appa, I hit the target perfectly!” Beomgyu almost shouted with a grin, apologising quickly when Jeongguk scolded him playfully for the volume.
The child practically radiated joy, eyes wide and squinted into small crescents. His body was jumping up and down in small bursts as his eyes darted over his parents, deciding to jump onto the sofa right in between them despite there definitely not being enough space from him to fit. It made a small huff fall from Yoongi’s mouth, shuffling to the side so that Beomgyu could sit comfortably whilst sandwiched between the elder duo, child still practically vibrating with energy.

“Oh did you?” Yoongi teased, eyes focused only on the boy in front of him.

His hand not holding Jeongguk’s along the backrest of the couch reached forward, fingers delicately fixing the slightly messy patch of hair on Beomgyu’s head, brushing through the strands. It made the boy playfully scowl, but Yoongi could see through the front how he melted into the affection, unconsciously leaning further into the elder’s hand. It was cute, and it brought a bust of love to Yoongi’s heart, darting forward to press a light kiss to Beomgyu’s forehead.

“Yeah,” the child agreed, playfully swatting at Yoongi’s hand, which only made the elder touch him even more in retaliation, ruffling the now neat strands. “Right in the middle, I was the only one!”

“I’m very proud, angel, you’re a star,” Yoongi whispered like a secret, Beomgyu’s giggles like silver bells, also making Jeongguk smile from the other side of the child.

“One day,” Beomgyu started, climbing onto his knees to completely face Yoongi. “I’ll be able to look after you with Appa, I promise.”

The conviction behind the words made Yoongi freeze for a second, the hand in the youngest’s hair pausing before it resumed after a second, still brushing the strands. The idea of small, innocent Beomgyu growing up to be like Jeongguk made a weird feeling settle in his stomach, a mix of completely different emotions all mix together. Of course, it wouldn’t be a bad thing, Jeongguk was the best person in Yoongi’s life, but the idea that his son would have to go through so much, endure so many tests and challenges, it made something heavy fall on his chest.

“I have no doubt,” Yoongi murmured with a smile, not letting Beomgyu see what he felt, stroking his fingers gently through his son’s hair as the boy rambled about his day.

Colours swirled together, all blurring as voices also started to fade, echoing in Yoongi’s ears like a memory. He couldn’t see the room anymore, couldn’t see the painting or the furniture, reds and golds and blacks all just creating an abstract piece if its own. The only thing he really could see was Jeongguk’s smiling face, the aged features with a grin that was almost just the same, bunny teeth and all coming together to make something warmly familiar.
Yoongi’s eyes fluttered open, fixing on the sight of his and Jeongguk’s favourite lounge. Memories of the dream still lingered in his mind; the images making him smile, pulling the blanket draped over him to cover his mouth, just over the tip of his nose. Looking around, he saw that apart from himself, the room was empty, not even Keopi sleeping anywhere around him. The cat was probably running around outside or looking for food somewhere, mewing quietly as soon as someone went into the kitchen.

The television screen was casting red and orange shadows on the cream walls, reflecting off of picture frames and the diamond chandelier, fragments of lava on the ceiling. The whole room seemed to have a warm filter cast over it, furniture seeming to reflect the heat, like the room was caught in the blaze. Images of fire on the large screen were entrancing, and Yoongi couldn’t stop tracing the flames with his eyes, the way they flickered as they grew and grew, no end in sight.

A woman was speaking over the programme in English, but Yoongi paid her no attention, too hypnotised by the sights to even think of the sounds, anything other than his imagined crackling as the heat engulfed everything it touched. The buildings that had once been in the video shot were long gone, some crumbling to dust, others seeming to just disappear as they were eaten by fire, only ash flying through the sky looking almost like snow. He couldn’t remember how long he had been watching, must have fallen asleep, couldn’t recall whether it had been minutes, hours, only that the originally tame flames had since destroyed everything they were meant to.

“The...all four CEOs are unaccounted for, and sources say that they were all in their offices at the time the first flames appeared...suspected targeted attacks due to the identical timings and appearances...no links found...bank accounts somehow crashed and all funds seem to have been transferred...agents have so far been unsuccessful with the tracing of the money, however...”

Yoongi smiled, never diverting his eyes from the television. They would never know, never think it, and as always the Kim family would get away with anything they wanted to, would sabotage evidence shamelessly to point fingers in whatever direction they pleased. It was what they were good at, what they revelled in.

Yoongi didn’t move even as the door opened, Jeongguk slipping inside and sitting down on the couch next to the elder with soundless actions. They were silent, stayed as silent as it was in the room even when it didn’t have a living thing between its walls, even as Jeongguk’s hands trailed up Yoongi’s sides, tracing under his shirt and the waistband of his sweatpants, circles in soft skin. It made a tremor crawl down the elder’s spine, small skeleton hands following the dips of the bones under his skin, caressing slowly until it reached the end of his back, shivers in his thighs.

“...In other news, Billionaire couple Namjoon and Seokjin Kim have reinstated their eldest son, nineteen year old Yoongi Kim, as an heir to their multi-billion dollar worth company...the legacy
is now again split between the five children equally, nineteen year old Hoseok Kim, and eighteen year olds Jimin Kim, Taehyung Kim and Jeongguk Kim, who all already have a net worth of well over a billion dollars…”

The victory felt so much better, now Namjoon and Seokjin had almost doubled their worth, had control over four more kingdoms dotted around the world. The bodies Yoongi knew to be tied in the burning offices were long gone, probably only bone left surrounded by chains, what appeared to be a jackpot for police. He knew they wouldn’t be caught, not even a stray thought in the law enforcer’s minds would be directed at the thought their family could possibly be behind this, the perfect crime.

As a kiss was pressed over his exposed hip, the younger bit lightly at the skin, already present marks being painted even darker. It made a low moan escape Yoongi’s throat, Jeongguk’s fingers making him gasp into the room, air seeming far too thin to even be breathable. As the taller leant back he pulled the skin, teeth leaving grazes and it made Yoongi’s chest feel as on fire as the people that crossed them, Jeongguk nosing lower and lower.

“Is this what you wanted?” Jeongguk whispered, air making Yoongi shiver in the heated room.

Teeth dragging over skin, sinking into flesh so carefully it made each point of contact burn, just as bright as the images on the television, little people on the screen desperately trying to undo the work their family had done. Lips ghosting over his thighs, hands making his limbs jerk and shudder, every sensation stronger than the last as Jeongguk conducted his body like an orchestra, controlling every move, every sound.

Gasps fell from his lips, the breaths on his skin feeling like brands, Jeongguk claiming him in every sense of the word, in every way possible, pure uncontrollable bliss.

“Yes,” he breathed, letting his head fall and eyes roll back. “Yes, it is.”
Chapter Summary

An epilogue of sorts

Chapter Notes

Everyone ready?

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Three Years Later

The long table was full of potential allies, blank faces on both sides paying their full, unbroken attention to the five people at the head of the assembly, all the power balanced on one side of the scales. This was a normal setting by now, this was what the usual weekly routine involved, a meeting of various elite who would barely hesitate before bowing down to the people they listened to in silence. The power tasted sweet on the tongue, make Yoongi want to laugh, savour the taste as he shared it with Jeongguk, lips trading the sugar between them.

If he was being honest, Yoongi didn’t really know what they were talking about at this point, his seat sideways on Jeongguk’s lap giving him full visual access to the grand room’s décor, the hotel they were in almost as richly designed as their own home, one of Jeongguk’s expectation in all the buildings he owned. There was one particular painting which Yoongi found himself fixated on, a beautiful piece of art with a clear night’s sky, the whole thing looking like Jeongguk’s eyes when he gazed at Yoongi with that fond expression of his, the one he had never lost through years of trials and hardships.

The stars painted to look almost like gemstones were almost as bright and shining as the flawless diamond that shimmered in its silver band on Yoongi’s left ring finger, the one the younger had given him a year ago and they still hadn’t acted upon. Looking more closely, Yoongi decided that the diamond’s glint wasn’t exactly like Jeongguk’s eyes, not more than the painting anyway, something about the stone more lifeless than the devotion featured in his boyfriend’s ever present stare.

Yoongi wanted to tell Jeongguk about the painted scene, wanted him to know exactly what Yoongi thought about the stars in his pupils, but ultimately decided to stay silence as he vaguely heard Hoseok saying something which sounded as though it was probably important. Even if the elder
was technically part of business again, these meetings weren’t his concern, his responsibilities all centred around the papers full of numbers in the office he had in the penthouse he and Jeongguk lived in, another building that brought the youngest profit.

It was Hoseok that was sat in the centre of their family’s position, head held high as he took the responsibility of commanding the room, all eyes fixed on his figure. Since Namjoon and Seokjin had finally gotten married a few months ago, they were taking some time off to visit places they had never been and wanted to enjoy, with nothing on their minds but relaxation, no business or children asking for advice. Hoseok had reassured them that at this point, he was perfectly capable of running the business by himself for a while, having been learning since he was a young teenager the responsibilities and roles required. Of course, he wasn’t alone, always had everyone willing to jump to his need at a moment’s notice.

They were in constant contact with the older newlyweds, receiving innocent family postcards in every country, the occasional call which was slightly more business related. So far, they had pictures of Croatia, Iceland, Bora Bora, South Africa and even the Galapagos Islands all pinned up with silver magnets on the fridge, each with a heart warming or funny message on the back. Yoongi missed his parents a lot, but was happy they were finally doing the things they wanted to do, even if that was helping to save turtles and endangered crabs in South America which was Namjoon’s idea, no doubt.

There was nothing that didn’t scream authority as Hoseok coldly stared at the man who was speaking across from him, retelling profits and interconnections that were nothing compared to the Kim’s own operation, but could prove to be useful if accessible. Even the way he was dressed, a black suit with golden embroidery, golden buttons and a golden chain resting under the collar of a plain white shirt, everything about it making his persona seem even more untouchable, otherworldly.

Taehyung and Jimin were sat on either side of Hoseok, dressed like the billionaires they were, posture perfect as they fixed chilling stares on anyone they caught doing something they disapproved of, even the smallest twitch of an eye. They both looked like they stepped out of a fashion magazine, although as they had grown older their styles grew more independent, no longer like mirror images. Taehyung wore a dark teal suit, the black shirt under his blazer shining as the expensive fabric caught the light, silver rings decorating his fingers, tapping innocently on the barrel of a gun. Jimin was different, more contemporary, a translucent silver shirt paired with tight black jeans, jewellery hanging off of every inch of skin, diamonds glinting like the dangerous spark in his eyes.

The duo’s characteristics had separated too, both adopting different methods to business, how they preferred to prey on the weak. While Taehyung was stern, intimidating, using his whole body to assert dominance, make demands, Jimin was more subtle, a poison spider compared to a tiger. Many business empires had fallen once their leaders were seduced by flawless honey skin and beautiful features, Jimin only recently causing a £9.3 billion increase in their company’s worth when he ‘persuaded’ the CEO of a mass technology organisation to sign over his whole operation,
something their parents had been trying to do for months before Jimin took the task. Yoongi didn’t ask how, but he already knew Jimin had ways of making both men and women alike bend backwards for him, even with the innocent flash of a smile.

Unlike Hoseok, who had based all his time and work on the family company, the younger duo was set on broadening their horizons, splitting time between the business and their own projects. Taehyung had a tattoo parlour, one he worked in himself when he felt like it, happy to ink art onto people’s skin for a pretty price, letting his family have their pieces done for no expense. Jimin, on the other hand, had delved into a more criminally related career path, owning the country’s most renowned strip club, where he watched over business transactions, often handling meetings Namjoon and Seokjin would rather not do themselves. It worked well, and even with their differing directions everyone always made it to family meetings, the dinners Seokjin liked to cook with Yoongi on a Sunday.

Even when pursuing different things, the duo’s reputation within the criminal world was well know, some truths even leaking into mainstream media. Stories of murder, torture, seduction and manipulation surrounded both Jimin and Taehyung, told from mouth to mouth like folktales, people all over the world knowing of their tendencies to not stop at anything until they get what they want, what they were asked to retrieve. Yoongi knew the duo were feared, knew businessmen prayed when either one visited their companies, people scrambling to get what the pair demanded with pure desperation. Yoongi also knew their reputation didn’t lie, he had witnessed plenty of evidence to prove the pair was just as deadly as they were said to be, but Jeongguk tried to keep him away from that.

The youngest member of their family was sat next to Jimin, Yoongi draped over his lap in a position more comfortable than most five-star mattresses he had slept on, the couple staying just as silent as the other members of their family as Hoseok took complete charge, waiting to provide information or be of use to their brother some other way. Despite the facades, Yoongi could see the badly hidden fondness in every single one of his family’s facial expressions, and the eldest’s own chest being full of pride at the younger’s ability to command a whole room of dangerous people. He would make sure to congratulate Hoseok later, but right now his mind was preoccupied with his boyfriend, staring at the figure he knew better than his own.

Jeongguk was dressed in probably the simplest fashion, body covered in all black fabric, no doubt as expensive as everyone else’s clothes despite the simplicity. His shirt and blazer were not doing much to hide the muscle which was prominent under the fabric, the black lines of tattoos which ventured out from his collar, his sleeves, the patterns Yoongi knew by heart. The trousers he wore were the exact same ebony, which made the deep purple of the silk robe Yoongi wore stand out in the room, silver embroidery matching the silver buttons on Jeongguk’s black shirt, the silver lining of his blazer. The colours also matched the diamond choker worn around Yoongi’s neck, reflecting light from the chandelier, gemstones matching those on his fingers.

For a moment, Yoongi watched his boyfriend, the way the youngest’s eyes were always darting around the room, the people inside, watching for possible danger, waiting for someone to slip.
Despite his capabilities, excelling at everything and anything, Jeongguk never tried to assert himself as the leader in this environment. Even from the beginning, it had been unanimously decided that Hoseok was the one to take that title whilst Namjoon and Seokjin were away, and Yoongi couldn’t help but be grateful for it.

It meant Jeongguk could spend more time doing what he wanted, following what his mind was telling him rather than urgent commitments from business, something Yoongi knew Jeongguk would throw himself into if he was asked. Instead, the youngest had branched out Namjoon and Seokjin’s empire, buying high-rise buildings all over the globe, scraping in heaps of income through hotels, apartments, restaurants, anything that appealed to him at the time. Even when he worked under their parent’s name, it was all still Jeongguk, both the eldest members of their family happy to sit back and let the maknae do what he wanted, everything turning out well so far.

The less restricted business hours also let Jeongguk stay closer to Yoongi, devoting the majority of his time to the elder, staying with him as Yoongi looked over countless pieces of paperwork. From the moment Yoongi started looking over the critical numbers of their parent’s company, he found himself enjoying the repetitive nature of it, feeling like he was contributing to the business like everyone else, able to help not only Namjoon and Seokjin but with the others’ financial states. A few years ago, he had even started offering services to other people, companies who needed advice on funding or investment, and it was always a benefit to have Jeongguk right beside him as he reviewed trade deals or budget requests, especially if there was a difficult client who thought they were the person in charge of the room.

The younger’s protective tendencies never truly lessened over the years, even if they had become slightly more professional. If anything, by day they just grew stronger and stronger, Jeongguk becoming much more confident in his abilities until he acted in a way that showed he was perfectly ready to oppose anyone who even looked at Yoongi the wrong way. It had become a part of the younger’s legacy, that Jeongguk was fair and good unless you offended his fiancé, that landing you in a situation you had no opportunity to survive if you didn’t get on your knees and beg. People no longer gazed upon Yoongi almost at all, avoided letting their eyes even glance over his figure, people knowing others had lost more than their sight by the hand of the youngest of the family.

Yoongi could feel that even now, the pointedly averted stares, determination to keep Yoongi’s form out of other people’s heads. His silk robe wasn’t doing a very good job at hiding his features, pale collarbones and marked thighs on full display for the whole room to see, but not one stranger had stared in lust, hunger, even discomfort. Not one person looked over as Jeongguk began to gently and slowly kiss along Yoongi’s neck, moving to nip at the skin with his teeth before starting to leave bruises with his mouth, the hickeys red in the room’s low light. It was the youngest’s way of almost staking his claim, and Yoongi loved every moment of it, loved how the businessmen shifted in their seats as Yoongi let a gasp through his lips, a dirty exhalation of air.

Realistically, Yoongi should have been self-conscious in the situation, should have been anxious about the attention that was being drawn to him, but he wasn’t. The attention was something he had learned to grow into, learned to relish, Jeongguk being a safe place in his head; Jeongguk
wouldn’t allow him to be gawked at by strangers, or treated as someone who was subordinate. The younger would do everything in his power to ensure that Yoongi stayed out of harm’s way, and that not one greedy businessman’s fingers even brushed his fair skin, even breathed too close to him. It made Yoongi have no fear when he knew the younger was with him, watching everyone around them to ensure not one stray look was thrown their way, the elder’s body on display for no one but Jeongguk.

That was always the case, but there was always someone who missed the memo, didn’t do enough research before meeting with the Kim family for business. One man Yoongi didn’t know was sat almost at the bottom end of the table, his suit cheap enough for Yoongi to know he was new to the scene, probably had lots to learn, ambitions too big for his head. Pale brown eyes were constantly flickering between Jimin, Hoseok and Taehyung, watching the trio with an unbothered attention until Yoongi felt a soft moan fall from his mouth, Jeongguk paying attention to the junction of his neck and jaw with his teeth.

It was at that sound that Yoongi watched the man look directly at the couple, gaze roaming freely all over the elder’s clearly claimed body, not seeming to notice the way Jeongguk had stopped. Anybody could tell it was a message the man was doing something wrong, a warning the youngest often wasn’t generous enough to give, probably only allowed himself to provide because of the man’s clear status as a novice. Yoongi shivered at the image he conjured in his head of his boyfriend’s downturned lips, the dark glinting danger hidden in his eyes.

Seeming unable to look away now his gaze was fixed, the man ignored the predatory look Yoongi knew Jeongguk had painted all over his face, alarm bells almost ringing audibly in the air. As Jeongguk slightly moved his left hand to the side, the silken robe fell away slightly more from Yoongi’s body like liquid over a stone, revealing pale, marked inner thighs, red bites staking claim. It was an appearance Yoongi was proud of, preened when he saw from pictures or mirrors, even better when he turned and could show the tattoo of Jeongguk’s name on his back, hangul creeping down his spine.

The years passed had treated him well, and he knew he was healthier than he ever had been in his life, legs less skeletal and now lean, scars finally beginning to fade after time and herbal ointments. Yoongi knew he was irresistible, and felt sorry for the man who was now subconsciously licking his lips, looking about ready to jump on Yoongi from the other end of the table. The low hum Jeongguk was letting out of his chest now should have sent the message to back off, almost a growl, but the man didn’t pay attention, too caught up with what he saw of Yoongi’s body, a sight he would learn to regret.

It was towards the end of the meeting, and Yoongi knew the man would leave soon, lucky to have his life, Jeongguk seeming to be in a slightly more subdued temperament because of the circumstances. After today, Yoongi had no doubt he would never see the trespasser again if Jeongguk had his way, the youngest most likely to let him live when all he had done was look, someone like him still learning conduct and the unspoken rules their empire had. It would probably be a lingering thought in Jeongguk’s mind for a few weeks that he should have killed the man, at
least harmed him for looking where he shouldn’t have, even when Yoongi was on display.

It was almost like some sort of power play the younger relished in, showing Yoongi off for the world to see but yet not letting people have anything more than a glance. Anybody who tried their luck and asked for more were quickly disposed of, and Yoongi knew his boyfriend took some sort of sick satisfaction in the situation where he gets to kill someone who admired Yoongi for a moment too long, tried to reach something they didn’t have the right to. The most gruesome were the people that tried to touch, managed to brush fingertips over pale skin, Jeongguk content to spend hours making them regret their decision.

It had happened less and less in recent years, people learning to avoid looking at the couple, even when Yoongi’s sounds were irresistible or Jeongguk’s hands wondered too far along pale skin, showing too much. People hadn’t made mistakes for a long time, not until now, and it was thrilling to Yoongi’s brain, especially when Jeongguk was touching him just right, pleasure rippling all over his nerves. It wasn’t exhibitionism, it was rather the opposite, the knowledge that people were all around them and yet nobody was looking, whoever caught too much being disposed of before the image brought them much benefit.

It was when Hoseok was asking for any questions that the man finally made his fatal error, smirking as he spoke, not knowing he was hammering the nails into his own coffin. If there was anything Jeongguk hated more in the world than physical harm to Yoongi, it was false judgement, accusations surrounding his purity, position. Jeongguk was the only one Yoongi devoted his life to, allowed to see him in his entirety, and it was an important fact for the world to note, that calling Yoongi anything alike to a prostitute would end in pain.

“I didn’t realise we were allowed to bring whores to meetings,” the man drawled, and the words echoed around the room like a death sentence, the other guests seeming to move back in reaction to the other’s faux pas.

After the words were spoken, Yoongi felt Jeongguk’s muscles tense below him, the actions of his fingertips stopping their motions, a quiet whine leaving the eldest’s lips. Slowly, a hand moved from where it had been resting along pale thigh so close to where Yoongi was on fire, making him huff as the pleasure he had been feeling was interrupted. Eventually, it reached the gun resting by Jeongguk’s leg on the chair, always slipped between the cushion and the armrest, the click of the safety being switched off not loud enough for the majority of the room to hear.

Where Jeongguk’s mouth was pressed against Yoongi’s shoulder, he felt a small smile form on the younger’s lips, making a shiver travel up his back. A subtle glance down showed a tattooed hand holding the grip of the gun, one finger already resting on the trigger, a sight that made a rush of adrenaline run through Yoongi’s body, heart beating in his ears.
“Pardon?” Hoseok asked with a raised eyebrow, voice as chilling as a winter storm.

“I said,” the man scoffed, expression far too nonchalant for the way the entirety of the family was looking at him with no emotion, looks that could kill. “I didn’t realise we were allowed to bring—”

His confident tone was cut short by the sound of a single gunshot, a lone bullet being fired from the pistol Jeongguk had pulled up into eyeshot, still pointed in the man’s direction, aimed at his head. There was a pause, complete silence until a heavy body thumped loudly as it collapsed on the table, a pool of red forming on the dark oak wood from the hole in his skull. For a moment, the room was completely still, Jeongguk holding the gun stationary in air until he tutted, lowering the weapon to its original position on the chair.

“Such a shame, he didn’t get to finish his sentence,” Jeongguk sighed, the challenge clear in his voice, staring down the table at anyone who dared to look up.

Yoongi knew the younger was waiting for someone to take the bait, for someone else to make their fatal error, but nobody else around the table stirred. Everyone seemed like statues apart from the trio at the head of it, Hoseok reordering the paperwork he was reading while Jimin and Taehyung played with their knives playing some sort of twisted version of catch. The businessmen had frozen, all eyes pointedly focused only on Hoseok, making Jeongguk sigh in contentment, resuming his actions against Yoongi’s skin, trailing lower and making the smaller shudder.

It was a knock on the door that startled everyone from where they were pointedly trying to ignore the pair, Yoongi huffing as Jeongguk stopped his movements yet again as a member of the hotel staff stepped in, bowing as he closed the door behind him. There was a visible layer of sweat over his forehead, a nervous tick to his actions as he stood and waited for one of their family to command him to deliver whatever message he had, probably Jeongguk seeing as the youngest was his boss.

His appearance was what caught Yoongi’s attention, the obviously highly strung stance, tense muscles, and he knew he wasn’t the only one to pick up on the abnormality. People were normally scared of their family, but not normally their workers to this degree, especially when the employees were treated incredibly well as long as they did what they were paid to do. At the undertone of worry, Jeongguk gripped his fingers more firmly over Yoongi’s thighs, one of his hands once again holding his gun with the safety off, eyes sharply watching the area by the guard and the door. It was like a switch was flicked, their whole family becoming completely focused, Hoseok raising an eyebrow as the staff member visibly gulped.

“You are all dismissed,” Hoseok said as he turned to face the chairmen in the meeting, everyone immediately standing and moving behind their chairs. “Leave this room from the door to my left, staff should be waiting to direct you to your rooms courtesy of my brother,” he told them, nodding
There was limited noise as the people all started to walk to where they were directed, one man almost making Yoongi laugh by accidentally starting to walk in the wrong direction, covering up his mistake by quickly starting to quietly talk to the woman he was now facing. The footsteps became hushed as everyone passed into the carpeted hallway, Yoongi knowing staff would give each person a room key, directing them to the nearest lift or staircase.

“Someone clean up my floor,” Jeongguk ordered once the guests were gone and the door was shut, guards standing at the corners of the room moving as soon as the words were spoken to deal with the lifeless body on the ground, one leaving probably to fetch a body bag and bleach.

It was quick work, and Yoongi didn’t let himself avert his attention until he watched the blood being removed from the table and floor, red nowhere to be seen once the man was dragged away. The body would probably be burned in the basement, ashes disposed somewhere random to avoid any suspicion entirely, Jeongguk getting a decoy to pretend to be the man and go to his hotel room for the night, leaving in the morning like nothing was wrong, the man never being found again with no suspicion pegged on them.

Once the guards were back at their posts, Jeongguk seemed to take total control over the room, the rest of their family happy for him to be the leader now they were in his territory. This was his hotel, after all, his nervous staff member wringing his hands as he waited for a cue, and any business would be related to Jeongguk, not the others primarily. Reaching for a crystal clear glass of red wine, the youngest took a sip, passing it to Yoongi as he swallowed, the other happy to slowly drink the alcohol in his boyfriend’s place.

“Speak,” Jeongguk finally commanded, moving a hand to brush over Yoongi’s collar bones, the elder instinctually baring his neck to the side.

“Sir,” he began, before his eyes fluttered between everyone left at the table. “Sirs,” he corrected, Jeongguk giving him a small, encouraging smile of approval. “There’s agents sent by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the lobby. They said they would like to ask you some questions.”

Chapter End Notes

So, this is the end. Not the end of everything, I promise, but the end of this phase of the storyline. I have to say thank you to everyone that commented and said such nice things, it really makes my day!

A warning of a hiatus for a while.
Now, I just want to inform people that I might be slightly slower at everything for at least a year. Writing is my hobby, and I love it, but the next year of my life is very important and so I might be much less active. I'll still read and reply to comments, but the actual writing will be much slower, so I can't promise anything will be published anytime soon. Maybe some small oneshots, but nothing of this length for a while. I have so many plans for these characters, and have planned out prequels and sequels, but nothing may be seen for a while, because lots of my time is being taken up rewriting the original story, and I have less time in total on my hands.

Really, thank you all for the support.
I'm now done rewriting this story, and I was happy with all the other chapters that haven't been edited. All the rewritten chapters have an asterisk in the title, and there have been quite a few bits added so I hope people like the new content. I now plan to start my prequel project before the last long story in the series, but it may take a while, I'm sorry for the delay. It was just important to me to edit this fic and *Powerful Families And Threats* to ensure I was only publishing what I was happy with, and in future I will also edit the side stories posted under the series.

I hope everyone likes the edits I've made!

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!