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**Hand in Hand**

by **TheMetaBard**

**Summary**

Namjoon, a sign language professor, and Yoongi, a songwriter, got certified to foster. But, they never expected that would open the door to love, heartache, pain, and most importantly, family. But, as they figure out this “dad-thing” hand-in-hand, they realize that family isn't made up of blood, it's the love that they have for each other.

~or~

Namjoon's a deaf college professor
Yoongi is his husband and a songwriter
Seokjin is their case manager
Hoseok, Jungkook, Tae and Jimin are kiddos with their own set of challenges and triumphs
So, I'm...procrastinating on my other works. And going through a slight depressive episode, I think. Just kind of in a funk. And with my other work, I'm kind of having a storyline/character development crisis.

Therefore sweet Namgi being sweet dads exist lol Just wanted to write some fluff and it grew into a monster lol.

Disclaimer: I did research into the foster care system, but I don't have experience with it personally, so if you see inconsistencies, please chalk that up to creative license.

All ASL in my works are ~translated~ into English, since ASL doesn't technically have a written form. I took ASL all 4 years in college, ran my college's ASL club and got pretty involved in my Deaf community enough that they paid for me to take a summer crash course/camp thing at Gallaudet, which is a Deaf college in Washington DC when I was 19. I am however, not d/Deaf. If you see inconsistencies, let me know in the comments :)

I do deal with adult themes/triggering content. Please always read my works at your own risk and mind the tags.

Enjoy!
Yoongi didn’t expect to get a call from the social worker as soon as they did.

Actually, he didn’t think they would get placed with a kid at all, really. He did the classes and got the certificate to become a foster parent mostly for Joon’s sake – since he himself was a foster child. But, Yoongi was a realist. They were a gay couple who had never fostered before and Namjoon was *technically* disabled. Yoongi expected to be at the bottom of the list of who the social workers would call to place.

He expected that maybe, eventually they would look into adoption. And being a foster parent would make that process easier. But, that was a milestone so far on the horizon that it didn’t even blip on his radar.

But, at almost eleven at night when Yoongi was trying to get a song out of his head and into his computer, they got a phone call from the social worker.

“Hello?” Yoongi answered as he moved a beat around on his program.

“Is this Mr. Min-Kim?” The social worker, Seokjin, asked. Seokjin had been the ones to do the final interview and walkthrough of their house, certifying them to become foster parents to begin with. He was nice guy with a light sense of humor. Yoongi liked him.

“Yes.”

“I have a child that needs placement.” He sighed. “If you have room.”

Yoongi froze with shock, his eyes looking towards the door of his studio. Namjoon was in the living room, watching television and grading papers. “A child?”

“He’s five and deaf.” Seokjin said. “He’s…been neglected. He was found during a meth lab bust.”

“Oh my god.” Yoongi said, his heart skipping beats in his chest. He moved to the living room. “Is he okay?”

Namjoon looked up from his papers on his lap and signed “what’s up?”

“Yes,” Seokjin said. “He’s a little malnourished and upset, obviously. But, healthy otherwise.” Seokjin made a noise. “The only thing is…he doesn’t really have a language.”

Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed as he froze in front of the television, placing his hand on his waist. “What do you mean?”

“We’re not really sure how deaf he is, but we’re pretty sure it’s almost completely. But, he doesn’t know sign – or at least he doesn’t know the little bit I know.” Seokjin said. “But, he also doesn’t know English. We tried Korean. Even Spanish. He just…doesn’t have a language. I’m guessing there is some milestone delays because of it.” Seokjin said. “But, I thought of you guys since your partner is deaf.”

Yoongi chewed on the inside of his cheek as he tried to imagine a five-year-old unable to communicate. *At all.* How do they handle with a child who had no language? None of the one hundred hours of classes they took prepared them for *that.*
Namjoon was on his feet at Yoongi’s expression. “Yoongi,” He signed Yoongi’s name sign – a ‘y’ combined with the sign for music. “What’s going on?” He asked and signed at the same time.

“Um,” Yoongi said. “Can I talk to Namjoon and get back to you?”

“Okay,” Seokjin said. “But, I really need an answer soon, otherwise I’m going to have to call another family.”

“I’ll promise it’ll be quick.” Yoongi said and hung up the phone.

“Yoongi,” Namjoon groaned. Namjoon learned to speak later in life since he didn’t really have the support to get into speech therapy early on. His accent was thick and he didn’t really like speaking if he didn’t have to. And Yoongi didn’t make him usually – unless Namjoon was worried over him. Like now. “What’s going on?” He signed again.

“That’s was Seokjin.” Yoongi signed. “There’s a deaf kid that needs a home.”

“Deaf?” Namjoon’s eyebrows shot up.

Yoongi nodded “He was found in a drug bust.” He said and shook his head and glanced down their hallway. Yoongi was a songwriter and producer. Namjoon was a professor that taught ASL at the community college. They had a three-bedroom house. One of the bedrooms was a makeshift storage room. And the other had been recently turned into a bare-bones child’s room – a twin-sized bed, a dresser and a student’s desk. For the certificate they had to have space for a child.

They could take him. The child with no language.

“What did you say?” Namjoon demanded, his eyes lighting up. Namjoon was really excited to be a dad. Especially to a deaf child. A child that he could give the childhood he never had to.

“I said I needed to talk to you.” Yoongi signed back. “He doesn’t know sign.”

“That’s okay.” Namjoon’s eyebrows furrowed. “A lot deaf kids don’t know sign if their parents aren’t deaf.”

“He doesn’t know English either. Or any other language.” Yoongi signed. That caused Namjoon’s hands to stop midair. He flexed his fingers and then dropped them.

They just stared at each other – frozen and undecided – the same question hanging between them. Could they take a child with no language?

Could they?

“Hi,” Namjoon said and signed as soon as Yoongi opened their front door, a big welcoming smile over his face. “Hi, baby.” He signed.

Hoseok was his name. He was in Seokjin’s arms, clinging to him like a spider monkey clinging to a tree. Yoongi noticed right away that the child was extremely small. Like more like a big toddler than a five-year-old. And thin – his arms so skinny that they looked like they would snap if he was breathed on wrong. Yoongi himself was a small-boned child growing up, so he knew that it wasn’t atypical. But, this wasn’t small bones. This was malnourishment. This was neglect.

He looked apprehensive – his dark eyes sparkling with fear. He made a noise and buried his
face into Seokjin’s neck. Yoongi and Namjoon stepped aside to let the social worker in.

“How much sign does he know?” Namjoon asked and tried to pry Hoseok’s arms from around Seokjin’s neck. Yoongi cringed. Don’t break him.

“He knows ‘milk.’” Seokjin made the sign for milk. “And ‘please.’ As far as I know, nothing else.” Seokjin said. “His parents were so strung out, his mother was unresponsive. The father was combative, he ended up being tased. They found him in the bathtub. They figured out he was deaf when he didn’t shield his ears from the sirens.”

Namjoon looked to Yoongi, who interpreted for the social worker.

“Oh my God.” Namjoon breathed as he finally detached the child and pulled him in his arms. He made another noise – leaning out of Namjoon’s grasp towards Seokjin – his fists opening and closing.

“I came with cookies and he’s decided that we’re BFFs.” Seokjin said and patted his back as he handed Yoongi a Walmart bag of all of Hoseok’s worldly possessions and his file. “He ate a snack a couple of hours ago, but I only got a little into him.”

“I have some noodles going on the stove.” Yoongi volunteered.

Seokjin sighed. “Thanks, guys.” He nodded. “I know he’s in good hands.”

“Absolutely.” Namjoon said and pushed Hoseok’s hair out his face even though he was leaning so far out of Namjoon’s arm, Yoongi was afraid that he was going to fall.

Seokjin left and Yoongi closed the door behind him, deadbolting the lock.

And then Hoseok screamed.

It was a piercing, shrill, horribly loud noise. It was a volume that Yoongi was convinced that only deaf children had – noise just rocketing out of him and atom bombed everything around him. His face turned red and his fists clenched through it. Yoongi had to take a whole step back as he cringed away from the sound.

Namjoon even winced, balancing Hoseok on his hip as he played with the volume of his hearing aids. “Buddy,” Namjoon said and moved him to his other hip to adjust the other one. “It’s okay. Shhh. It’s okay.” He touched his head gently, petting his hair down.

The screaming evolved into loud sobbing, punctuated by noises that were made through his nose. It was a volume that Yoongi was convinced that only deaf children had – noise just rocketing out of him and atom bombed everything around him. His face turned red and his fists clenched through it. Yoongi had to take a whole step back as he cringed away from the sound.

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The screaming evolved into loud sobbing, punctuated by noises that were made through his nose. He pointed to the door, his eyes full of fear and confusion. And then let out a bloodcurdling scream again. A scream so loud, it left Yoongi’s ears ringing and tingles running up and down his spine. Yoongi stepped back, trying to get away from the noise.

“It’s okay.” Namjoon patted his chest. “Look. O.” He made the sign for ‘o.’ “K.” He signed ‘k.’

Hoseok made another scream and started to wriggle, trying to get out of Namjoon’s grasp. Namjoon placed on his feet on the floor before he toppled out of his arms and Hoseok tore off at a dead sprint. Yoongi felt a spike of panic arc through him.

“Where is he going?” Yoongi signed.

“I don’t know.” Namjoon signed back and they both hurried after him. He made a turn down
the hall, managed to get into Yoongi and Namjoon’s room and into their bathroom where he found a dead end. He hit the far wall which housed their bathtub and sunk down onto his butt into a tight fetal position – his eyes still wide and terrified.

Yoongi felt simultaneously heartbroken and anxious. How were they going to handle a fearful, language-starved, neglected child? How were they going to bridge the gap and get it through to him that he was okay here?

“Don’t get too close.” Yoongi signed at Namjoon, stopping him. “Don’t freak him out more.”

“I’m not.” Namjoon squatted near the door, giving Hoseok plenty of space. He was still screaming – random outbursts exploding out of him peppered with random, muted vocalizations. His eyes darted around – looking for another escape or possibly his parents. Tears made angry red lines down his face. “It’s okay.” Namjoon signed over and over, his eyebrows pulled into concern and worry. “It’s okay.”

Yoongi just watched his tiny child huddle himself against their tub, cowering away from the people who were supposed to help him. And they couldn’t tell him that they weren’t going to hurt him. They couldn’t tell him that they were going to keep him safe. They didn’t know his language, because he didn’t have a language.

He knew milk.

Yoongi waved to get Hoseok’s attention. “Hoseok,” He said. “Do you want some milk?” He signed milk – his fist squeezing like he was milking a cow teet.

Hoseok froze. The screaming seized, but he was still making noises – apprehensive, fearful noises. He looked between the two of them, indecision in his eyes. He finally signed “milk please” back at them, his little hand rubbing a shaky circle over his chest.

Yoongi ran from their bathroom to the kitchen. “Please have milk.” He chanted. “Please have milk.” They usually didn’t buy it, since none of them drank it. But, they did have half a gallon from when Yoongi made casserole the other night. Thank God. He poured a little in a coffee mug and brought it back to the bathroom.

Hoseok took the mug with both shaky hands, sipping it with his eyes closed. He drank the whole thing and then handed the mug back to Yoongi.

“Are you hungry?” Yoongi asked and signed at the same time. He pointed to his mouth. “Eat?” He mimed like he was eating from a bowl, chewing and swallowing.

Hoseok just responded with a small “please” over his chest again. Yoongi guessed that was affirmation for Hoseok. They would have to teach him the actual signs for ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ But, not tonight. Tonight’s goal was for Hoseok to realize that he was safe here. That he was going to be loved here.

“Can you make up a little bowl for him?” Yoongi signed.

“Do you want to try and bring him to the kitchen to eat?” Namjoon signed back.

“I don’t want to make him upset again.” Yoongi signed. “He can eat here. Just for tonight.”

Namjoon got to his feet and left the bathroom. Yoongi turned back and smiled at Hoseok, trying to show him that Yoongi wasn’t going to hurt him. Now that Hoseok wasn’t squirming or
running or screaming, Yoongi could see how cute he was – his little ski-tipped nose, his wide eyes that were full of sparkles, his apple cheeks. And then Yoongi’s heart broke for the tenth time that night. Who would neglect you?

Namjoon hurried back. “Dinner.” He announced with his voice, since his hands were full.

Yoongi took the bowl from him. “Dinner?” He signed to Hoseok.

Hoseok moved to his knees, his eyes growing curious. He made a couple of noises before shuffling forward to peer at the contents of the bowl. It was some farfalle pasta tossed with butter and a little parmesan cheese. Bland and safe for a little kid, Yoongi assumed.

Hoseok sat back on his heels and opened his mouth, pointing at it. He reminded Yoongi of a baby bird.

“Is that hungry?” Yoongi tried to discern out loud. “Are you telling me you’re hungry?”

Hoseok just signed “please” over his chest. Yoongi poked some noodles into his mouth. He ate them and swallowed and opened his mouth and signed “please” again. Yoongi put more food into his mouth.

“Oh, baby.” Namjoon said as he squatted, hesitantly placing his hand on Hoseok’s back. “What a day you’ve had.” He signed with one hand.

Yoongi handed the fork to Hoseok and watched him shovel noodles into his face as fast as he could, eating like he hadn’t had a real meal in weeks. Yoongi wondered when his last meal even was. He wondered what he sustained on and then glanced at his little skinny arms and his angular collarbone that was sticking through his shirt and decided that it was probably not much.

Yoongi inspected his clothes as he gobbled his dinner. He was wearing an Old Navy t-shirt that was threadbare and a pair of jeans that were holey at the knees. His shoes were kid flip flops. Yoongi didn’t have any clothes for a child and by the light weight of the Walmart bag, he was sure that he didn’t come with pajamas. He guessed one of their t-shirts would be fine to sleep in tonight.

Hoseok made a noise and shoved the bowl back into Yoongi’s hands. “Please” he signed, punctuated by noises.

“More?” Yoongi put the bowl on his lap and signed. “Do you want more?” He pointed at the empty bowl.

Hoseok watched his hands. And to Yoongi’s surprise, he mimicked the sign for “more” – his little fingers tapping together - and then pointed at the bowl. He signed “please” again. Namjoon rose to his feet and took the bowl to dutifully refill it.

Yoongi took the couple of moments to show him another sign – “dad.” He pointed to himself and made the sign for “dad.” Yoongi’s lips pursed as he deliberated over whether that was crossing some sort of line. He technically wasn’t his dad. But, at the same time, teaching him ‘Yoongi’ or even his name sign might be too complicated. ‘Dad’ was fine for now, he surmised.

He repeated the sign a couple of times, always pointing to himself afterwards. Finally, Hoseok mimicked the sign, the thumb of his open hand tapping on his forehead. But, then he pointed to himself.

“No,” Yoongi shook his head and signed at the same time. “You are Hoseok.” He poked his chest and very slowly spelled ‘Hoseok.’ “I am Dad.” Yoongi pointed at himself and signed “Dad.”
Hoseok watched him. He made a low noise before signing “Dad” and pointing at Yoongi.

“Yes.” Yoongi smiled and shook his head ferociously, making the sign too. “I am Dad. You are Hoseok.” He signed. “Good job.” He ruffled his hair. Hoseok’s hands smoothed it back down and he made some noises that didn’t sound like he was about to start screaming again. That was a small improvement.

Namjoon came back with more noodles and Hoseok inhaled this second bowl as fast as he ate the other one.

“I taught him ‘dad.’” Yoongi signed to Namjoon. “He has a sign for me, at least.”

“That’s good.” Namjoon stretched his long, long legs out in front of him as he watched Hoseok eat. “We need to get him clothes.”

Yoongi nodded. “And kid-friendly foods.”

“Some toiletries too.” Namjoon signed. “I went through the bag. There was only a stuffed animal and a jacket in there.”

“Target tomorrow?” Yoongi asked.

“I guess so.” He signed as they watched him finish the second bowl. He held it out with both hands and Yoongi took it from him.

“More please.” Hoseok signed, his little hand rubbing over his chest.

Namjoon woke up way before his alarm went off – half-anxiety from having a tiny, helpless human in their house, half-nerves from getting him calmed down enough to go to sleep the night before.

Namjoon rolled over to face his husband. He pushed Yoongi’s hair – which was currently a silver gray color – out of his eyes as he slept with his face smashed into the pillow and his knees pulled up to his chest. Namjoon could tell he was snoring by the way his nostrils flared, but he couldn’t hear him.

Namjoon wondered what Yoongi’s voice sounded like. It was low – he knew that much. Low enough that it was in the range of pitches that Namjoon couldn’t hear even with his hearing aids on.

Hoseok’s voice, on the other hand - well, his _screams_ - were at the correct pitch and decibel level that Namjoon could hear them with his aids on. Not as loud as Yoongi could – who flinched every time Hoseok opened his mouth the night before – but he could hear them. He could hear the fear in them, the confusion, the frustration.

Namjoon knew it well.

He sighed and rolled to his feet, tip-toeing across the hallway to Hoseok’s room. He let himself in and very, very carefully sat on the edge of the twin-sized bed where Hoseok was curled underneath the yellow duvet, being careful not to wake him.
Hoseok looked so tiny with both of his hands pressed under his little cheek, sleeping hard with his eyebrows pinched. His nose was red from crying and the little bags under his eyes were puffy.

After Hoseok ate his first dinner in their house on the floor of their master bedroom – all three bowls of it – he fell into what Namjoon assumed was a half-carb coma, half-emotional exhaustion state of lethargy. He turned sluggish and didn’t fight when Namjoon got him into the bath. He didn’t even play with the toys that Yoongi dropped into the water or strawberry-scented bubbles. He just laid with his head on the lip of the tub and let Namjoon clean the layer of grime that was on the surface of his skin, turning the water a sickly gray color.

They dressed him in a pair of Yoongi’s boxers knotted at the waist and a t-shirt. He swam in the clothes, his arms disappearing almost completely into the sleeves and the neckline falling off his tiny shoulders. His only outfit was promptly thrown into the washer.

They got his teeth brushed with an extra toothbrush they had in their bathroom drawer and into bed. He was out before he hit the pillow – his feather-light hair turning into a black halo around his head.

Namjoon and Yoongi then went through the file they were given – which was minimal since he was just found that night – and tried to game plan for how they were going to take care of him. The first step was obviously to get him clothes. Yoongi wanted to get him a doctor’s appointment ASAP to make sure he was physically healthy. And then a hearing test eventually to see how deaf he actually was.

He was five, but he looked and acted like he was three or four. He was definitely not ready to be enrolled into school. Especially not knowing how to communicate. When he was ready, Namjoon wanted to get him into the deaf school across town, the private one that was endorsed by Gallaudet University.

Hoseok stirred his eyelashes fluttering and sparkling in the morning light. His eyes opened and focused on Namjoon’s face.

“Good morning.” Namjoon signed and smiled. He wanted to run his fingers over his soft hair, but refrained. He didn’t want to crowd him on his first official day.

Hoseok sat bolt upright, his face twisting as he looked around the unfamiliar bedroom. His mouth popped opened and his face heated red. Namjoon couldn’t hear him, but he assumed he was screaming and Namjoon’s guts twisted into knots.

“No. No. No.” Namjoon signed quickly. “You’re okay. Look at me.” Namjoon tried to get Hoseok’s eyes on him. He wanted to show him they were the same. They were together in this.

“Baby, don’t scream. It’s okay.” Namjoon signed. He touched his shoulder and rubbed gently.

Some movement caught Namjoon’s attention and he looked up to Yoongi in the doorway – his silver hair sticking up on end and his eyes a little delirious from being yanked out of sleep. He leaned on the doorway with one hand. “What’s going on?” He asked, his finger flicking off his chest with the sign.

“I’m sorry.” Namjoon signed remorsefully at his husband. “He just woke up and started to scream.”

“It’s okay.” Yoongi spoke and signed together – simcom was the official term for it – his lips pursing into a little pout. “Is he okay?”
Namjoon glanced back down at Hoseok, who was curling up his little body under the duvet. His mouth was still open and his cheeks were heated red and he was crying again. Namjoon sighed. “He’s…awake.” He signed slowly.

Yoongi approached the bed on the other side, taking a seat next to Namjoon. He patted Hoseok’s leg. “Hoseok,” He said. “It’s okay. You’re okay with us.” He said, Namjoon reading his lips.

Hoseok’s eyes fell on Yoongi. “Dad.” He signed and scrambled into Yoongi’s arms, pressing his face against his shoulder. He linked his fingers together behind Yoongi’s neck, his lip trembling with his tears.

Yoongi pressed his lips into Hoseok’s hair and was murmuring things to him. Namjoon rubbed Hoseok’s back. “Breakfast?” He signed with his other hand.

Yoongi looked at his husband as he continued to talk into Hoseok’s hair – his black eyes flashing. The same thought running through his head – *we can do this right?*
“More please.” Hoseok signed and thrust his plate towards Namjoon.

“You ate seven pancakes.” Yoongi signed, his narrow eyes lighting with surprise. “And you’re still hungry?”

Namjoon hesitantly took the plate. The pancakes were little - silver-dollar sized. And the mix was whole wheat served with almond butter instead of syrup, so they knew that it was healthy. But, man, this little guy could pack it away.

“More please.” Hoseok signed again, his hand rubbing a circle on his chest. Namjoon made a note to get a booster seat, since Hoseok’s chin barely grazed the surface of their table and he was sitting on his knees to get to the food.

“Why don’t we have some eggs?” Yoongi grabbed a hard-boiled egg from the fridge and cut it up into chunks before setting it on Hoseok’s plate. Hoseok took a chunk in his fingers and stuffed it into his mouth.

Namjoon sipped his coffee and watched Hoseok eat. At least when he was eating, he wasn’t screaming. And at least when he was eating, he seemed to calm down. He even wiggled happily as he stuffed eggs in his mouth. More content now that he realized that he was safe here. At least, he knew that Namjoon and Yoongi weren’t going to hurt him and that they were going to feed him. Maybe the next step could be a smile? Trust, even?

“Dad. Dad. Dad.” Hoseok signed, his sparkly eyes wide. He pushed the empty plate and Namjoon waited for the “more please.” But, it didn’t come. Instead he traced his finger on the wood grain of the table.

Namjoon tapped his knuckles on the table to get his attention. “Are you finished, Hoseok?” Namjoon signed. “Finished?” He signed again.

Hoseok watched him and looked up at Yoongi, confusion in his eyes.

“More please?” Yoongi signed and Hoseok just blinked at him. “Finished?” Yoongi tried.

Hoseok mimicked him. “Finished.” He pushed the plate further down the table.

Yoongi smiled and picked up the plate. “Success,” He signed.

“Success.” Hoseok mimicked, even making the little pa with his mouth.
Namjoon smiled. “You have a mini-me, it seems.” He said to Yoongi, who was in the kitchen.

“He seems to want to learn.” Yoongi signed when he got back, raking his fingers through Namjoon’s hair afterwards. “A little sponge.”

Namjoon looked at Hoseok, who went back to tracing the table with his fingertip, rocking himself a little. He tried to imagine this little guy trying to fend for himself in a dirty crack den somewhere, having two parents that were so…strung out that they couldn’t even teach him how to communicate his needs. He grimaced as a weight dropped inside of him. How much damage have they done?

Namjoon taught American Sign Language. That’s what he did for a living. But, he taught adults in a college setting, not children. Not little, impressionable brains. And in theory, it should be easier to teach a child than having to contend with an ingrained native language of an adult. But, Namjoon had no idea what obstacles they were facing with him. He had no idea what they had to undo.

“Let’s get you dressed.” Yoongi pulled Hoseok off the chair and set him on his feet. “Do you have to go potty?” He signed.

Hoseok’s eyes widened in understanding. He knew the sign for ‘bathroom.’ He signed bathroom and then signed “please.”

“Hoseok,” Namjoon got up and dropped to one knee in front of Hoseok. “You can sign ‘yes.’” He shook his fist up and down and nodded at the same time.

Hoseok watched him. His fist shook up and down, mimicking the sign. If he actually got what it meant, Namjoon wasn’t sure. But, it was a start.

It was a start.

Hoseok was…a screamer.

Even when he wasn’t upset – which Yoongi could tell he wasn’t, even though he actually hadn’t started smiling yet – he would vocalize often and loudly. Noises just exploding out of him to elicit reactions – negative or positive, he didn’t care. It was his way of entertaining himself, maybe even self-stimulating himself. And it was his learned way of getting people’s attention.

And it definitely worked in Target.

They had a booster seat – a little one for older kids to sit on – that they bought for the certification. But, Yoongi could tell right away that it wasn’t enough for Hoseok. So, their first stop was the car seat aisle, where Namjoon and him spent a couple minutes deliberating over the brand and type of car seat to get.

Hoseok entertained himself from the cart, his legs swinging. Every once in awhile he would make a noise, just entertaining himself – a loud, shrill vocalization. Yoongi glanced over his shoulder every time. But, he seemed okay – just playing with his one stuffed animal that was a bear-dog hybrid thing that was slightly charred on one side. So, he ignored him mostly, trying not to reinforce
this behavior. Namjoon as well, because he was high enough in pitch that he could hear it.

They picked out a car seat and headed towards clothes. Yoongi figured out Hoseok’s sizes by holding up clothes to him and guesstimating. He wanted to buy slightly bigger than he was so he could grow into them. But, it really bothered Yoongi that Hoseok was more of a 4 – even a 3 in some shirts – than a 5, where he should be.

Hoseok shrieked – loudly enough for Yoongi to wince - lacing his fingers and unlacing them in front of his face.

“That’s a loud-ass baby.” Some lady commented from a couple of clothing racks over.

Yoongi whipped his head towards the lady and scowled, putting on his best resting bitch face to let her know that he heard that.

“What?” Namjoon signed.

“Just an asshole saying something rude.” Yoongi signed back and then

Namjoon dragged his fingertips down Yoongi’s arm in comfort before holding his hands up to sign. “You want me to fight them for you?” He bumped his fists together.

Hoseok copied him, bumping his fists together for the sign for ‘fight,’ his tongue sticking out like he had to concentrate hard to do it.

“Don’t teach him bad words.” Yoongi scolded in sign.

“‘Fight’ isn’t a bad word.” Namjoon defended, his fists bumping more aggressively. “Fight is a good word to know. He has to fight for himself. Fight for others. Fight for what is right. Fight is strong.”

Hoseok made the word for ‘fight’ again. And then he signed “Dad,” vocalizing loudly with it. Yoongi pushed his hair out of his eyes and signed “What?”

He pointed to his mouth, opening it like a baby bird, his face twisting in discomfort as the other fell on his abdomen.

“Hungry?” Yoongi asked, making the sign. “Are you hungry?”

“He just ate like an hour ago.” Namjoon signed. “He can’t be hungry again.”

“No, baby.” Yoongi signed as he pushed the cart down to pants. “We’ll eat later.” He signed.

Hoseok screamed – high and loud. If Yoongi had to guess, it was somewhere in the F7 range on the piano. The emotions in it between frustration and maybe…pain? Namjoon’s eyebrows furrowed at the child.

“No,” Yoongi signed and shook his head. “No screaming. That’s not how you get what you want.”

Hoseok froze for just a second – his eyes wide on Yoongi - and then screamed again, his eyes squeezing shut and his finger pointing at his mouth. Yoongi realized that Seokjin was wrong, Hoseok had a language. This was his language. Adults just giving him what he wanted to get the screaming to cease.

“What are you doing to that child?” Some other person asked on the other side of the t-shirt.
Yoongi bristled. “It’s not…” He started, but then gave up. He didn’t have to explain it to a stranger. And he wasn’t going to.

“I’ll go grab him snack.” Namjoon volunteered.

Yoongi just listened to Hoseok scream like he was being murdered, his body slumping over in the baby seat of the cart. He wondered where to begin with him.

Hoseok’s mood bounced back once he was given a small bag of dried banana chips to munch on. And he was quiet when he was eating, humming a made-up tune and brr’ing his lips around the snack. It distracted him enough that they made it through clothes, toiletries, food, and were at their last stop in toys in pretty much no time at all.

Yoongi wanted to pick out some toys for Hoseok, something that wasn’t this stuffed animal fished out of a bottom of a crane game located in the state high-sec penitentiary. He assumed – like any child – he would be excited to be in the toy aisle.

Hoseok, however, had other plans. He was trying to keep himself from nodding off – his whole form taking a dive to the side as he attempted to rest his head on the edge of the cart. His head would spring up and he would straighten but then he would start drifting again.

“Hoseok,” Yoongi tickled his ribs a little. “Do you want to pick out some toys?” He asked. “Hmm?”

Hoseok’s eyes fluttered open, a banana chip still in his fist. But, then his eyes slid shut again and he sighed.

Yoongi mashed is lips into a line. This happened last night too, but Yoongi assumed it was the result of a horrible, stressful day and he was just exhausted. He was worried that he overfed him. The boy had, like, seven pancakes and a hardboiled egg and now half of a bag of dried banana chips. And it wasn’t even lunchtime yet.

“Do you think something is wrong with him?” Yoongi asked worriedly.

“I think he’s just had a couple of emotional days.” Namjoon signed back and pulled him out of the seat so he didn’t have to use metal as a pillow anymore. He got Hoseok settled against his shoulder, where he hooked both of his hands together and fell asleep with his nose buried in Namjoon’s neck. Namjoon shifted him so that he could sign with one hand. “And who knows what his previous home was like.”

Yoongi ran his hand down Hoseok’s back. Namjoon was right. Yoongi was a realist. He didn’t like to imagine some horrible methed-out trailer that came right out of *Breaking Bad*. As, it was probably a little better than that. But, he didn’t imagine it was a stimulating, supportive environment for a small child either. He was probably in emotional overload, confusion over where his parents were and trying to traverse that without being able to communicate. Yoongi would be exhausted too.

Yoongi picked out some fun, but educational toys – mostly ABC games - and a Disney DVD. That
was a good start for now.

For now.

Hoseok slept for approximately six hours once they got home.

Namjoon kept reminding himself that Hoseok was probably just stressed out and exhausted as he watched him sleep peacefully on the couch, a throw blanket tucked around his little body and his stuffed animal under his arm. And naps were important at Hoseok’s age. But, six hours was a long time for a child – or so Namjoon thought. And when he woke up, he went right into a scream – by the way Yoongi cringed – for food.

Namjoon found his file again as Yoongi got dinner into him. It was some pork and rice and veggies – a kind of kid-friendly tonkatsu. He scanned the file and poked at his own dinner. There wasn’t anything in it, really. Just the police report that Namjoon had already read. They didn’t even have shot or dental records for him.

Namjoon decided to email Seokjin, asking if any more documents on Hoseok were found at the crime scene, so they could at least begin piecing together his past. Piecing together his past so they could map his future while he stayed with them.

He also asked if any relatives were found, as they would assume rights while the parents were going to court. If nobody was found last night, that might’ve meant he didn’t have anyone local – grandparents or aunts and uncles. Even an adult sibling to take him. But, family could step forward at any time and claim him and then Hoseok would leave to live with his biological family.

Hoseok yawned as he finished his dinner, his little fist digging into his eye socket. He was horribly cute. The type of cute that sunk into you, weighing you down as you fell more and more in love with him.

“Do you want to watch a movie with me after your bath?” Namjoon asked him.

Hoseok just blinked at Namjoon as he rubbed his eye. Exposure, exposure, exposure. That’s how you learn a language. And Hoseok had it here with Namjoon, who was Deaf himself. And Yoongi, who passably fluent in ASL. Hoseok could learn with them. He could thrive with them.

If he was claimed by a different family member, would he have the same level of support that he had here? Would he have the same empathy being a deaf child being raised in a Deaf household by a Deaf parent? Namjoon couldn’t answer that, but he was leaning towards no just based on the childhood he had.

“Potty?” Yoongi signed to him and he signed “please,” hopping off the chair himself. “We’ll practice bath words.” Yoongi signed with one hand, his other clasped with Hoseok’s. “That’ll be fun.”

Namjoon went to Hoseok’s room. They had already unpacked the bags and bags of clothing they got from Target – filling his closet a little. Yoongi thought to buy him a poster for his wall – Paw Patrol. And with his couple of toys, the room looked less like a little bare prison cell and more
like a child’s room. Hoseok’s room.

He pulled out a pajama set and a pair of clean undies and walked to the bathroom. Yoongi was on his knees next to the tub, picking up bathroom toys and signing their names. He smiled as he watched his husband form words with his fingers, waiting for Hoseok to mimic him and then rewarding him by pushing the toy towards him – his all-teeth and gums smile over his face.

Yoongi swore up and down that he wasn’t a parent. He always said was more like a cool uncle that makes music and dyes his hair every couple of months. But, he also swore up and down that he wasn’t the marrying type and Namjoon got him to sign ‘I do’ with tears in his eyes. He swore up and down that he wasn’t a dancer, but Namjoon distinctly remembered him dancing on their wedding night, the speakers on the floor so Namjoon could feel the beat through the soles of his feet.

“Okay, you fish.” Namjoon read Yoongi’s lips as he pulled Hoseok out of the tub and handed him to Namjoon, who was waiting with a towel. He dried off Hoseok – being careful of all of his bones that seemed to stick way too far out – and brr’d his lips against his neck, trying to elicit some giggles.

He did laugh, his face scrunching tight and his heart-shaped lips opening wide – the first time since he had been dropped off with them. Namjoon felt dragged further down. Could you love someone you just met? Namjoon felt like he could.

Namjoon caught Yoongi’s wide-eyed expression and Namjoon asked “what?”

“He’s so loud.” Yoongi just signed – his fist shaking next to his ear.

Hoseok signed “dad” and pointed at Yoongi. Namjoon handed the child off, who set him down on the floor and finished drying him off.

“You need a sign.” Yoongi signed with one hand as he got Hoseok’s t-shirt over his head with the other. “I can’t just be dad.”

“I can be dad too.” Namjoon signed and squatted. He grabbed Hoseok’s hand as Yoongi pulled his undies up. “Hoseok,” He fingerspelled and pointed to Hoseok. “I am dad.”

Hoseok’s eyebrows furrowed. He was so expressive – all of his thoughts painted right over his face. He pointed at Yoongi and signed “dad.”

“I know.” Namjoon signed. “I’m dad too. We are the same.”

Hoseok methodically bent each finger into a ‘y’ shape and then made the same sign for ‘same.’ Namjoon nodded and smiled. “That’s right. Good job.”

“Dad.” Hoseok signed and then pointed to Yoongi.

Namjoon sighed. Ah, we’ll get there. He thought. He was sure of it. He helped Hoseok step into his pajama pants and then swooped him back up to his arms. He was so light for a five-year-old. They walked to the living room together where Namjoon started Fantasia on the television. He always liked Fantasia - there were no words to keep up with.

Hoseok curled into Namjoon’s lap, his eyes watching the television intently. Namjoon realized that the television was probably used a babysitter most often than not. He blew Hoseok’s bangs off of his forehead and he tore his eyes away from the screen to scrunch-smile at Namjoon. “Dad,” He signed and pointed at Namjoon.
“Yes. I am your dad.” Namjoon signed back.

Hoseok curled tighter against Namjoon’s chest, his eyelids sliding to half-mast, their fingers tangled together, pulling Namjoon further down the valley that was love.

Namjoon received a follow-up email from Seokjin the next morning.

Namjoon,

Thank you for writing me. I have reached out to Hoseok’s uncle and his grandmother. At this time, only his uncle has written back, saying that he’s currently stationed in Afghanistan and is estranged from his brother. He didn’t even know that he had a nephew. His grandmother has yet to write me back.

I have gathered some of his shot records that were recovered from the house he was staying in. I didn’t find any dental records of his, so I’m assuming there aren’t any. He has not had a formal hearing test. He’s not currently enrolled in any schools in the area. I’ll get these records to you as soon as I can.

Let me know if you have any other questions.

Seokjin

His grandmother has yet to write me back. Namjoon read that sentence over and over. So there was a family member out there, potentially. A family member that could take Hoseok. He relayed this to Yoongi.

“Well,” Yoongi said as he watched Hoseok eat his second bowl of oatmeal, sitting on his brand new booster seat so he could actually put his elbows on the table. “That’s good right? For him to be with family?”

“What if the situation is the same?” Namjoon signed back. “What if he goes back to being neglected?”

Yoongi chewed on cheek and then shrugged, even though Namjoon could see a flash in his eyes. A flash of apprehension and fear. It was Hoseok’s second day, but he didn’t want to turn him back to the same situation he was just rescued from either. It was only the second day, but Namjoon wanted to keep him safe and secure forever – their little, loud screaming human with ears like his. “That’s just the reality of being a foster parent. We can’t adopt them all.” He signed.

Namjoon dropped his eyes back to his phone, back to the email. His grandmother has yet to write me back. He read that sentence again, his gut clenching with anxiety. A grandmother that would love and raise him? Or just another person to ignore him that just had the same last name?

A had wave caught his attention.
“I’m making a doctor’s appointment for this week.” Yoongi signed. “I really want him to get checked out.”

Namjoon nodded. “That’ll be good.”

Hoseok shrieked and Namjoon’s hearing aid responded with a loop of feedback. He adjusted the volume until the whining stopped. Yoongi cringed, but gritted his teeth, not giving in to Hoseok’s attempt at garnering his attention this way.

Hoseok resorted to waving, at which both of them snapped their eyes to him.

“Dad,” He signed and then his palm hit the table and his face twisted like he was going to cry – heating his delicate olive complexion red.

“Baby, what’s wrong?” Yoongi asked in sign, his eyes flashing with concern.

He looked between the both of them and then burst into tears. “Momma.” He mouthed and Yoongi’s eyes blew wide as he pulled Hoseok off the dining room chair and into his arms.

“He said ‘Momma.’” Yoongi signed as he cradled Hoseok against him. “He talks.”

Namjoon stood up and sandwiched Hoseok between him and Yoongi, pressing his lips to his head as he sighed with his heavy heart. “Why is he crying?” Namjoon asked as he helped support Hoseok’s weight.

Yoongi shook his head. “I don’t know.”

“Do you think it’s just emotions?” Namjoon asked.

“I don’t know.”

They crushed in further until Hoseok was squished between their chests – their concern and love engulfing him. He dug his little face into Namjoon’s breast bone as he sobbed.

Yoongi tapped his arm and he uncurled to look at him, tears in his eyes and his fist around Namjoon’s tie.

“Are you tired, Hoseok?” Yoongi signed and then mimed that he was sleeping, his eyes closing and his body popping with exaggerated snores.

Hoseok just twisted so that he could wrap his arms around Yoongi’s neck, his face burying against his shoulder. Namjoon watched his pointy shoulder blades contract through his t-shirt.

“He needs to see a doctor.” Yoongi signed with one hand. “I’m going to make an appointment for today.” He pressed his nose into Hoseok’s hair. “This isn’t just emotions. Something is going on.”

Namjoon just nodded as he rubbed Hoseok’s back, trying to think of what to do to take the pain away. Forever.

Chapter End Notes
Please comment <3
Yoongi held a limp and sleeping Hoseok in arms and rocked him as the doctor finished the examination, settling back down in the little circular stool and clicking through the brand new chart of Hoseok’s on the computer.

He had cried all morning – all the way through getting dressed and teeth brushing. All the way to the doctor’s. All the way through his exam. He was inconsolable. Yoongi tried to give him more food or a toy or even just hugs. Nothing was working. And every scream punctuated sob just tore through Yoongi’s middle, taking a little piece of his heart with it.

She did a check-up – looked into his nose and throat and ears. She listened to his heart and breathing. They weighed him and got his height, Yoongi helping by holding his shoulders back against the wall. Hoseok wailed through the whole thing, his face tomato red and his nose running. Yoongi finally resigned to being Hoseok’s nose and face wiper and his stress ball – his little fingernails digging crescents into his shoulder. Finally – finally - at the end of the examination, he fell asleep in Yoongi’s arms, exhausted and congested from tears.

“Excuse me.” Namjoon said. “I didn’t quite get that.”

“You said that he was found in a meth lab.” The pediatrician – a young woman with ice blonde hair said. “He might be withdrawing…off of meth.”

Yoongi could not believe his ears as horror rang through him like a gong. “Who in their right mind would give a child meth?” He breathed.

“It might not be him taking it directly.” The doctor said. “If they’re smoking it around him – exhaling it in his face - he could be getting secondhand high. And meth is a very volatile substance, especially to a child.”

“The pediatrician said he might be withdrawing.” Namjoon fingerspelled, his narrow eyes intense on Yoongi for interpretation.

Yoongi just glanced at Hoseok in his arms – his cheeks puffed and his lips rolled into a pout as he slept - and nodded. He can’t be on meth.

“I’m going to confirm with a blood test.” The doctor opened a drawer and started rummaging around. “It’ll be very quick.”

“You need to take blood?” Yoongi pressed his hand over Hoseok’s face, horrified. Can’t the
world just leave him alone?

“Just a stick.” The doctor produced a lancet and a card that divided into six parts. She donned gloves and grabbed an antiseptic wipe.

Hoseok didn’t even wake up when his fingertip was stuck. She dotted the blood on the card and then produced two droppers. Afterwards, Namjoon held Hoseok’s tiny finger between his with a square of gauze to get the bleeding to stop.

“Be back in a second.” The doctor said and left the exam room, clicking the door shut behind her.

“Oh my God, Namjoon.” Yoongi signed Namjoon’s name sign – an ‘n’ tapped to the side of the mouth where Namjoon’s dimple was. “Meth?”

They both just stared at each other for a second, horror and shock mirrored in each other’s eyes, this news dangling between them. This poor, little soul in their care can’t be addicted to meth. There can’t be an illicit substance running through his system. He can’t be withdrawing off of meth.

“What do we do?” Yoongi whispered.

“Well, I’m going to tell Seokjin immediately.” Namjoon signed and then rubbed the lines in his forehead. “And then…I don’t know.” He shook his head and dropped his hands.

Yoongi adjusted Hoseok so that he was sleeping on his shoulder. “I can’t believe…” He started in English, his eyes dropping. I can’t believe this is happening.

A couple of minutes – which felt like an eternity to Yoongi passed – and the doctor came back to read the results.

“He’s positive for meth.” She glanced at the card as she settled on the roll stool again. “He’s in the beginning stages right now.” She said, looking between the both of them. “He’ll be very hungry and very sleepy for the first week as his body processes whatever is left in his system. And then for another couple of weeks he’ll be really moody and listless as his body adjusts to not having it.”

“Very hungry and very sleepy.” Yoongi repeated. That was Hoseok to a T. In the almost forty-eight hours that they got to know him, that was Hoseok. Well, that and screaming.

“Once he detoxes, he’ll be okay.” She assured with a nod. “Just make sure he eats well and stays hydrated.” She patted his arm. “He’s tiny - very low on the growth chart – but I assume with the proper diet and care,” She looked at them pointedly and smiled. “He’ll be just fine.”

He’ll be just fine.

Yoongi kept that chanting like a mantra in is head as he roused Hoseok to eat dinner later that evening. He woke for a little bit – just about an hour in the afternoon – and then fell right back into unconsciousness, his little foot hanging off the side of the couch and his arms around his stuffie.

“Please call me if you need anything.” Namjoon signed dressed in a button-down and tie as he gathered up his papers and stuffed them in his briefcase. He had a night class to teach on Mondays and Wednesdays. And he looked worried to leave them.

“Okay,” Yoongi signed back, Hoseok on his knee as he fed him leftover tonkatsu and rice. He really was digging the rice, shoveling it in with an ice cream spoon as fast as he could go. “It’ll be
fine, though. I’m sure.”

Hoseok made some noises around his food as he watched Namjoon peck Yoongi on the lips and then disappear out the door. He whipped around to face Yoongi, concern in his eyes. He opened his mouth and made a couple of anxious vocalizations and then signed “dad,” pointing at the door.

“He’ll be right back.” Yoongi signed and rubbed his shoulder. “He’s gotta work.” Yoongi pounded his fists together for the sign for work. Hoseok watched him and mimicked – his little fists hitting right on top of each other and then looked up at Yoongi, anxiety still shining in his eyes.

“I know, baby.” Yoongi signed. “I know. He’ll be back, though. Don’t worry.”

Hoseok just frowned, his breathing hitching just slightly. Yoongi thought he was going to start crying or freaking out. Instead, he glanced at his plate and then made the sign for “finished.”

Yoongi got him up, balancing him on his hip as he cleared his plate to the sink and then started for the bathroom.

“Momma.” Hoseok said mournfully – his voice thick and the sound caught in the back of his throat in the typical deaf accent – as he hooked his chin on Yoongi’s shoulder. “Momma.”

Yoongi’s heart squeezed. He can’t imagine what was going through his head – being yanked by the police from his home to live with two strangers. He must be so confused and frustrated and upset. On top of that, his little body was trying to detox off of methamphetamine. Yoongi sighed. He just wanted to make it easier for him.

Anything to make it easier for him.

He’ll be just fine.

He will be. Kids were resilient. They bounced back. And he had Yoongi and Namjoon now and while Yoongi might’ve been a little biased, he thought that was a pretty good set-up. At least, after he purged the meth from his system.

Yoongi got him into the bath, but Hoseok was fading fast – his eyelids starting to droop, “Momma,” still rolling out of his little mouth in sighs. Yoongi got him washed up quick and changed. He sat him on the bathroom counter and brushed his teeth for him.

Then he tried to get him into bed, but Hoseok wasn’t having that.

“Baby. Seokie.” Yoongi said as he tried to pry Hoseok’s fists from around the neck of his t-shirt. “It’s time to go to bed, okay?” He signed and then mimicked like he was sleeping.

Hoseok just whimpered, signing “please,” over and over on his chest. He opened his mouth and screamed when Yoongi got one hand off of him, his face contorting with tears. According to the classes, kids should have a stable bedtime in their own bed every night. But, watching Hoseok get more and more upset as he begged in the only way he knew how to not be left alone had Yoongi caving fast.

He gave up and scooped Hoseok back up into his arms. He carried him across the hallway to his studio, settling them both down at his computer – Hoseok on his lap with his head on his shoulder - and tried to work on one of his projects that had been sitting stagnant the last couple of days.

At least, with a deaf child, he didn’t have to worry about waking him as he played around with a sample that had to be emailed to Sia’s studio by Wednesday. Yoongi hummed the melody of the song he was working on, listening to Hoseok sigh as he slept against Yoongi’s chest.
Hoseok was only conscious for about half of the first week he was with Yoongi and Namjoon.

The doctor was right – he was very hungry and very sleepy. When he was awake, he only wanted to eat. And that’s pretty much all he did, besides when Namjoon and Yoongi would force him to bathe and brush his teeth.

But, then he would climb right up onto the couch or the bed and pass out again. Namjoon and Yoongi took turns picking him up and carrying him while he slept, building at least a small foundation of trust when he would wake up and see one of them - be greeted by sign language, consistency, and love. And carrying him was for their own benefit too, feeling at least a smidgen helpful as he contended with withdrawing.

It was so worrying to Yoongi, but also Namjoon – who would stay up at night watching him sleep to make sure he was okay. But, he’ll be just fine. They just had to wait it out. That’s what the professional said.

Yoongi Googled symptoms of meth detox. Apparently cravings kicked in week two. He was praying – hard – that it wouldn’t be too bad for him, that his symptoms would be mild since he wasn’t actually getting high, he was just affected secondhand.

But, on Monday of week two, Hoseok woke the house by screaming at the top of his lungs, yanking Yoongi right out of sleep.

“Seokie,” Yoongi was the first in his bedroom. His form was a little huddle under his yellow blanket and he held up his arms when his eyes spotted Yoongi, his fists opening and closing for him.

“What’s wrong?”

“What’s going on?” Namjoon was on his heels – his hair up on one side from sleep.

“I don’t know.” Yoongi signed and scooped Hoseok up, taking his place on the bed. “He just screamed.” He looked him over, inspecting him. He looked okay. He was a little clammy, but that could’ve just been overheating from the blanket.

Hoseok sighed once he was in Yoongi’s arms, loose tears rolling down his face. But, he calmed down, turning slack in Yoongi’s arms. Yoongi pressed his nose into Hoseok’s hair – smelling in his sweet scent and tried to be as comforting as possible for him.

Yoongi felt his stomach roll as he realized what day it was, as he realized what stage they were at. Poor, poor baby. “The crash is over.” Yoongi signed. “Now we’re in the moody stage.”

Namjoon scratched the back of his neck and sighed. “You want to put him in our bed and get some more sleep?”

Yoongi nodded and carefully picked up Hoseok. They all moved into the master and Yoongi placed Hoseok in the middle of their king-sized bed, scooting in next to him under the covers.

Namjoon wrapped his arm up around Hoseok’s head and the other over his middle, caging
“The moody stage?” Namjoon breathed once they were settled and Hoseok was asleep, his little mouth opened.

Yoongi ran circles over Hoseok’s chest, propping his head on his other arm so Namjoon could read his lips. “I looked it up. It’s a depression since meth is a lifter and his brain is looking for that. Might even be some mild psychotic symptoms – hallucinations, things like that.”

Namjoon’s eyebrows furrowed and he turned over on his back. “He didn’t do anything to deserve this.” He said lowly.

“I know.” Yoongi said, talking to himself now since his deaf husband wasn’t looking at him. He looked at Hoseok – watching his eyelids flutter with his sweet baby dreams. “But, he has us now.”

Namjoon chewed on the inside of his cheek, thinking about Hoseok as he watched a student sign along to a Taylor Swift song for her midterm from an empty seat in the classroom.

The college he worked at was small, but his class always filled up quickly. He had one or two drop-outs every semester – usually an elderly person who couldn’t start signing all of a sudden or somebody who realized that ASL was, in fact, its own language with its own grammar and syntax and not just English, but with your hands.

It was midterms now and the assignment was a two- to three-minute project with an emphasis on proper grammar. Namjoon didn’t care what they did – a song, a poem, a recipe – as long as they did the whole thing in sign without talking. Most hearing people chose interpreting music.

Namjoon glanced at the projector that was playing a lyric video from Youtube of the song she was signing and watched her botch the grammar for one of the lines.

He marked her off on the project sheet and then tapped his pen on the paper, his eyes going back to her. He wasn’t paying attention to her. Not really. His thoughts were ten miles Northwest at home with Yoongi and Hoseok.

If they thought week one with all the sleeping was bad, week two was much, much worse. Hoseok was awake now – but all he did while he was awake was cry. He cried for Yoongi. He cried for Namjoon. He cried for his mother. He cried when he got to the bottom of his soup bowl. He cried at the television. He cried in the bath, during teeth brushing, and at bedtime.

They were doing everything, anything to get him to stop. They took him to the park to play and all he wanted to do was cling to Namjoon and cry. They tried to engage him with games, playtime, anything. He didn’t want to partake. He just wanted to cuddle and sniffle.

So…that’s what they did – just let him use them as a tissue as he worked through the depression that was associated with withdrawing, as he worked through the confusion of being in a new home, as he worked through his own grief of being separated by his parents. It’s what Hoseok needed right now. Yoongi kept chanting “he’ll be fine, he’ll be fine,” to himself when he thought Namjoon wasn’t looking. And Namjoon really, truly hoped that he would be fine.
“Hey,” Yoongi said, one of his arms under Hoseok’s butt as he held him against his chest as he worked over something that smelled like onions and garlic in the kitchen. “How was work?”

Namjoon took the child out of Yoongi’s arms, giving him a break. They traded Hoseok back and forth all day since he wanted that contact. It was fine, even though they were reduced to one arm now. But, it’s what Hoseok needed right now.

Yoongi was slowly turning into Hoseok’s favorite parent. And Namjoon could see why – Yoongi was home all the time with him while Namjoon still had to work Monday through Saturday. At least on Mondays and Wednesdays, his classes were in the nighttime, so he could spend the day with them. But, Yoongi was Hoseok’s constant. When Hoseok screamed – which they gave up on ignoring for the time being while he dealt with withdrawing from an illicit substance – it was Yoongi that found him first. It was Yoongi that cuddled him to sleep. Yoongi swore up and down that he wasn’t a parent, but it was him that wiped away Hoseok’s tears and tried to engage him in the bath and told him bedtime stories with his fingers.

Namjoon wasn’t jealous. He wasn’t.

“Watching people misspell ‘duck’ is always a pleasure.” Namjoon said adjusting him in his arms. Hoseok just buried his face in Namjoon’s shoulder. “How’s Seokie?”

Yoongi sighed as he scooped up a plate of dinner for Namjoon. “The same. Only three days left of this. Hopefully.” He signed with one hand.


“That would be a good name sign.” Yoongi suggested.

Name signs were assigned to a person by another Deaf person. At the moment, they would just sign ‘h.’ But, Hoseok needed his own name sign. It was part of his identity as a Deaf person in the community, which Namjoon really wanted to make sure he knew his culture as a Deaf person.

“Hope?” Namjoon made the sign with ‘h’ instead of the usual 4 fingers. “I kind of like that. Hope for Hoseok.”


“Hoseok.” Hoseok mimicked.

“Good job.” Namjoon signed big and excited, hurrying past Yoongi to the fridge, where he fished out a homemade popsicle from the ice tray as a reward – a big reward. “You want?”

Hoseok perked up – his face puffy and red from crying – and took the popsicle from Namjoon, holding the wooden stick in his tiny fingers. He pulled away and Namjoon shifted him so that he was sitting in front of his body. “Hoseok.” He signed again and pointed to himself.

Namjoon nodded and shook his fist, smiling big to show him how excited he was that Hoseok learned his new name sign.

Hoseok – even though in a depressive state – was still picking up words. He knew ‘yes’ and ‘no,’ now. And ‘dinner,’ ‘bath,’ ‘bed.’ Yoongi was right, he was a little sponge. Namjoon was so excited to actually teach him ASL once he was all better.
“He’s making so many noises.” Yoongi signed with a smile as he fished the soy sauce out of the cupboard. “I think he likes his name.”

“Do you?” Namjoon signed, his eyebrows furrowing in question. “Do you like your name?”

Hoseok just signed “Hoseok” again, a tiny smile flickering over his face as he licked his popsicle. A tiny, beautiful smile.

“Thank God. Namjoon breathed out a sigh of relief as he watched them. Yoongi’s hair was still a fluffy mess on his head and he was wearing a pair of sweats and t-shirt, dodging Hoseok while he prepared himself some coffee, being careful with the mug.

It was Sunday – Namjoon’s only real day off during the week. And instead of them waking him up and then trying to comfort him through the constant tears – which had become the new normal this past week – Hoseok woke them up around five in the morning, the can of Ovaltine in his little arms. He thrust it into Namjoon’s face and signed “please.”

Namjoon flipped the Mickey Mouse pancake he was making for Hoseok on the stove. Whether he actually got that it was Mickey Mouse was another question, since Namjoon couldn’t really pour pancakes into any distinguishable shapes.

“Hoseok,” Namjoon waved to get his eyes on him. “Do you want syrup?” He spelled syrup really slowly.

Hoseok inelegantly mimicked Namjoon, his eyes turning to his fingers as he clung to Yoongi’s leg like a fireman’s pole. Fingerspelling was still a brand new concept to him. He shifted his hand. “Milk,” he signed. “Please.”

“I got you some milk.” Namjoon signed and pointed to the little cup he made.

“Breakfast.” Hoseok signed and then beamed – his big, smile that took over his whole face – waiting for praise.

“Good job.” Namjoon squatted, the spatula still in one hand. “Do you want,” He signed slowly. “Syrup?” He spelled out and then pulled the syrup off the counter. “S-Y-R-U-P?”

Hoseok signed each letter slowly and then shook his fist in a “yes.”

Namjoon kissed his forehead and smoothed down his bedhead in the same motion. “You’re so smart.” He signed, puffed his cheeks for effect.

Hoseok giggled, his fingers on his lips and then opened his mouth and looked up at Yoongi, who was cringing at Hoseok’s gleeful screaming. Namjoon stood back up and flipped the pancake before it burned.

Yoongi touched Namjoon’s shoulder and Namjoon turned. “You want to go to the lake? I
have bird seed.”

“That would be fun.” Namjoon smiled, he looked down at Hoseok. “You want to feed the ducks?”

Hoseok’s eyebrows just furrowed in response.

They went to the lake after breakfast – a man-made body of water behind their neighborhood that was maintained by their HOA. There was a flock of ducks that lived there that Namjoon and Yoongi would feed when they went for walks. Thanks for Not Feeding the Ducks Bread! A sign read. They always brought bird seed.

Yoongi was in the middle of making sure Hoseok was properly bundled up in the early spring air when he spotted the ducks about twenty yards off, picking at bugs near the edge of the water. His finger violently pointed and he yanked on Yoongi’s jacket sleeve.

“Those are ducks.” Yoongi signed, his two fingers making a duck bill in front of his mouth.

“Ducks.” Hoseok copied, his other hand still pointing. He looked up at Namjoon, his eyes wide and sparkly with excitement.

Namjoon squatted to get on his level, pushing his hair out of his face with his fingers. “Do you want to feed the ducks?”

Hoseok just pointed, one hand finding Namjoon’s shoulder. Namjoon reveled just in the enthusiasm for something so simple. The way his face flushed and his mouth was open. Namjoon could kind of hear the high-pitched vocalizations he was making. He was so excited.

They approached the ducks and Yoongi showed him how to sprinkle the seeds on the ground from the bag he brought.

Hoseok took a handful of seeds…

…and then chucked them at the ducks. A couple them scattered from being spooked, flying away. Most of them just walked off out of the hail. Hoseok frowned and then marched after them, his other hand full of seeds. He threw that as well.

That caught their attention. They sauntered over and started picking at the seeds. Yoongi offered him the bag and he stuck his arm in and grabbed another handful. He threw that as well, pointing at the ducks and then signing their name with a big smile over his face.

And then the ducks started to swarm up around him, figuring out where the source of the seeds were coming from. Hoseok’s smile melted into shock and then fear as he backed up away from the birds that stood almost half his height and then ran around Namjoon’s leg.

“Aww, baby.” Namjoon signed, a couple of ducks around his feet. “They’re okay.”

“No. No. No.” Hoseok signed, digging his face into Namjoon’s hip. “No please.” He signed.

“Hoseok.” Yoongi said and touched his arm. He peaked one eye out. “They’re nice.” He said. “Watch me.”

Yoongi squatted and sprinkled some seeds in front of him. A couple of ducks approached and Yoongi gently petted one with his finger. They were used to humans, living in a neighborhood.
And hey, they had food.

Hoseok wasn’t budging though. He kept signing “no, no, no.” Namjoon bent down and scooped him up. He seemed to calm down being over them, but his fist was tight around the edge of Namjoon’s jacket.

“I don’t think we like ducks.” Yoongi said as he dusted his hands off and tied the plastic bag of seed off.

“That’s okay.” Namjoon signed.

Yoongi placed his hand in Namjoon’s back pocket. They couldn’t hold hands – for obvious reasons – so Yoongi stuffed his hand in Namjoon’s back pocket and pressed his face against Namjoon’s shoulder. “Yeah. It is.” His eyes softening as he looked at Hoseok.

Namjoon realized this was their first outing together. Their first outing as a family.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!
Hoseok bloomed like a sunflower – bright and happy - over the next couple of weeks.

Everyday the goal was to get more and more words into him. Communication, language. Everything they did they stopped to show Hoseok the signs. The sign for water when he was thirsty. The sign for bed when he was sleepy. The sign for cheese and cow and sky. Everything had a word, a sign. And Hoseok soaked everything up like a little sponge. Their little sponge.

Fingerspelling was a little harder, as you had to know how to spell. And Hoseok was five, he didn’t even know how to spell his name. Really. Most of the time they caught the gist.

With words came expression. And that was Yoongi’s favorite part – watching Hoseok’s personality come through as he learned how to express himself. He was so bright – a little ray of hope like his name – and happy. But, not only that. He was so soft and gentle too. He startled easily and was prone to crying. He was sensitive and cuddly. He liked to be neat, which was odd to Yoongi that a five-year-old could be neat. But, it almost bothered him when his toys weren’t cleaned up at the end of the day or when his bed would be messy.

And he loved to laugh.

His laugh was explosive. Absolutely volatile. Yoongi was sure he reached the same decibel levels as those macaw birds that could reach super sonic levels of volume. It shook the paintings on the walls. It echoed in the grocery store. But, the sound was addicting. It was addicting to make him laugh by pulling a funny face or giving him tickles. It was addicting pulling out his silly side. Yoongi never wanted it to end.

Yoongi vowed when they got their certificate to foster, that he would be able to separate his feelings to take care of a child temporarily. To love without getting attached. He was logical. He was a realist. He thought he could do that.

But, when he would watch Namjoon sign to him over breakfast, watching his eyes light up with understanding or when he would hand Yoongi a handful of crushed dandelions pulled from a backyard or when he would use his hands to tell a made-up story about the pig picture on his placement, Yoongi felt himself unable to distinguish that line. It was becoming blurred by tiny finger smudges of peanut butter and wet kisses on the cheek.

It wasn’t all sunshine all the time, though. With new words, came questions as well. Where his mother was being the primary one. Yoongi didn’t want to lie, but he also couldn’t…explain to a five-year-old that his parents were being charged for running a drug lab.

But, he knew…something was up. Of course he knew. He watched them get arrested.

“Dad,” Hoseok signed over breakfast one morning about a month after he got there. “Mom? Where?” He signed.

Yoongi glanced at Namjoon. “Do you want to take this one?” He signed, happily willing to defer this one off to his husband, who just made an uncomfortable face.

“Not really.” He signed back.
Yoongi internally sighed. “Seokie,” Yoongi said, turning back to the child. “Your mom has gotten…into trouble.” He signed slowly. “She’s…” He didn’t know how to put this into words that he could understand with the limited vocabulary he had. He chewed on his bottom lip.

“She’s in time out.” Namjoon signed for him, avoiding signing jail.

He nodded solemnly, humming lowly to himself. “I’ll see her again?”

“Oh, baby.” Namjoon’s eyebrows furrowed. “Of course you’ll see her again. You’ll stay with us for a little bit and then you’ll go back to her.”

Yoongi dug his nails into his thigh at that. He didn’t want Hoseok to leave. Hoseok belonged right there with them. He fit so perfectly with them – a puzzle piece that he didn’t realize they were missing. She didn’t deserve him. She didn’t deserve the little soul that was Hoseok.

“Okay.” He signed and nodded, his eyes turning to his plate. He stuffed an orange slice in his mouth and chewed. “See her today?” He asked.

“No, baby.” Yoongi said. “She can’t see you while in time out.”

He nodded like he understood. “Mom did bad.” He signed, his forehead crumpling. “She’s in jail.” He smacked his four fingers on each hand together in a criss-cross pattern, making a little noise with them.

Yoongi whipped towards Namjoon. “How does he know that sign?” He asked without signing.

“I don’t know.” Namjoon answered back in English. “Maybe he saw me talking to someone?”

Yoongi whipped back to Hoseok. He might as well be honest with him, since he knew the word for jail, apparently. “Baby,” He started, rubbing Hoseok’s hand with his before lifting them to sign. “Your mom was into some bad things. And she got caught.” He grabbed his own finger and pulled it towards his chest. “She was arrested.” His fists came together like he was handcuffed.

He nodded, his eyes wide – even though Yoongi used a lot of words they hadn’t gone over yet. His eyes dropped to his plate and he pushed it forward. “Finished.” He signed. “Thank you.” He hopped out of his chair, a frown on his face.

“Baby,” Yoongi called, but Hoseok had turned and was trotting off towards the living room. He sighed, his heart feeling heavy. He never had to go through something like this. He had no idea how to empathize with Hoseok. He had no idea how to ease the burn of that separation. She might’ve not have made the best choices, or have been the best person. But, she was still Hoseok’s mother.

He felt a hand on his and looked up at Namjoon. “He’ll be okay.” Namjoon signed. “He just needs some time.”

“I know.” Yoongi nodded, chewing on his lower lip. “I just wish I could make it easier for him somehow.”

“I do too.” Namjoon signed and then clasped Yoongi’s hands in his – his large, dark fingers wrapped around Yoongi’s pale, knobbled ones. He pressed his forehead against Yoongi’s. “I do too.” He breathed in English.
“I love you,” came one sunny afternoon while they were napping together. Or well, Yoongi was trying to nap on the bed with Hoseok – his arm around Hoseok’s waist. Hoseok kept playing with Yoongi’s face. Little fingers danced over Yoongi’s cheek and squeezed his nose and raked through his bangs. Yoongi kept pulling his hand off and putting it on his chest, but then he would go right back to playing with him. He made noises while he did it – humming nonsensical things to himself.

Yoongi cracked his eyes open and propped his head up. “Are you going to sleep?” He signed. “You should nap.”

Hoseok rolled on his belly. “I’m not tired.” He smiled mischievously.

“Not tired?” Yoongi asked.

“Dad.” Hoseok signed, deflecting.

“What’s up?”

“Why do you talk,” Hoseok signed. “On the phone and Dad uses the TV?”

Yoongi tickled his neck before signing. “Because I am a hearie.” He signed. “And you and Dad are deaf.”

“Deaf?” Hoseok signed back.

“You don’t use your ears to hear like I do,” Yoongi signed. “You use your hands.” He picked up Hoseok’s wrist and shook his little hand before dropping it.

“I can’t hear?” Hoseok’s eyebrows scrunched for a second and Yoongi prepared for the inevitable ‘being deaf is a culture, not a disability’ talk. But, then he just shrugged, rolling onto his back. Yoongi sighed as he watched him. He guessed you can’t mourn the loss what you never had in the first place. “Dad?”

“What’s up?” Yoongi signed.

“Why do I have three dads and one mom?”

“Because,” Yoongi sighed. He liked that Hoseok considered him a parent, a figure of authority and nurturing and love in his life. “You need all the love.” He made a big show for signing love, scrunching his shoulders up and his eyes closed.

“Love.” Hoseok copied the sign, his arms crossing over his chest. “What’s that?”

“L-O-V-E.” Yoongi fingerspelled, but Hoseok just blinked at him. “It’s…” He waved his hands in the air as he thought about how to explain it. “You know,” He started. “How we make you food and give you hugs and tuck you into bed?” He signed slow and deliberate so Hoseok could get it.

Hoseok shook his fist in affirmation.

“That’s love.” Yoongi explained. “We do those things because we love you.”
Hoseok grabbed Yoongi’s hand and drew a heart with his fingertip on his palm. “Like that?”
He asked.

Yoongi shook his fist in a “yes.”

“Momma used to do that before she kissed me at night.” Hoseok signed, his fingertips
tapping on his cheek like a face giving a kiss. His smile faded and he made a couple of noises. “I
didn’t do it to her.” He signed, his fingers going fast with anxiety. “Does that mean I don’t love her?”

“No. No. No.” Yoongi shook his head and then rubbed Hoseok’s chest. “You can show love
a lot of different ways.” He made the sign for “I love you.” His pointer, pinkie, and thumb out.
“Like this.” He signed and made it again.

Hoseok concentrated on his fingers as he formed the same sign. He showed it to Yoongi. “I
love you.” He signed and the rolled, curling up against Yoongi’s chest.

“I love you too.” Yoongi murmured against his forehead.

“Hoseok hears the five hundred frequency at eighty decibels. One thousand at seventy-eight
decibels. Two thousand at eighty decibels. Four thousand at eighty-four decibels and eight thousand
at eighty-eight decibels.” The audiologist plotted with his pen on the paper printout of Hoseok’s
hearing test results.

Yoongi glanced at Hoseok who was busying himself with the waiting room kids’ game of
feeding the bead over the looping metal tube thing – lost in his own world as he vocalized to himself.
He glanced at Namjoon, who was studying the results intently.

And then he looked at the audiogram that was sitting in front of them both.

They had Hoseok’s hearing formally tested to see if he would 1) benefit from hearing aids
and 2) to see how deaf he actually was. Even though Yoongi only vaguely knew what eighty
decibels were in tangible terms (a propeller plane, he thought he read once) he felt a little better
knowing exactly on the graph where Hoseok sat.

“He’s…severely deaf.” The audiologist said gently. “His right ear is a little better than his
left. But, only by a little bit.”

By the expression of the audiologist, Yoongi would assume that he thought this was bad
news. It wasn’t. Hoseok was deaf. They already knew that. And now they had the paperwork to
prove it.

Namjoon cracked a little smile. “I think I sit, like, two ticks underneath him on the chart.” He
said and shifted in his chair, crossing his legs.

“Can we get him fitted for hearing aids today?” Yoongi asked.

The audiologist nodded. “We can do that.” He glanced at Namjoon. “Are you interested in
any literature on cochlear implants?”

“What did he say?” Namjoon asked Yoongi.
“He wants to know about CIs.” Yoongi signed for him.

Namjoon’s face flushed red. “No.” He shook his head. “We aren’t interested in CIs.”

Yoongi sighed. Namjoon had a rough start to life, being told that he was basically broken for being unable to hear. It wasn’t until college when he was at Gallaudet that he discovered that deafness was a culture with its own language and history and art and literature – a tapestry weaved on this similarity of going against the stream in a world made for ears.

Cochlear implants were the hearing person’s solution to deafness. And Namjoon despised, outright resented anyone who told him that he needed to be fixed. And they wouldn’t be able to approve invasive surgery on Hoseok anyway. He wasn’t there’s. He was the state’s, technically.

“He didn’t mean to offend.” Yoongi signed quickly.

Namjoon nodded, even though his face was still red. “I know.” He signed back.

The audiologist picked up a board full of different hearing aid receivers and ear molds. They were all funky colors and looked like they were made for kids. “Since Hoseok’s deafness is severe, my suggestion is ITE ear molds, as others wouldn’t be suitable to his needs.” He pointed to the thick, chunky looking aids. The type that Namjoon wore.

They both nodded in agreement.

“Does he want to pick out a color?”

Yoongi got to his feet and grabbed Hoseok’s hand. “You get to pick out a color for your new hearing aids.” Yoongi signed and Hoseok’s face just crumpled in confusion as he walked with Yoongi.

They showed him the board and he looked at it and then looked up at Namjoon.

“You get to pick whichever one you want.” Namjoon signed and pointed at one that was camouflage color. “That one is cool!”

Hoseok looked at the board and then pointed. He chose electric blue receivers and bright yellow ear molds with little red hearts on them.

Two weeks later, Yoongi had to take Hoseok back to the audiologist to get his new hearing aids fitted alone, since Namjoon was at work.

Hoseok bounced on the sidewalk outside the strip mall where the audiologist was located, jumping over every crack. He stopped to pick a dandelion that was growing between the cracks of the concrete and handed it to Yoongi. “Pretty.” He signed with a smile.

Yoongi was a little nervous. He wasn’t sure how Hoseok – who never had hearing aids in his life – was going to react to them. He knew that it wasn’t going to be a magic trick. Hoseok suddenly wasn’t going to start to hear. They really were just so Hoseok could be in tune with his surroundings a bit better – sirens, alarms, crashes – things that could potentially be dangerous or hurt him.

But, it was going to be an adjustment. And hopefully – at least for Yoongi’s sake – he would
be able to hear himself a bit better so he could have more control over his volume.

The audiologist sat Hoseok down in a chair, tipping his head to the sign as they got Hoseok’s ear molds that were custom made to fit in his outer ear canal in, looping the receiver over the back of his ear. He repeated it with the other one.

Hoseok made a noise and his face scrunched with discomfort as he tipped his head to the other side.

“Do they hurt?” Yoongi signed as he watched him.

“No.” Hoseok pouted. “Not good.” He signed and crossed his arms. His cartilage in his ears were soft and bendy and the hearing aid receivers pushed them down a little, giving him tiny elf ears. As if he couldn’t get any cuter.

The audiologist showed him how to move his jaw to make sure they didn’t pop out. He mimicked the doctor making funny faces and then laughed his gigantic laugh.

“Okie dokie.” The audiologist turned. “We’re going live.” He reached behind Hoseok’s ears and flipped the switches of them on. He reached over and fitted the device that measures the hearing aid output to test them.

Hoseok hummed and then jumped, his eyes widening. His fingers flew his ears, which the audiologist gently pulled off. He made another noise and then jumped again – startling himself with the occlusion effect. Yoongi realized that he was hearing his own voice for the first time.

“What is that?” He signed quickly.


Hoseok’s eyebrows just furrowed in confusion. He didn’t know the sign for ‘voice.’ He made a noise and jumped again, his face heating red with frustrated tears. “I don’t like it.” He signed, his fingers pressing on the sides of his face.

“They’re going to help you.” Yoongi signed, sighing with sympathy. He wished Namjoon was here. At least, he could empathize what he was going through. “It’s okay. Don’t be scared.” He smiled gently. “That’s your own voice.”

Hoseok just shook his head, his eyebrows pulled and tears falling down his face. “It’s big.” He signed as he rubbed his eye.

“You mean loud?” Yoongi pointed to his ear and then shook his fist dramatically next to his head. “You’ll get used to it.”

Hoseok nodded and slumped in the chair. “I don’t like it,” was all he signed again.

Two and half months after Hoseok was brought to their home, Seokjin emailed Namjoon.
Namjoon and Yoongi,

We have made contact with Hoseok’s grandmother. She’s currently in a residential facility and is unable to take on Hoseok to care for. His uncle has signed off rights completely.

His father is taking a plea deal and is facing fifteen to twenty years in prison. At the moment, his mother is going to court. If she’s found guilty of all charges, she faces twenty to thirty years in prison.

We are still attempting to reach out to see if there is any other family. At the moment, it looks like Hoseok will be with us for the foreseeable future. Please let me know right away if your situation changes and you need to have him placed in a new home.

If you have any questions, I’m always available on my cell or at my office phone.

Seokjin

Namjoon almost, almost jumped for joy. Not at Hoseok’s parents going to jail for the entirety of his childhood. That kind of sucked – at least for Hoseok’s sake. But, there wasn’t a family member that could take him. Hoseok could be theirs one day. One day soon, maybe.

He got up and moved to Hoseok’s room where Yoongi was playing an ABC flashcard game with him that involved jellybeans as rewards. They really were pushing language so that he could go to school in the fall. If they could get him fluent enough for school, then he would only be a year behind. That would be amazing, especially since he came to them with no language at all.

Yoongi looked up and Hoseok did too from where they sat together on his bed - Yoongi sitting with his legs crossed over each other and Hoseok sitting indian-style near the head.

“What’s up?” Yoongi’s finger flicked off his chest.

Namjoon just responded by thrusting his phone into Yoongi’s face. He watched Yoongi’s mouth push out into a little thoughtful pout as he read Seokjin’s email. He glanced at Hoseok and then back up to Namjoon. “How should we tell him?” He said with English.

“Tell him what?” Namjoon asked, but then realized what Yoongi was asking.

He looked at Hoseok, who was sneaking jelly beans from Yoongi’s pile with his finger, cramming them in his mouth. He looked at the little face that would climb into bed with him every morning and demanded to be carried on his shoulders in the grocery store so he could sit up high, but not too high, and drew Namjoon with purple hair just because.

The face that he fell in love with.

Hoseok was theirs, Namjoon was convinced. He didn’t like to admit it because part of being a foster parent was the cold, hard reality that the child could be taken away for this or that reason. But, in his heart, Namjoon had claimed Hoseok. He was theirs.

But, Namjoon thought with his emotions and not his brain in these situations. All he saw was the fact that they were one step closer to adopting Hoseok. Yoongi thought logically. Hoseok’s parents were still alive. But, they were going to jail for a long time. Hoseok needed to know that.
And it was their job to have the hard conversations.

Namjoon signed and sat down next to them on the bed. “Hoseok,” He signed. “You know how your parents got in trouble with the police?” He winced. He didn’t like bringing them up. Hoseok still brought them, but only occasionally now. And he didn’t really call for his mother either. That should be a sign that he belonged with them.

Hoseok glanced between their faces and shook his fist up and down. “Yes.”

“And you’re a big boy, right?” Namjoon asked.

Hoseok squared his shoulders. “Yes.” He signed, his eyes flashing.

“Okay. So, I’m going to tell you straight, like a big boy.” He signed. “We were told today that they are going to be going to jail for a long time for what they did. This means that you might not see them for awhile.” Namjoon signed slowly.

“What did they do?”

“They broke the law.” Yoongi signed simply. “So, the have to go to jail because of it.”

Hoseok nodded, looking between the both of them. He looked at his hands and then looked back up. “I can stay with you guys, though, right?” He asked.

“Of course, baby.” Yoongi signed, his eyes softening.

“I don’t have to go to jail, right?” He signed little and tight in front of him. Hesitant. He was hesitant and scared.

“No, baby.” Yoongi grabbed underneath his arms and pulled him into his lap. “You didn’t do anything wrong. You didn’t break any laws. Jails are only for people who break the law.”

Hoseok twisted so he could wrap his arms around Yoongi’s shoulder. “Okay. I like it here.” He signed and put his head on Yoongi’s shoulder. “You are my favorite dads.”

Namjoon couldn’t help but feel a bit of smug satisfaction at that. He rubbed Hoseok’s shoulder. *My favorite dads.* He liked the sound of that.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!<33
They got Hoseok into school that fall - Oliver School for the Deaf. It was a bit a drive across town, but Namjoon was really excited about this school – it was a ASL-first language school, all the teachers had to be fluent and certified, and it was endorsed by Gallaudet - so Yoongi let him take the lead on this one and went with it. They enrolled him into kindergarten and they had an open house the evening before the first day. Hoseok had eleven other classmates. That was it.

On Hoseok’s first day, Namjoon was so excited, he thought he was going to combust. He didn’t get to go to a Deaf school. In fact, he didn’t get to know sign until he was 14 – having to trudge through classes barely skating by on lip-reading alone. So, being able to get Hoseok into that - to have a classroom of his peers that were just like him - Namjoon was over the moon. He was ecstatic.

Namjoon and Yoongi took him in together. Namjoon pushed off his first class so they both could escort him all the way to his classroom. The school itself was set up with each grade getting its own building – a pathway with cool flowers and signs connecting each structure. It was a very beautiful campus.

“Do you have batteries?” Yoongi signed. He was going through the list with Hoseok to make sure he packed everything in his backpack that was on the school supply list. Even though he was the one that packed his Captain America backpack that was currently slapping against Hoseok’s butt.

Hoseok nodded, his eyes widening a little with each step they approach the kindergarten and preschool building. They explained to him almost everyday this past week that he was going to go to kindergarten and he was going to be a big boy and learn cool things like how to count and animal names. He was going to make friends and meet new people – just generally trying to get him pumped for it. And he seemed excited when they talked about it.

“Do you have your pencil case?”

Hoseok didn’t answer this time. His eyes weren’t on Yoongi; they were on everything else as he looked around at his new school. Namjoon realized that reality was settling into Hoseok. It wasn’t just a thing - an intangible, abstract thing - they talked about anymore. Kindergarten – big, scary kindergarten – was here.

They found his classroom, his teacher standing outside the door welcoming everyone in with big smiles. They got him to his desk and Yoongi carefully unpacked everything for him into it and Namjoon took off his coat and hung that and his backpack on the hook under the cubby that was labeled with his name in font made out of crayons.

Namjoon smiled at the other kids and their parents that were getting settled. He found a
reading corner of picture books and bean bag chairs. A big rug for rug time. They even had a class pet – some large lizard that was pacing against its glass box.

Once they confirmed that Hoseok was established in, they started saying their goodbyes…

…and that’s when the tears started.

“Don’t leave.” He signed as his face heated red with tears. “I don’t want you to leave.”

“Seokie,” Yoongi signed back, squatting next to the miniature desk. “It’s okay. You’ll have fun.”

“No,” Hoseok shook his head. “I’m not going to have fun without you.”

Namjoon’s heart clenched. “You’re going to have a blast.” He said, squatting too and squeezing Hoseok’s shoulder. “Look at all the cool things, like that lizard.” He pointed at the class pet. “And you’re going to make so many friends.”

“That’s a bearded dragon.” Yoongi fingerspelled swiftly, correcting Namjoon.

“Whatever.” Namjoon rolled his eyes and playfully pushed his husband. He went back to Hoseok. “You’re going to be just fine.”

“But,” Hoseok argued. “What if…what if you don’t come back?”

Namjoon sighed. He knew…kind of…in the back of his mind that separation anxiety might be an issue, being that he was yanked so violently away from his bio parents. Now he had stability again – months of Namjoon and Yoongi being constants in his life, day in and day out. He was hoping, deep down, that Hoseok would be fine. But, children dealt with grief and anxiety differently than adults. And this was just how Hoseok was handling his stress.

It broke Namjoon’s heart.

“I’m going to be standing right here at one-thirty.” Yoongi signed and then pointed to the digital clock on the wall. “When that clock says one-three-zero, I’ll be right there. I promise.”

Hoseok couldn’t tell time. He glanced at the clock and then back at them. “When will that be?” His face contorted as tears started to fall. Namjoon wiped his nose with his thumb and rubbed it on his trousers.

“Just a couple of hours.” Namjoon pressed a kiss to his head and Yoongi followed suit. They both started to stand.

“No.” Hoseok started to get upset again, his hand gripping the edge of Yoongi’s jacket. “No. Don’t leave.” He signed. “Please.” His hand rubbed circles over his chest as he begged.

And Namjoon almost didn’t. Maybe this was a mistake. Maybe he got caught up with making sure they were enrolling Hoseok in the perfect Deaf school that he forgot to consider Hoseok’s emotional scars. He didn’t have a normal childhood, it was okay to delay some things until he was 100% ready, right?

The teacher – a dark skinned, middle aged lady with a broach in the hand-shape for ‘I love you’ - came over. “Hi, honey.” She signed big and excited. “You’re Hoseok, right? I wanted to meet the little boy whose name was as unique as Hoseok.” She signed. “Do you have name sign?”
He hesitantly signed his own name, sniffing.

“Go.” She turned to them and signed quickly. “He’ll calm down. First days are always hard.” She turned back to the child. “Wow, I love that name sign! My name is Miss Rebecca.” She signed back.

Namjoon and Yoongi quickly made their escape into the hallway, hurrying all the way to the push-bar door that was decorated with painted hands in bright, primary colors.

“He’s going to be okay, right?” Yoongi signed to Namjoon as they let themselves out into the mid-morning heat.

“Yes.” Namjoon signed back. “Of course. He just has to adjust.” He was unsure if he was trying to convince himself or Yoongi.

Namjoon could see the worry in Yoongi’s narrow eyes and the way his eyebrows were creased in the middle. He grabbed his husband’s hand and bent at the waist and pecked him with a chaste kiss. He felt better after that. “He’ll be fine.” He signed, running a finger down Yoongi’s face afterwards. “He has us, after all.”

Yoongi was there at 1:30 sharp, come hell or high water.

And Hoseok ran – at a complete dead sprint – into his arms. Yoongi barely had time to squat before Hoseok was mashing his face into Yoongi’s shoulder, squeezing his little body as tight has he could against him.

Yoongi pushed him off so they could talk. “Did you have fun?” He signed.

Hoseok frowned. “No.” He signed back.

“Did something happen?” Yoongi cupped his little face, inspecting it and then he inspected his hearing aids. Everything looked okay. He didn't look hurt or anything. Yoongi sighed. So, it was all emotions. That was slightly comforting.

Only slightly though. Yoongi spent the first day in four, almost five months completely alone. He managed to get one song completely mastered and emailed back to Lorde’s production team, but he spent it all in the wrong headspace as he worried over how Hoseok was doing. He expected to get an email back asking him to redo it.

Hoseok’s cheeks heated red and he started to cry. He crushed himself flat against Yoongi’s chest again, hooking his hands together behind Yoongi’s neck.

“How did he do?” Yoongi asked Miss Rebecca as he lifted Hoseok with a slight groan. He had put on some pounds in the last couple of months of good eating and was getting heavy. At least for Yoongi’s small frame.

Miss Rebecca rubbed his back. “He’s...” She started to sign. “A sensitive child. He didn’t interact with anyone during the day and his signing…”

“Is basic.” Yoongi finished with a sigh as he grabbed Hoseok’s things off of his peg. “I
know. He’s a foster and didn’t know ASL before coming to us.”

“He’ll get there. He seems incredibly bright.” She reassured. “It’ll just be some adjustment, is all.”

_Ajustment._ Yoongi chewed on that as he carried Hoseok outside, putting him down on his feet when they reached the parking lot.

“So, what happened at school?” Yoongi asked when they reached his Honda, throwing Hoseok’s backpack in the seat. Hoseok climbed into his car seat and got settled and Yoongi started to buckle him in.

Hoseok was pouting, his little mouth pulled down into a wishbone-shaped frown. “Nobody talked to me.” He signed.

Yoongi’s fingers froze on Hoseok’s buckle. “Did you talk to them?”

“I tried.” Hoseok signed. “One girl said my signing was weird.” He dropped his hands in his lap.

Yoongi sighed and smoothed Hoseok’s hair down. He was delayed in language and Yoongi desperately hoped that he would be caught up enough for school. And he thought he was. He signed okay with the both of them. But, they also knew him now. But, maybe he wasn’t as caught up as they hoped. “You’re signing isn’t weird.” Yoongi assured him. “And if that girl was mean, then ignore her.” He signed. “You don’t need to be friends with mean people.”

Hoseok chewed on his lower lip. “Can you come to school with me tomorrow?” He signed.

Yoongi just smiled at him. “I wish, but the desks are too little.”

Hoseok just frowned harder, his eyebrows scrunching. “I hate school.” He signed.

Yoongi ruffled his hair. “You won’t.” Yoongi said. “You’ll love it soon enough.”

He…didn’t love school.

Every morning it was a tearful fight for Yoongi to drop him off. One morning, Yoongi was convinced he had a straight up panic attack over it. Sometimes, he threw himself on the ground in a fit. Once he got mad and threw his pencil case on the ground.

Most of the time, Yoongi would walk him to class and get him settled in, the only parent that did so now. All the other kids were just dropped off at the front of the school. And then he would say his goodbyes. The waterworks would start and Hoseok would beg him not to leave. Yoongi would assure him that he would be back at 1:30 – like he was every day – to pick him up. Usually Miss Rebecca would try and run interference, be a distraction. Sometimes he would just give up – his face pouty and full of betrayal that stabbed Yoongi straight to the core like a white hot cattle brand.

And then at 1:30, Yoongi would be there – like he promised every day – and Hoseok would sprint to get to him like he hadn’t seen him in years.

“Is he completely miserable here?” Yoongi straight up asked his teacher during the parent-
teacher conference that Miss Rebecca requested to schedule about a month after school started.

“He’s not.” Miss Rebecca signed. “He has fun during lessons. He likes answering questions, too.”

“How is his signing?” Namjoon asked next to Yoongi as they both tried to sit on miniature chairs, their knees hitting their chests as they talked with Hoseok’s teacher.

“It’s getting there.” Miss Rebecca said. “But, that’s not why I asked to meet. I called this meeting because Hoseok isn’t…making friends.” She said. “And I know there’s an adjustment period. But-,”

“Why isn’t he making friends?” Namjoon asked, interrupting.

Yoongi just glanced at Hoseok who was playing with Drogon, the class pet bearded dragon through the glass – moving his hand back and forth and making the lizard chase it.

“He’s…shy.” Miss Rebecca pursed his lips. “But, more than that. He’s hesitant about putting himself out there. I think there might be a fear.” She signed. “A fear of abandonment.”

Yoongi looked at his hands, the way they were laced up – his nails digging into his own skin out of heartache. Hoseok would never, ever be abandoned. Ever. Not with them. He would be protected for the rest of his days with them. Loved. Cherished.

But, communicating that to him? Proving themselves to him? That was a completely different story. He already had the rug yanked out from under him once. Why would this time be any different?

“What do we do?” Yoongi asked as he watched his husband brush his teeth later that evening in their bathroom mirror. He patted skin cream into his face with his fingertips as he stood next to him.

“Do about what?” Namjoon signed and spat in the bowl of the sink.

“Show Hoseok that he isn’t going to be abandoned.” Yoongi chewed on it all evening, mulling it around as they ate Little Caesar’s pizza and got Hoseok through his bath and changed for bed. “It’s why he isn’t making friends. It’s why he cries every morning when we leave him at school.” Yoongi signed, watching his reflection sign back. “He thinks his parents are going to leave him again. He thinks we’re going to leave him again.”

“We’re not.” Namjoon put up his toothbrush. “And we just have to show him that.” He turned so that he was facing Yoongi, picking up one of his hands. “If it takes a hundred times or a thousand times or a million times. He’ll see it.” Namjoon stroked Yoongi’s cheek, his eyes flashing. “I promise.”

Yoongi dropped his eyes to their clasped hands. He moved his fingers so that they were laced together and then shoved his whole body against Namjoon’s chest. “I want to adopt Hoseok.” He murmured as he listened to his husband’s heart beat.

Namjoon gently pushed him away so they could talk. “What did you say?”

“I want to adopt Hoseok.” Yoongi repeated in sign. “I want to keep him forever.”

Namjoon’s face softened and his dimples peaked out with his smile. “I want to adopt Hoseok too.” He signed. “So badly, it hurts.” He twisted his fingertips together over his heart – the sign for
‘pain.’ That’s what Yoongi felt like – his heart tied up, tangled with loved for a little boy who deserved the world.

“‘You’re so cute when you’re about to fall asleep.’ Namjoon said as he pushed Yoongi’s hair out of his face.

“Then let me sleep.” Yoongi signed back without opening his eyes, his lips pushed out into a little pout as he rested his head on Namjoon’s chest. “I’ll show you how cute I can be.”

It was a sunny Sunday afternoon and they were taking advantage of Hoseok’s nap time by getting in some adult time of their own. Namjoon ran his fingertips down Yoongi’s bare back all the way to his bare ass where he squeezed. He felt Yoongi’s low voice rumble in protest against Namjoon’s chest. He moved his face so it was pressed into Namjoon’s throat and Namjoon gulped as he ran his hands over his husband – down his back, past his venus dimples, down his thighs.

“You remember when we had sex for the first time and you didn’t know how to sign ‘get off my prostate?’” Namjoon chuckled lowly.

“No.” Yoongi signed back and nuzzled Namjoon’s neck again. His body flushed with heat – a wave pulsing right under the surface of his skin. “I think I blacked out after that.” Yoongi picked up his head, a playful smile over his face. “That was probably the most intense orgasm I’ve ever had.”

Namjoon wrapped his arms around Yoongi and then twisted so that he was on his back. Yoongi smiled – his small frame now caged in Namjoon’s arms. Namjoon kissed him and Yoongi kissed him back. “I think we should recreate that evening.” Namjoon said.

“I wouldn’t mind.” Yoongi said lowly, Namjoon reading his lips.

They connected and Namjoon kissed him eagerly, his body flushing with heat again as he grew hard again. Yoongi knotted his fingers in Namjoon’s hair, sloting his tongue into Namjoon’s mouth. Namjoon shifted his body so that he was settled between Yoongi’s legs, grinding his hips against Yoongi’s, searching for friction.

Namjoon felt two taps on his shoulder and stopped immediately. “Everything okay?”

“My phone is ringing.” Yoongi signed and rolled over, grabbing his cell phone off the bedside table. Namjoon stayed in position as Yoongi glanced at who was calling.

“Silence it.” Namjoon said, kissing Yoongi’s pale chest, running his tongue over his nipple.

“It’s the case manager.” Yoongi signed and slid to answer it.

Namjoon sat up on his heels, still situated between Yoongi’s legs. He ran his hand down his thigh as he watched Yoongi talk on the phone, his head nodding every couple of moments.

“Everything okay?” Namjoon signed when he got off the phone.

Yoongi sucked in a breath. “Fine.” He nodded. “Just wanting his updated shot records.” He signed and threw his phone across the bed.
Namjoon nodded and went back to pressing kisses to Yoongi’s throat, but Yoongi’s eyes were distant and tight. “What?” He asked.

“Every time he calls,” Yoongi scooted back and sat up. “I always hope that it’s with good news.” He signed. “I always hope that it’s news that Hoseok’s mother signed off rights.”

Namjoon sighed and fell next to Yoongi on the bed, wrapping his arm around his shoulders. “I know. I do too.”

“I want him, Namjoon.” Yoongi signed and pressed his head against Joon’s chest.

“I know.” Namjoon chewed on his lip. If the roles were reversed and he was in trouble, knowing his child was out there somewhere, of course he would want to hang on. Of course he would fight until his last to get Hoseok back. He would do anything. He realized that. And, in a way, he sympathized with Hoseok’s mother.

But, Hoseok was theirs, dammit.

“I ruined the mood.” Yoongi signed. “Sorry.”

Namjoon smiled a little and kissed his head. “It’s okay.” He signed back. “I don’t mind.”

“Hey, Seokie.” Namjoon greeted as Hoseok ran into his arms when he picked him up from school. “How are you?”

“Where is Dad?” He signed, his eyebrows furrowing.

“He’s at home.” Namjoon signed. “He had to work.”

Hoseok gave a little relieved sigh, his eyes softening from the sharp anxiety in the them. “You never pick me up.” He signed.

“I know.” Namjoon signed back as he straightened and reached for Hoseok’s backpack and jacket. He loaded up Hoseok’s graded homework from his cubby and made sure to not forget his lunchbox. “I thought I would today.” The fall semester was on a two-day break for Thanksgiving weekend. Yoongi was at home getting a last minute project submitted so that he wouldn’t have to spend his weekend in his studio. Namjoon thought this would be a good afternoon to bond with his boy.

“How was school?”

Hoseok shrugged as he skipped out the class with Namjoon, his little hand in Namjoon’s fist. “Miss R, read a story about a mouse and a cookie.” He said. “But, she signs really fast and I didn’t get it all.” His nose scrunched.

Namjoon sighed. He’ll get there. He will. He assured himself. He just couldn’t lose hope. “Have you made any friends?”

Hoseok shook his head, but then his eyes widened. “Josie said she liked my shoe laces.” He glanced down at his sneakers – at the rainbow shoelaces he begged Yoongi to get while they were in Shoe Carnival last weekend.
“That’s nice. Is Josie nice?”

Hoseok shrugged. “Yeah.” He shook his fist lazily. “But, she doesn’t really talk to me.”

*He’ll get there.* Namjoon repeated to himself. “I thought,” He said as he got Hoseok loaded into the car. “That we could spend the afternoon together. You and I.”

Namjoon took him to little kid heaven – McDonald’s. Yoongi would balk if he knew that they came here and Hoseok ate the nutrition-less garbage the fast food chain pushed. So, instead of a cheeseburger, they just grabbed a snack of apple slices and some Hi-C.

Hoseok munched on an apple slice and watched the playplace, itching to get over there and climb up to go down the slide. Namjoon had to wave his hand to get his attention. “Seokie,” He signed. “What is your favorite part about school?”

Hoseok chewed on his apple slice, his eyebrows furrowing. “I think,” He signed. “I like Miss R. She’s nice.”

“Yeah?”

His eyes lit up. “And parachute time!” He said and rose both hands over his head. “When we play with the big parachute.”

“What’s your least favorite thing about school?”

Hoseok glanced at the table. “One time,” He started to sign. “Cassidy brought cupcakes for her birthday, but she only brought ten and I didn’t get one. And she said it’s because she forgot me.” He pouted. “Nobody wants to be my friend.”

Namjoon’s heart clenched. “You know,” He signed. “When I was growing up, I didn’t have friends either.”

Hoseok’s eyes grew concerned. “You didn’t?”

Namjoon shook his head. “I had a tough time making friends because I moved around a lot.” He signed. “But, that’s okay. Because I knew that good friends would come eventually. I just had to be kind to everyone I met.” He poked Hoseok’s chest. “Someone will see what a big heart you have and want to be your friend. You just gotta wait a little.”

Hoseok nodded. “Be kind.” He signed, his eyes drifting to the playplace. “Can I go down the slide now?” He signed and pointed.

Namjoon nodded. “Watch your hearing aids.” Namjoon warned and Hoseok yanked off his shoes and headed for the playplace – throwing them in the empty booth and running towards the play area.

*He’ll get there. He will.*

Chapter End Notes

Please comment<33
Yoongi received a call from Seokjin on a Wednesday afternoon while he worked in his studio, his mouse right clicked over a loop of a beat. His heart skipped when he read the name that flashed. *Please don’t take Hoseok away*, he silently pleaded as he swiped to answer. *Please don’t take him away.* “Hello?” He said.

“Mr. Min-Kim?”

“This is he.”

“I have another child that needs placement.” Seokjin said. “If you could take him.”

Yoongi’s heart completely stopped for a second and then he let out a sigh. They weren’t taking Hoseok away from them. *Thank God.* But, another child? So soon? Yoongi glanced at the doorway, where he knew Hoseok was just across hall playing with his toys.

“His name is Taehyung.” Seokjin said. “He’s deaf. He’s been in the system for awhile – almost his whole life. We found out his last house was…” He made a noise. “Not *abusing* him, we don’t think. But, in comparison to their biological children, he wasn’t treated…as well.”

“You don’t *think*?” Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed. “What do you mean?”

“He doesn’t have…visible markings, but-,”

“Aren’t your jobs to make sure that children are put into safe homes? Isn’t that why you have to take the classes and get certified?” Yoongi blurted, getting heated at the thought of some foster family *hurting* a child that was already hurting to begin with.

“I know.” Seokjin said. “I know. He’s a new case of mine and I did an inspection and…” He sighed. “You have no idea how many families get into it for the *money*. You get into to *help* the *children*.

Yoongi almost snorted. The state stipend that they got for Hoseok barely covered food, let alone tuition, clothes, school supplies, toys, his $3000 set of hearing aids…the list went on. You don’t get into it for the *money*. You get into to *help* the *children*.

Yoongi’s fingers mashed on his mouse and he accidentally copied the drum beat he was working on – seven times. He sighed and calmed himself down. “I need to talk to Namjoon.” Yoongi said. “Can I call you back?”

“Yes.” Seokjin said. “This situation isn’t as urgent as Hoseok’s was. Please take your time.” Seokjin said and then paused. “I do…I did think of you guys first.” He added gently. “Because I know that you both are in it for the right reasons.”
Yoongi felt himself completely deflate at Seokjin’s gentle words. “Thanks, Seokjin. That means a lot. I’ll get back to you as soon as I get ahold of Namjoon, okay?”

“Thanks.”

Yoongi hung up and immediately hit FaceTime and dialed Namjoon, staring at his own reflection as it tried to connect with Namjoon’s phone.

“Hello?”

“Are you busy with a class?” Yoongi signed with one hand.

Joon shook his head. “We just took a ten-minute break. What’s up?”

“The agency called.” Yoongi said. “There’s another deaf kid that needs a home.”

Namjoon’s eyebrows furrowed and Yoongi could see him take a seat at his desk. “What do you mean?”

“Apparently, he’s being mistreated in his other home.” Yoongi signed. “They need to replace him.”

“Do you think…” Namjoon’s fingers hesitate as the gears turn in his head behind his eyes. He glanced to the side as he thought, his forehead crumpling. “Do you think we can take another one on?”

“We would need to get another bed.” Yoongi signed. “But, Hoseok’s been with us almost a year. I think he’ll be fine.”

“Do you want to take another on?”

“Do you?”

They stared at each other – unwilling to say no, but hesitant about saying yes too. But, there were logistics that needed to considered. Their third bedroom was storage room for music stuff mostly and some exercise equipment. They would have to clean that out. They would have to get another bed. They would have to go through the whole period of adjustment and learning and contending with scars from previous homes – like they did with Hoseok.

Yoongi tried to imagine another little soul out there, innocent and hurting. He knew that with them, he would find only love. He knew that with them, he would be safe. “I do.” He signed finally, nodding. “I want to take him.”

“I’ll dismiss class early then.” Namjoon said. “And be home in ten minutes.”

Yoongi opened the door when their living room lights flashed with the doorbell – rubbing his hands on his jeans as he took in their case manager and the little boy that held his hand.

Upon first glance, Taehyung looked healthy. At least, in comparison to Hoseok when he first got to them. He was taller and fuller – a tangle of long limbs and healthy, round cheeks. He had hearing aids – flesh tone ones that looked like an older model. And his full upper lip was clamped
“Hello,” Namjoon was the first to greet him, squatting to get to his level. “How are you, buddy?”

Taehyung looked between the both of them with apprehension – but squared his little shoulders and stepped forward. “My name Tae.” He said with a light deaf accent in a small, shaky voice. “I am five. Is it okay if I stay here for a little bit?” He held out his hand as if to shake. “I promise I will be a good boy.”

Yoongi felt a knot of tears work their way up his throat. “You can stay with us as long as you need.” He whispered and stepped aside to let them both in.

“Do you sign?” Namjoon signed and asked with his voice.

Taehyung shook his head. “I wasn’t allowed at Mr. and Mrs. Jensen’s.” He said.

Namjoon blanched and Yoongi watched him finger the line of scars on the back of his hand where he was hit with a metal edged ruler for signing – over and over and over. He swallowed thickly with his own bad memories and put on a smile. “You can sign with us.” He signed and said. “Or you can talk or both – whatever makes you comfortable.”

“Here’s his suitcase.” Seokjin handed over an elderly looking suitcase. “And his file.”

“Thanks.” Yoongi smiled as he looked at the suitcase. At least they didn’t have to start from scratch, like they did with Hoseok. At least he had something to call his own.

Yoongi heard Hoseok make a curious noise and turned to see him hiding behind Yoongi’s hip, peaking at the new child. He wrapped an arm around Yoongi’s thigh.

“Taehyung,” Yoongi squatted, pulling Hoseok forward and then caging him between Yoongi’s thighs so he couldn’t escape. “This is Hoseok.” He signed and said at the same time. “He’s deaf like you, but he doesn’t talk.”

Tae offered his hand for a handshake, but Yoongi could see what looked like fear in his eyes as he sized up Hoseok. “Nice to meet you.” He whispered and Hoseok just signed “hi,” back making a noise with it and staring at Tae’s hand.

“Do you want to see the house? Are you hungry?” Namjoon asked.

Tae reached for his suitcase and Yoongi let him take it, even though it was a little big for him. “Can I see my bed?”

That was an…odd request. His bed? Yoongi nodded though. “Of course, Tae.” He stood up and offered him his hand to hold. He didn’t take it. Namjoon said his goodbyes to Seokjin.

They led him into the recently converted third bedroom. They got a twin and a desk and dresser so the set matched Hoseok’s room. Unlike Hoseok’s room - which actually looked like a kid lived there – this one was empty. Soon enough, Tae would decorate with his own posters and drawings and call it his own, though.

Tae looked around and then set his old suitcase down. He got onto his knees and looked underneath the bed, moving the bed skirt out of the way.

Yoongi squatted down next to him and touched his shoulder. “Tae,” He asked. “What are
you doing?”

“I’m looking for the trundle.” He frowned. “You guys don’t have a trundle.”

Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed in confusion. “That’s because we don’t need a trundle.” He patted the new bed. “This is your bed.”

“I get to sleep here?” Tae frowned harder. “Why?”

“Why not?” Namjoon asked, his hands on Hoseok’s shoulders, who was watching everything with wide, curious eyes.

“Because I’m just a foster.” Tae played with his fingers.

Yoongi felt his heart splinter – loud and harsh like an iceberg falling into an icy ocean. Yoongi wanted to scoop him up and kiss him and tell him that he wasn’t just a foster. He was a perfect little boy. That was going to be loved with them. That he wasn’t any less for being a foster.

But, he didn’t do that. He didn’t want to scare or overwhelm Tae on his first day. Instead he glanced at Namjoon, who was paling again, his breathing hitching in his chest. Yoongi had half a mind to get up and slap him to get him to inhale.

He glanced back at their new baby. “This is your room, Taehyung.” Yoongi motioned around. “The whole thing is just for you.”

Disbelief painted over Tae’s features. He had full, beautiful lips and they were pressed into a thin line as he looked around. Yoongi was going to say something more – get him hyped up or something. But, Tae averted his eyes to his suitcase, setting it on it’s side. He carefully opened it and extracted a purple Crown Royal whisky bag – the cloth ones with the ties on top.

Yoongi watched as he pulled out a fifty cent piece – one of the large, round ones – an arrowhead, his hearing aid case, and a bendable action figure of Iron Man. He set everything down in a neat little line on his nightstand and then started pulling out clothes.

“Let me help, okay?” Yoongi got to his feet and helped Taehyung put his clothes – all three outfits he had including a white button down and a pair of slacks made for special occasions – into his dresser. Yoongi made a note to visit Target in the next couple of days to grab him more clothes.

“Are you hungry?” Namjoon asked. “We made mac n’ cheese with hotdogs.”

“Mac n’ cheese?” His eyes brightened.

They sat down to dinner as a family. Yoongi made sure to pull out two identical kids’ plates with the different sections so the food didn’t touch. He made sure to give Hoseok and him equal portions of mac n’ cheese and green beans. He made sure that everything was equal. Because Tae wasn’t an equal in his previous house but he was here. Yoongi was going to make sure he realized that.

Hoseok’s eyes stared at Tae as they both ate on their booster seats, even though Tae almost didn’t need one. There was a mixture of emotions in them – confusion, hesitation, maybe a bit of wistfulness. But, no jealousy. Yoongi was thankful for that. They had sat Hoseok down and explained to him before Taehyung arrived that they were going to have a new child stay with them for awhile. But, he was littler than Hoseok, so Hoseok was going to have to be a good big brother and make him feel welcomed.
He glanced at Taehyung, who was eating carefully with his fork that seemed a little too big for his small fist. He started with his vegetables and then picked out all the hot dogs chunks from the mac n’ cheese and then started eating the noodles themselves. He was quiet, silent even.

“Do you guys want to play a board game after dinner?” Namjoon said and signed at the same time.

Hoseok nodded, his big smile over his face. “Candyland?” He signed.

Taehyung didn’t answer. He just chewed his food and looked between the both of them.

“Taehyung?” Namjoon asked. “How does that sound?”

Tae nodded, his eyes still apprehensive. His hand carefully came up like he was trying to answer a question in class.

Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed. “Tae, baby.” He said. “You don’t have to raise your hand to talk.”

“Mr. Jensen said children are to be seen and not heard.” Tae said. “Especially at the dinner table.”

“Well, you’re not at Mr. Jensen’s anymore.” Yoongi simcommed. “You’re at our place and Namjoon and Hoseok are deaf like you. So, to get everyone’s attention, you can wave or knock on the table.”

Hoseok giggled, his fork in his hand as he stabbed at his green beans, accidentally flicking food off of his plate. He slammed his hand on the table to get everyone’s attention on him. Tae jumped like he was startled. “Today, at school,” He started signing really fast. “I was the line leader and Miss Rebecca said I did good job and gave me a star on the star board.”

“Good job, Seokie.” Namjoon simcommed. He usually didn’t with Hoseok, since he didn’t talk anyway. But, everyone was talking for Tae’s benefit. “How many stars do you have now?”

“Seven!” Hoseok signed, making a happy noise with it. “Josie has eight. I’m almost beating her.”

“Do you want some more food?” Namjoon asked Tae. “We have plenty.”

Tae shook his head. “I’m okay. Thank you for the meal.” He said so politely and formally – rehearsed, practiced lines. Yoongi frowned. Was he declining because he was full? Or was he declining because that’s how he was trained?

Yoongi looked at Tae, taking in his little nose and his lips that were pulled into a thoughtful frown and his apprehensive eyes. He was physically healthy – unlike Hoseok when he got to them. But, Yoongi could tell that Taehyung had scars. They were just invisible and sat right on his heart.

Namjoon saw himself in Taehyung.

It was like looking into a mirror. From his inability to sign to his hesitancy in answering questions out of fear of answering them wrong to the deep, dark palpable belief in his eyes that he
wasn’t good enough for a family. A real family. A family that would tuck him into bed at night and kiss his scrapes and bruises and cheer for him and watch him grow – Namjoon saw himself.

To be completely honest, it was dragging up a lot of bad memories for Namjoon. A lot of repressed bad experiences as he contended with being a foster himself. A familiar knot settled into the pit of his stomach and all his trauma echoed around the walls of his mind. And he kept having to stop and blink himself back to reality, to remind himself to breathe.

To remind himself that he was the parent now. That he wasn’t his foster parents. That Taehyung needed him. That there was loved to be shared.

It was easier when he could focus on the game. Hoseok – in classic Hoseok fashion – was an explosion of signs and laughter as he stood on his knees to carefully move his Princess Lolly piece over the board. Taehyung was quieter, more reserved and had to be prompted to spin the dial. But, he also wasn’t as comfortable. And it was understandable. He had only been with them a couple of hours.

Tae won the game with his King Kandi piece. Hoseok dramatically slumped over the table in defeat. “Can we play again?” He asked. “Please?”

“No,” Namjoon glanced at the clock. “We need baths. Do you want to go first, Tae?”

Tae looked at Namjoon with that same slight apprehension, but nodded and slipped off of his chair to his feet. He walked to the hallway, his little shoulders held high and back.

“Do you want to take them?” Yoongi asked as he finished up cleaning the kitchen. “And I can finish putting away laundry?”

Namjoon nodded and got up, Hoseok hopping down his chair as well. He felt his little hand in Namjoon’s and Namjoon bent down to scoop him up in his arms. He crammed his face into Hoseok’s neck and blew big raspberries. Hoseok giggled and wrapped his arms around Namjoon’s neck, hook his hands together.

Namjoon carried Hoseok down the hallway, finding Tae standing outside his doorway, looking nervous as he held a tiny toiletries kit and his pair of pajamas in his arms. His lips pressed into a line when they saw them.

“Go play and I’ll get you for your bath after I help Tae.” Namjoon signed when he got Hoseok to his feet.

Hoseok nodded and turned to look at Taehyung. “I like your Iron Man pajamas.” He signed gently.

Tae looked up at Namjoon for interpretation, his eyes wide.

“He said he liked your PJs.” Namjoon said.

Taehyung tightened his arms around them like he was afraid Hoseok was going to take them away from him. “Thank you.” He whispered.

“I hope we can be friends.” Hoseok signed, one foot standing over the other. “Do you have any friends?”

“Okay,” Namjoon intervened, pushing Hoseok towards his bedroom. “Go play. I need to get baths done so you guys get some sleep tonight.”
Hoseok scampered down to his room and Namjoon got Tae in the bath, making it extra special by adding strawberry-scented bubbles and Hoseok’s tub toys. Tae inspected each toy as he sat in the water and chose and little fish to play with, dipping it in and out of the water with furrowed eyebrows.

“Tae,” Namjoon tapped his shoulder and the child looked up at him. “If there’s anything you need, you let us know. Okay?”

His eyebrows furrowed and a looked of disbelief crossed his features – like he was waiting for the punch line to the joke. He glanced back at the bath and Namjoon gently soaped him up, making sure to get behind his ears and down his back.

Tae looked up at him. “Mister?” Namjoon didn’t almost catch his lips moving.

“What’s up?” Namjoon signed, flicking his finger off of his chest.

“What are my chores?”

“Chores?” Namjoon repeated, trying to discern if he got that right. Tae just nodded.

Hoseok was…strangely enough…a neat little guy. He kept his room generally clean – making sure his toys were in his toy box at the end of the day. Yoongi helped him make his bed in the mornings. Besides that, Hoseok didn’t really have chores besides clearing his own dinner plate. He was six, for Chrissakes. His chores should be homework and having fun with his imagination.

“What chores did you have at your old house?”

“I did the laundry.” Tae said as he ran his fingers through the foam of bubbles.

“The…laundry?”

Tae nodded. “I did red clothes on Monday and blue jeans on Tuesday and white clothes on Wednesday and…” His head tipped and Namjoon lost sight of his mouth.

“Tae,” Namjoon touched his shoulder and he looked back up. “You did…all the laundry?”

Tae nodded. “We cleaned the kitchen after dinner too.” He said. “But, I did that with the other fosters.”

*But...you’re five.* Namjoon just blinked in disbelief. “How many other kids did you live with?” He asked.

“Well, there was Cassie and Carter.” Tae said. “They were Mr. and Mrs. Jensen’s real kids. And then there was me and Quinn and Hunter. We were the fosters.”

*The fosters.* The divide was so apparent in Tae’s mind that was too mature for his age. Where was his childhood? Laundry? Cleaning the kitchen? That wasn’t a childhood. That was indentured slavery.

“Tae?” Namjoon touched his shoulder again and waited until Tae’s eyes were on him before speaking. “First, my name is ‘dad.’” He made the sign. “And the other guy, his name is ‘dad’ too. No ‘misters,’ okay. We’re family, here. We’re not *strangers.*”

“Dad.” Tae said and signed at the same time, his face crossing with that look of disbelief again.
“And second, your only chore is to keep your room clean. Can you handle that? Make sure your toys are put away at the end of the day and make your bed in the morning?”

Tae mashed his mouth into a thin line and he nodded.

“Let’s get you clean, okay?” Namjoon tickled his neck, but he didn’t smile.

“Story!” Hoseok signed big, waving his favorite picture book – *Goodnight Moon* – dressed in only his Power Ranger undies.

“You have to get dressed first.” Yoongi giggled as he signed. “Where are your clothes?”

Hoseok looked down, a surprised look crossing his face like he didn’t realize he wasn’t in his PJs. He dashed from the living room doorway, tearing around the house at a full sprint. They tried to get him to stop running. But, he always became energized after dinner and they realized the best way to deal was to just let him tire himself out.

Namjoon was helping Yoongi finish up folding the last of the laundry, his thoughts trying to picture a tiny, little Tae doing all the laundry for a family of *seven*. It took Yoongi two whole days to do all the laundry for a family of *three*. It must’ve been all he did. What about school? His homework? What about playtime?

Namjoon stuffed the sheets and clean towels in the linen closet and then glanced in Tae’s room to check on him. They didn’t want to crowd him on the first day and he seemed…not as helpless as Hoseok was his first night. Although, Hoseok shrieked on the top of his lungs his first night.

He was sitting on the edge of his bed in his pajamas, playing with his Iron Man action figure. His room seemed so empty in comparison to Hoseok’s, but Namjoon knew that they would fill it up with toys soon enough.

Namjoon knocked to get his attention. “Do you want to join us for a bedtime story?” He asked and signed at the same time.

“What’s a bedtime story?”

“It’s how we make sure you have good dreams.” Namjoon entered and picked up his little hand, guiding him off the bed. Tae toddled with him to Hoseok’s room, where he was struggling to get into his Mickey Mouse sweater. Namjoon helped him get his head through the head hole and his arms through their sleeves.

Namjoon got both boys onto Hoseok’s bed. Hoseok immediately claimed his lap, sitting on his knee, twisted so that he could watch Namjoon sign. Tae perched himself on the edge of the bed, his fingers laced together. Namjoon gently cinched him closer so that he could see the picture book.

The lights clicked on and off and Namjoon looked up to Yoongi carrying two Camelbak eddy’s full of milk and dressed in loose shorts that showed off his thin, pale legs. “Story time?” He said and signed at the same time.

Namjoon nodded. “You want to join?” He asked and signed back.
Yoongi rolled his eyes to the ceiling. “Duh.” He said and Namjoon scooched over to make room. Yoongi grabbed Tae and pulled him in to his lap. Tae just looked around in disbelief as he held his milk with both hands.

“You have to sign with me.” Namjoon signed to Hoseok.

“Oh kay.” Hoseok nodded.

“In the great green room,” Namjoon signed and said and Hoseok signed with him. “there was a light and a telephone and a red balloon and a picture of…” He glanced at Tae, who was looking at him with shock – pure shock. “The cow jumping over the moon.”

Namjoon had a family that he stayed two weeks with, since they were overfull. They were older – fifties. Their kids were grown and they fostered as their way to give back. When Namjoon arrived, they sat him down at their counter that was decorated with tiles that had pictures of chickens on them and gave him a plate of three homemade chocolate chip cookies and a glass of milk. They told him that all kids going through a move needed some “baked comfort hot out of the oven.”

Namjoon had felt that disbelief. His was convinced that the lady was a fairy godmother and the man was the farmer from that famous painting with the pitchfork. He couldn’t believe that there were actual people out there that wanted to take care of him. Nice people. He couldn’t believe that he could be a parentless child and still have a family – even if it was only for two weeks.

Namjoon felt a pang of longing. He had only known Tae for four hours, but he could see them – Yoongi and him and the two of them – as a family. He could show Tae love.

“Goodnight room.” Namjoon signed and Hoseok signed with him, his eyes getting heavy and his hands dropping. “Goodnight moon. Goodnight cow jumping over the moon.”

Tae was fading too, his mouth around the straw of his cup and his eyes droopy. Goodnight Moon always got them.

Namjoon picked Hoseok up and Yoongi got Taehyung, lifting him so that his head was on his shoulder. Namjoon tucked Hoseok into bed, making sure his hearing aids were in their case before kissing him goodnight.

Then he helped Yoongi get Tae into bed, making sure his hearing aids were in his case too. They were. They tucked him in and Namjoon pushed his bangs off of his forehead.

“Goodnight.” He mumbled, his fingers signing it lazily before thumping on his chest as sleep took him.

“Goodnight, Taehyung.”

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!
Y’ALL i love Taehyung so much and I'm so excited to flesh out his character. But, I've also started writing on Kookie, who is the next kid and he's gonna be a little heartbreaker. I'm excited to write soft conflict. It's a nice change lol.

FRIEND in ASL is interlocking your two first fingers twice, first with your dominant hand on top and then switching so that your non-dominant hand is on top!

Yoongi poured over Tae’s file since there was something actually in it, unlike Hoseok’s which was a one-page police report of the drug bust.

There were his medical records in there. He found his audiogram. He definitely wasn’t as deaf as Hoseok or Namjoon, which is why he talked so well. He had been in four homes, making Namjoon and him his fifth. Yoongi sighed as he sipped his coffee when he read that. His fifth home.

He found a letter from his last foster family that he only lived with for a year – the one he was taken out of. It was vague – only outlining that Tae didn’t have any apparent behavioral problems. Yoongi scowled at that. How do you take on a child for a year and never get to know him? How do you take on a child for a year and didn’t celebrate the growth, the experiences, the person they were growing to become?

He got up from the dining room table and moved to his bedroom, where Namjoon was sitting on the edge of their bed, his fingers massaging the hollows under his ears and his eyes closed. Yoongi flicked the lights to announce his presence.

“Hey,” Namjoon signed and cracked his eyes open.

“Everything alright?” Yoongi sat down next to him, running his hand down his husband’s back.

“Yeah,” Namjoon signed. “I’m just…” his hand spun in the air. “I feel Tae’s pain.”

“I know.” Yoongi pressed his cheek to Namjoon’s shoulder. “I know you do.”

“Is it bad that I’m already thinking about adopting him?” Namjoon asked with a small smile.

“No,” Yoongi signed. “You want to give him the childhood you never had. There’s nothing wrong with that.”

Namjoon rubbed the back of his own neck. “Fostering’s hard.” He signed with a sigh. “I just want them all.” His eyebrows pulled together. “I want to take away all of their pain.”

Yoongi felt that. He felt that in his soul. He never expected to be a parent. Or at least, he never expected to love as hard as he did as a parent. He never expected that you could fall in love so
fast. Yoongi smiled and Namjoon wrapped his arm around his shoulders. “Let’s work on adopting Hoseok first.”

Namjoon frowned. Everyday they waited. They waited for the call that Hoseok’s mother signed over rights completely. But, it never came. She was still fighting – her case still going to court. She was pleading guilty to only one felonious drug possession charge that would give her five years at least. But, she was pleading not guilty to all of her other charges that included child endangerment and production of meth.

They decided, as soon as they got that call they would file for Hoseok’s adoption. As soon as they were told that Hoseok wasn’t hers anymore, they were going to make him theirs. Because he was already theirs. He had been theirs almost a year now. He should be theirs forever.

Yoongi laid back on the bed, flat on his back. He didn’t completely mind the idea of Hoseok having a little brother, though. He closed his eyes and let his mind drift to the beach where he saw two pairs of tiny flip-flops and two pairs of sandy hands.

Yoongi awoke to…rustling?

He got to his feet and moved to the kitchen to investigate. It was definitely rustling. Sometimes hungry tummies would wake up Hoseok and he would scavenge in the pantry for a snack. Yoongi wanted to make sure that he wasn’t getting into any chips or Little Debbies without permission.

However, he didn’t find Hoseok. He found Taehyung – still dressed in his Iron Man pajamas - trying to yank out the trash bag from the trash can, his lips squared out in a grimace and his eyebrows pinched in determination.

“Taehyung,” Yoongi arced around him to get into his view. “What are you doing, baby?” He signed and asked at the same time.

“Chores.” He said in a whisper, his eyes wide. He looked at the trash can. “I’m sorry. Am I doing it wrong?”

Yoongi felt his eyebrows pull in confusion. “What were going to do with the trash?”

“Take it to the curb?” His eyebrows furrowed. “It’s Thursday. That’s trash day.” He said with a nod.

Horror rang through Yoongi as he thought of Taehyung, the tiny five-year-old, trotting to the edge of their driveway unsupervised where he could be hit by a car or taken or…whatever. “Baby, no.” He shook his head. “You don’t have to take out the trash. That’s an adult chore, okay?”

“But, I did it at…”

“I know.” Yoongi cut him off. “But, you don’t live there anymore. You live with us and that’s an adult chore.” He signed and said fast, his heart beating hard in his head. If he hadn’t woken up and Taehyung had made it outside, what would’ve happened? His mind was spinning with the possibilities. “Understand?”
Taehyung nodded, his eyes dropping. “I’m sorry.” He whispered.

“It’s okay.” Yoongi nodded, pulling Taehyung close without really thinking about if he was comfortable with that yet or not. He just made himself feel a bit better, his heart beat a little calmer as he held Tae’s warm, little body close to his. “You’re okay.” He breathed.

Yoongi glanced at the clock on the stove. 5:02. He sighed and pushed Taehyung so they could talk. “Do you want to get in bed with dad and I?”

Tae looked nervous. He glanced at his fingers without answering him, his little shoulders shrugging.

“You don’t have to.” Yoongi said. “If you don’t want.” Hoseok always liked crawling into bed with the both of them, usually falling asleep with one of his feet in Yoongi’s face and his head on Namjoon’s chest. But, Tae wasn’t Hoseok. He may not like that.

“I want to.” He whispered.

Yoongi squatted and grabbed Tae under his butt and scooped him up. Tae didn’t press his head against Yoongi’s shoulder like Hoseok did. Instead he stared at him with large eyes, that same incredulity in them. We’ll get there. Yoongi thought as he plopped Tae down on the bed and then slid in next to him. It’ll come.

Namjoon was asleep on his belly, his snores filling the air. Taehyung moved so he was sitting between them, his hands on his knees.

“You can lay down.” Yoongi yawned and closed his eyes as he got settled in his bed crevice under the duvet. “And go to sleep.” Sleep sounds nice.

“Dad?” Tae asked.

Yoongi opened his eyes. “Yes, Tae?”

His lips pursed out and he looked at his fingers, like he was uncomfortable with his question he wanted to ask. “Are you an angel?”

Yoongi propped himself up on one arm. “What do you mean?”

“At Sunday School, they talked about how there are angels on earth that protect people.” Tae tapped his fingers together. “Are you angels?”

“No, baby.” Yoongi crossed his lap with his hand, grabbed his hip, and pulled Tae towards him. “We’re just daddies who love our boys.”

“Am I your boy?” Tae asked as he got settled down on Yoongi’s pillow, his black hair making a light halo around his head.

“Of course you are.” Yoongi said. “As soon as you walked through that door, you became our boy.”

Tae’s lips pursed out and his eyes migrated to the ceiling as he thought about that. “Okay,” He nodded. “I’ll be a good boy.”

“I know you will.” Yoongi said and pushed his hair out of his face. “Go to sleep now, okay?” He slid his eyes shut.
“Dad?”

Yoongi opened his eyes again, suppressing the groan. He valued sleep probably more than life itself. But, it’s for Taehyung.

“You say you aren’t an angel.” Tae said. “But, I think you are. You just don’t know it.”

Yoongi smiled. “Well, angels got to sleep too.”

“Okay.” Tae snuggled close to Yoongi, his hot breath on Yoongi’s throat. “I like being your boy.” He whispered.

Namjoon got to witness firsthand how incredibly, cripplingly shy Hoseok was.

There was a slight desperation in his eyes as he watched Taehyung eat his oatmeal. He wanted to talk to him, but there was also fear – fear of rejection, fear of abandonment, just... fear that seemed to follow Hoseok since he scared easily - Namjoon wasn’t sure. But, Namjoon did understand now why they had almost quarterly visits with his teacher over his social skills. Because, frankly, he didn’t have any.

He watched Hoseok tried to sign – tiny and little – at Tae. But, then he got frustrated when Tae didn’t respond and he turned back to his oatmeal, a pouty frown over his face.

“Hoseok,” Namjoon signed and wiggled his fingers in front of his face. “Why don’t you say good morning?”

“He doesn’t understand me.” Hoseok signed back, his hand on his forehead, underneath his bangs. He was so dramatic.

“I can interpret.” Namjoon signed. “It’s okay.” He nudged. “Go ahead.”

Hoseok touched Tae’s arm and Tae turned to him. “Good morning.” He signed, his eyes searching for something they could talk about. “I like your t-shirt.” He signed. “Do you like Iron Man?”

Namjoon spoke aloud Hoseok’s words for him.

Taehyung nodded. “He’s good at everything.” He said, his eyes lighting a little as he picked at the silkscreen of his t-shirt. “And he always gets the bad guys.”

Hoseok looked back at Namjoon, who signed Taehyung’s words for him. “I like Captain America! Can you tell him I like Captain America?” He signed quickly and excitedly.

“Why don’t you show him your toys?” Namjoon prompted.

Hoseok nodded and then hopped down his chair and sped to his room. He ran back, carrying his Captain America stuffie that he got for his birthday from grandma. He leapt back into his chair and Namjoon cringed as he watched it wobble.
Hoseok thrust the Captain America in Tae’s face, his features twisting with worry. “I like Captain America.” He signed and Namjoon interpreted.

Yoongi emerged from the back hallway, stopping as he watched the interaction. He folded his hands on his hips and his forehead crumpled.

“This is neat.” Tae said and gently took the toy, gripping it to his chest like he was afraid to let it go.

“He likes the toy.” Namjoon signed to Hoseok.

Hoseok’s eyebrows creased and he looked like he was panicking a little. Namjoon wasn’t sure why. Social anxiety maybe? He made a mental note to call the school counselor and maybe setup some one-on-one time to work on that. Hoseok shouldn’t be so…anxious talking to people.

“Seokie,” Yoongi saw Hoseok it too and started to approach, ready to intervene and help.

“Friend.” Hoseok said – with his words and not his hands – his eyebrows still creased. Yoongi stopped, his eyes lighting with surprise, and Namjoon cocked his head to the side. “Friend.” He said again.

Taehyung looked shocked too. Probably because a severely deaf child with no formal speech training just blurted a word out to him. Namjoon had no idea what deaf accents sounded like. He had asked Yoongi once, who just described it as “a voice underwater.” But, that didn’t help Namjoon any.

“He wants to be your friend, Tae.” Namjoon said gently.

Tae gripped the toy closer and nodded. “Okay,” He said. “I’ll be your friend.”

The biggest smile split over Hoseok’s face. He really had a knack for lighting up the room wherever he was. And it was doubly so when he was so happy he looked like he was going to explode with it. “Friend. Friend. Friend.” He said and clapped deaf-style – his outstretched hands shimmying in front of his face.

Namjoon smiled as he watched Hoseok lean over and hugged Tae around the shoulders, his big grin on. Tae smiled too – the first time since he arrived – and the corners of his mouth pulled his lips into a rectangle and his eyes closed. Namjoon glanced at Yoongi, whose nose had gone red as he teared up. Look at our family. He thought.

\[ \text{Look at our beautiful family.} \]

“Why can’t Tae come to my school?” Hoseok signed sulkily as he dragged his feet on his way into class that morning.

“Because Tae goes to a school across town.” Namjoon said. He had taken over drop-off duties that morning before so Yoongi could spend it with Taehyung. They got a grace period of a couple of days to settle a new foster into their house before he had to go back to school, the state realizing that yanking a kid of their house didn’t make the best mental state for academics.
“But, he’s deaf like me.” Hoseok signed and then crossed his little arms over his chest.

“I know.” Namjoon stopped in front of Hoseok’s classroom and bent down to one knee. “But, school is almost over – just about another month left – and then you can spend the whole summer with Tae. How does that sound?”

Hoseok glanced nervously into classroom and then back at Namjoon. “Can you come with?”
His eyebrows furrowed as he stared dejectedly at his hands, his eyes rimming with tears.

They were working on the separation anxiety. Hoseok still cried every morning when he was left. He still ran to them in the afternoon when he was picked up. But, it was getting better. Incrementally. They didn’t have to fight inside the classroom anymore. Most of the time they could convince him to go in on his own outside the door

“Sure.” Namjoon stood up and grabbed Hoseok’ hand. He helped him get settled and then squatted next to his desk, kissing him on the temple. “Dad’s going to be here at one-thirty.”

Hoseok nodded as he played with a pink pearl eraser. Namjoon caught a stray tear off of his full cheek. “I know.” He signed.

“And you’re going to have a good day.”
He nodded again. “I know. Dad?”

“What’s up?”

“Can I learn how to talk?” He asked. “Like Tae?”

That caught Namjoon off guard. Even though Yoongi talked and the grocery store clerk talked and Namjoon talked occasionally and his teacher talked and the mailman talked, Hoseok had shown zero interest in talking. And Namjoon and Yoongi didn’t want to push talking on him. He wasn’t a hearing kid. Talking was going to take therapy with a speech pathologist. It was going to take work and commitment. And if that was something he wanted to do, he needed to make the decision for himself.

But, in this last year, he had been okay with just sign. And he was getting really good at signing. Namjoon was so incredibly proud of him.

“Sure, honey.” Namjoon smoothed down his hair. “Is there a reason you want to start talking?”

“I want to be like Tae.” He signed. “I want to talk to him too.”

“Well, Tae’s going to learn sign.” Namjoon said, not wanting to discourage him from wanting to talk, but to show him all sides before he committed to something like this.

Hoseok considered this. “I still want to talk.” He said with a resolute nod.

“Okay,” Namjoon nodded kissing his head. “We’ll discuss it some more at home, okay?”

“Okay.” Hoseok smiled a little, his eyebrows still furrowed with anxiety. “I love you.”

“I love you too.”
“So,” Yoongi said as he went grocery shopping with Taehyung, his fingers wrapped around the metal of the basket and his eyes on Yoongi. “What do you like to eat?”

Tae shrugged. “I eat what is put in front of me.” He reiterated quietly. “Or I don’t get dinner.”

Yoongi inhaled a short breath and gently ran his fingers down Tae’s hair. Tae was basically brainwashed, he was convinced. Or at least, there was some sort of conditioning involved there. Not… abuse. That seemed too strong a word. But, Tae reminded him a lot of Cinderella who was forced to clean while the ugly stepsisters went to the ball. But that was abuse.

“Well,” Yoongi kept his face happy. “You have to have favorites, though.”

Tae’s eyebrows furrowed. “I like shake n’ bake chicken.” He said. “And pisketti.”

“Pisketti.” Yoongi repeated and smiled, turning down the pasta aisle. “I can get behind that.”

“On my birthday, I got Burger King.” Tae smiled and laced his fingers together. “I even got a crown.”

“Well, Burger King isn’t very good for you.” Yoongi said. “But, I guess we can have it occasionally.”

“With the crown?” He asked, his eyes shining.

“Sure.” Yoongi rubbed his shoulder as he picked out a couple of boxes of whole wheat ‘pisketti.’ “Hoseok like radiatore.” He pulled down a box to show Tae. “Do you like these?”

Tae shrugged. “I don’t know.” His smile faded and his mouth mashed into a thin line.

“Hoseok is your real kid?”

Yoongi made a face as he thought about that one. Logistically, that wasn’t possible. He guessed anatomy and physiology was a little above Tae’s sense of understanding. “No,” He shook his head. “We are fostering Hoseok like we are fostering you.” Yoongi said.

“Oh,” Tae said. “Did his mom give him up too?”

Yoongi sucked in a breath. “His parents…did some things.” He kept it vague to keep that part of Hoseok’s life private. “And we’re taking care of him.”

“Oh,” Tae said again. “I thought he was your real kid.”

“Why do you say that?” Yoongi pulled some crushed tomatoes and tomato paste off the shelf from amongst the cans and added them to the cart.

“Because you love him like he’s your real kid.”

Yoongi turned and grabbed Tae’s hand. “We love you just the same.” He assured.

That skepticism entered Taehyung’s eyes. That mistrust that had his little heart chained to the belief that he was lesser because he didn’t have parents. Yoongi desperately wanted to get rid of it. He desperately wanted to show Tae that he would be loved with them as equally as they loved Hoseok.
Yoongi smiled and ran his fingers through his bangs, smoothing them down. *I'll come.*

“What’s your favorite dessert?”

“Friend!” Hoseok burst as soon as he came through the front doors of the preschool/kindergarten building—his jacket and backpack falling off his arms. “Friend!”

Yoongi blinked hard at Hoseok’s newfound voice. Besides ‘momma’ when he first arrived to their house, Hoseok didn’t speak besides his vocalizations to punctuate his sentences. And screaming. The screaming had gotten a lot better now that he had hearing aids.

But, Hoseok knew ‘friend.’ Yoongi wondered if he practiced it or where he learned it. How he learned it, because they weren’t actively trying to teach him how to talk.

Tae smiled shy when he saw Hoseok and then his eyes bugged a little when Hoseok wrapped him in a big hug and held him tight. He hugged him back after he got over his initial surprise, his eyes squeezing shut.

“Show him what you got him, Tae.” Yoongi prompted.

After food shopping, Yoongi made a stop into Target just to grab some more undies and t-shirts and socks to help pad up Tae’s wardrobe a little bit. He also wanted to welcome him in with a present and they went to the toy aisle to have him pick something out.

However, Tae seemed really hesitant with picking something out for himself. Instead, he wanted to get Hoseok a toy. He chose a Captain America toy for him. Yoongi grabbed the matching Iron Man one for Tae when he wasn’t looking and decided to surprise him with it after dinner.

Tae was so excited to give Hoseok his toy. And Yoongi realized Tae got pleasure from making other people happy— which was still incredibly mature for his age— and another puzzle piece of Tae’s unique personality fell into place.

However, Tae acted like his age when he excitedly bounced like a pogo stick—his bangs bouncing with him— as he handed the plastic package to Hoseok.

“You got me this?” Hoseok signed as he inspected the present. “For me?”

“He’s can’t believe you got him a present.” Yoongi interpreted for Hoseok.

“You’re my friend.” Tae said. “Friend.” He signed— asking Yoongi as they walked towards the school together earlier.

Hoseok hugged Tae again, almost clocking him in the head with his new toy, and squeezed him tight. “Friend.” He said aloud.

*Not friend.* Yoongi smiled as he watched them. *Brother.*

Chapter End Notes
Please comment!
I Promise

Chapter Notes

Chapter Warnings: mentions of past abuse, mention of suicide
please keep in mind all the fluff I gave you last chapter as you read this one ;]

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Hoseok told me,” Namjoon signed from the small loveseat in Yoongi’s studio the after they had put both boys to bed. “That he thinks his middle toe is bigger than his big toe and that’s why he’s so smart.”

Yoongi was sitting at his computer, but had turned to talk to his husband. He sipped the mug of tea he made himself and wondered for a second if going from a glass of merlot to a mug of tea before bed made him old.

“I have one better.” Yoongi signed back. “Tae thinks we’re angels.”

“How did today go, by the way?” Namjoon signed.

Yoongi got up and moved to the loveseat, sitting on Namjoon’s lap. Namjoon wrapped a large arm around Yoongi’s waist and Yoongi pressed his head against Namjoon’s shoulder. “Okay,” He signed. “Tae is such a sweet guy.”

“I know.” Namjoon said. “He’s so quiet.”

“We’ll get him out of his shell.” Yoongi smiled. “I’m sure of it.”

“Hoseok’s taken to him.”

‘Hoseok’s taken to him’ was an understatement. Hoseok had velcroed himself to Tae’s side, not leaving him alone all evening. They surprised Tae with his matching Iron Man toy and the two boys spent hours playing pretend and having fun despite having an obvious language barrier. Tae had such an adorable smile – wide and rectangular – and he was gentle in speech and mannerism.

“Yeah,” Yoongi rubbed Namjoon’s thigh and smiled. “He sure has.”

At dinner, Tae was quiet like the night before. But, he was more smiley with Hoseok, who tried to feed him some ‘pisketti’ off of his plate, getting it all over the table.

At the end of the night, got the boys into Tae’s bed for another bedtime story – *The Velveteen Rabbit*. Hoseok said Tae picked it out, but he didn’t confirm as he sat quietly next to everyone again, his fingers tangling together on his lap. Hoseok screamed when he was pulled off of Tae’s bed and wouldn’t leave until Hoseok smooched his head goodnight.

“Oh,” Namjoon signed, rubbing Yoongi’s arm with his other hand. “Hoseok told me that he wants to learn how to talk.”

That shocked Yoongi. He looked up into Namjoon’s face. “He does?” He signed.
“He wants to be able to talk to Tae.” Namjoon smiled gently.

“Aw,” Yoongi looked towards the door of his studio. “That’s sweet.”

“Do you think,” Namjoon signed. “That he’ll commit to it?”

Yoongi chewed on his lip as he thought about it for a second. Hoseok’s delay in language had caused him to struggle in class, particularly in reading comprehension. And while his signing had gotten better in leaps and bounds, he had a hard time spelling. He had a hard time with his ABCs. He had a hard time forming relationships with the other kids in his class. He had a hard time putting himself out there.

But, that was just school. Hoseok had a friend now. He had someone that wanted to be his friend. That meant absolutely everything to Hoseok.

“Yes.” Yoongi finally signed. “For Tae, he would.”

Namjoon grinned.

“What?” Yoongi signed and then poked his husband’s dimple.

“I win.” He signed and kissed Yoongi on the lips.

Yoongi awoke and sat up to the sound of crying. He elbowed Namjoon awake, who inhaled his snore and then choked on it, coughing as he sat up.

“What’s going on?” Namjoon signed and then rolled to click on his lamp.

“One of them are crying.” Yoongi signed. “I’ll check Hoseok. You get Tae.”

They both moved across the hallway to the boys’ rooms. Yoongi carefully peeked into Hoseok’s room. He was dead asleep, his arm wrapped around his Captain America stuffie, his fingers going as he signed in his sleep.

So, that left Tae. Yoongi moved to his bedroom and found the bedside lamp clicked on and Namjoon removing the sheets of his small bed. Tae was standing in the middle of his bare room, his hands pressed over his eyes.

“I’m sorry.” Tae cried, his face flushed red and upset.

“Baby, it’s okay.” Namjoon signed and then squatted once the sheets were balled up. “Come here. It’s okay.” Namjoon beckoned.

Yoongi watched Tae flinch back a little, his head shaking. Yoongi felt anger blast through his veins hot like lava and then concern, cold as ice following right after it. If they hurt him… he thought as he also got to Tae’s eyelevel. “Tae,” He spoke gently. “We’re not mad that you wet the bed.”

He shook his head, his fingers in his eyes. “I can’t…” He sniffled. “I can’t see what you’re saying when…” His little chest contracted with his sobs.

“Oh, baby.” Namjoon approached slowly. He grabbed Tae’s hand and pulled him close,
wiping tears out of his eyes. “Accidents happen, okay?” He nodded and Tae looked up into face. “There’s nothing to cry over.”

“I-I’m not going to get the spoon?” He asked, his chin quivering.

“The spoon?” Yoongi blurted, but both his deaf husband and their deaf child didn’t hear him.

“The spoon?” Namjoon repeated like he was trying to get that right.

Tae nodded, his head tipping to his fingers. “Mr. Jensen would give me the spoon if I made a mess.”

Namjoon looked back at Yoongi for interpretation, but Yoongi’s fingers felt numb. His mother gave him corporal punishment in the form of a house shoe when he was extra naughty sometimes. But, it was always just a swat on his bottom. But, Yoongi could only imagine the horrors inflicted on the little soul in their care.

Namjoon turned back to Tae, moving to his knees and grabbing both of his little hands. “TaeTae,” He said. “You’re never, ever going to be hit here. Okay? Hitting’s not an okay way of telling someone they did bad – which you didn’t do at all. Okay?”

Tae nodded and sniffled. “Okay.” He breathed in deep breaths, calming himself down.

“Give me a big hug.” Namjoon said and Tae reached on his toes to get his arms around Namjoon’s shoulders. He pressed his face into Tae’s temple and dotted a bunch of kisses there, coaxing Tae’s boxy smile out him. “If you do have an accident,” Namjoon said, speaking and signing slowly. “Let us know as soon as you can so Dad and I can take care of it, okay?”

He nodded, his little cheeks red and puffy from crying.

Yoongi unglued his limbs. “Let’s get you cleaned up,” He held out his hand for him. “and Dad will change your sheets.”

Yoongi fished out new pajamas from his dresser and some new undies and walked across the hallway to their bathroom. He helped Tae get out of his wet clothes and showered him off. After a quick towel off, Tae redressed himself.

“Did you have a bad dream?” Yoongi asked as Tae pulled up his pajama bottoms.

Tae nodded. “Yeah.”

Yoongi squatted and grabbed his hand. “Do you wanna talk about it?”

“Eomma,” Tae said after a moment of silence. “She looks angry. It makes me scared.”

Yoongi grabbed his hand and pulled him to his chest. “Well, you’re safe with us.” He said, Tae’s eyes tipped up at him.

Tae nodded and pressed his head against Yoongi’s shoulders. “I know.” He whispered. “That’s what angels do.”
Namjoon volunteered to lay with Tae as he fell asleep to “protect him from the bad dreams.” He gently ran the pad of his thumb against Tae’s cheek as his breathing slowed down and evened out. His little fists were balled around the edge of his comforter and his mouth opened up after he drifted off.

Namjoon had a foster father once that used part of a Hot Wheel track as his weapon for “keeping his kids in line.” And by that, he meant beating severely when he had a little too much to drink. He hit hard enough that the pain echoed around Namjoon’s mind, blinding him for a second where the only thing he could see was the white hot sting of plastic hitting skin. But, never hard enough to leave marks. And if any of the kids said anything, his threats included killing them or – if they had any – their parents.

Of course, to the case managers, the foster parents were wonderful for taking on all the kids they did. And the kids themselves behaved. They had to. That’s how they survived.

To this day, Namjoon can’t look at Hot Wheels without wanting to throw up.

Namjoon inhaled a deep breath and let it out as he cinched Taehyung tighter. He decided that when he became a parent, if he became a parent that his children wouldn’t know the pain that he did.

But, Taehyung did know pain. And Hoseok knew pain. And while it might’ve been a bit different than being beat with a piece of a Hot Wheel track, they still knew it. And it was incredibly difficult for Namjoon to stomach – that his children knew trauma like that. It felt he was failing them.

But, the pain was afflicted before they got to him. Their house was a new chapter in their rough start to their lives. And he vowed that they would only know the joy of being a child, love, their own priceless self-worth. I promise that it’ll be different with us. He thought as he watched Tae inhale and exhale in the dark.

“I promise.” He whispered in the dark as he rubbed Taehyung’s little cheek.

They took both boys out to the park in their neighborhood on Sunday. It was a bit too sunny for Yoongi’s taste, as he hated getting tan or sitting outside or outdoor activities in general – preferring the dark cave of his studio surrounded by music.

However, Namjoon convinced him to come out with him and the boys. And he seemed to be having fun – by the way his big, all-teeth and gums smile was stretched over his face as he taught Taehyung how to hang upside down from the monkey bars.

Tae was happy too as he giggled, his arms swinging freely and his shirt showing off his little belly. Namjoon looked at Hoseok that got two steps up on the monkey bars and then freaked out and needed help down. “Do you want to try?” Namjoon signed.

Hoseok shook his head. “I want to go down the slide.” He signed back and pointed to the curlycue slide that was attached to the jungle gym. “Will you go with me? It’s really high.” He asked, his eyes widening.

“So sure.” Namjoon signed and Hoseok skipped with his hand in Namjoon’s to the jungle gym. He went up the steps with Hoseok, passing by different steering wheels where kids could pretend to ‘steer’ the jungle gym. They got to the mouth of the slide and Hoseok pulled him to a stop.
“You have to sit down.” Hoseok directed, making a little Dad with his two fingers to show Namjoon had to sit in sign. “And then I sit on your lap.”

Namjoon smiled as he sat down and Hoseok climbed into his lap. “You ready?” He asked and Hoseok nodded. Namjoon wrapped his arm around middle and kissed his head before falling down the slide. Hoseok’s little fingers clamped on to Namjoon’s hands as they twisted down the bright yellow tube – Namjoon’s sneakers hitting the gravel when they got to the bottom.

Hoseok scrambled off of his lap. “Again! Again!” He signed.

Namjoon caught Yoongi near a bench on the edge of the playground. He was pacing on his cell phone, his face twisted. He found Taehyung sitting on a swing.

“Why don’t you go swing with Tae?” Namjoon pointed. “And I’ll be right there to push.”

Hoseok nodded. “Okay.” He signed and ran off to join Tae.

Namjoon got up and walked to where his husband was, one hand on his hip in a position that Namjoon always teased him for because it made him look like pregnant. But, Yoongi’s face was solemn and his narrow eyes were hard stones of onyx and it made something sink in Namjoon’s stomach. Hoseok’s being taken away. His thoughts flew. Tae’s being taken away. Something’s wrong. His eyes scanned and found Hoseok trying to push Taehyung on the swings.

“What?” Namjoon demanded as soon as Yoongi pulled the phone away from his face.

“That was Seokjin.” Yoongi squinted slightly in the sun, not signing. “Hoseok’s mom…” He sucked in a breath.


“She’s dead.” He said and shook his head. “She hung herself in her jail cell.”

Namjoon froze, his limbs turning to ice and his joints locking solid. “What…what are we going to tell Hoseok?” He forced himself to glance at him again. His big smile was wide over his face as he played with Tae, his skin shining in the high sun.

“I don’t know.” Yoongi signed and shook his head, his eyes wide with shock.

They decided to make it a good day for Hoseok and tell him later. After the park, they went to Cold Stone Creamery and let the boys pick out their own flavors and mix-ins. Hoseok chose mint with gummy bears and Tae chose chocolate with strawberries.

“I like the colors.” Hoseok signed as he licked on his ice cream.

Tae’s nose cutely crumpled. “But mint ice cream is gross.”

They took them to Target afterwards since Yoongi said they need toilet paper anyway and let the boys pick out toys. Tae didn’t want to pick a toy out for himself again. So, Namjoon turned it into a game and had Hoseok pick out a toy for Tae and Tae pick out a toy for Hoseok. Tae chose a little Lego set and Hoseok – after spending no less than twenty minutes pacing around each aisle – chose an art set with paints and colored pencils and crayons. Tae looks so happy when he’s presented it by Hoseok. And Hoseok looks so happy to get his toy from Tae. Namjoon thinks to grab
a ream of computer paper so that Tae has something draw and paint on.

At least Namjoon was thinking. Yoongi felt like he was stuck in a bowl full of jello, trying to consciously move his limbs and breathe over the thought that he was going to have to tell Hoseok that his mother is dead. The thought that weighed on him, pulled him to the ground like someone turned up the gravity.

“She…she was found.” Seokjin had said, his voice solemn. “In her jail cell.”

“Did she leave a note?” Yoongi blurted, not even believing his ears. It sounded like Seokjin was speaking a foreign language.

“She didn’t.” Seokjin said. “She just wrote ‘I’m sorry’ on the wall of her cell.”

Yoongi couldn’t fathom it. He tried to imagine him losing his own mother that way and he just…couldn’t. It was like his mind would blue screen like a faulty computer. And that was the reality. That was the reality for Hoseok.

And they were praying that yes, Hoseok’s mother would sign over rights. They were praying that yes, that she would realize that she wasn’t a fit mother and that Hoseok deserved a household of love and affection. And yes, Yoongi caught himself thinking that he was doing a much better job than any cracked-out druggie could ever do every once in awhile. But, he would never wish death on her. Ever. She was the one that brought the tangle of limbs and supernova personality that was Hoseok into the world.

The hours ticked down. Even though they pushed it off past dinner and baths, Yoongi knew that the conversation had to happen. They were going to have to tell him.

“Hoseok,” Namjoon said as he pulled him onto his bed. Yoongi was already there, fingering a microfiber blanket that Hoseok liked because it was soft and still trying to figure out how to break this news to a six-year-old. “We have to talk to you about something, okay?”

Hoseok got settled on Namjoon’s lap, looking so small in his cute pajamas. He was really into Moana and begged for pajamas with Moana on them. It took Yoongi three days of scavenging the boys’ section to realize that all the Moana stuff was in the girls’ section. “Okay.” He signed.

Namjoon inhaled, his eyes sharpening with pain and his face twisting uncomfortably. Yoongi couldn’t put to words the churn of emotions inside of him. That’s why he took to music so much, because with music you didn’t need words, you just needed soul.

“Seokie,” Namjoon started. “Do you know what happens when people get really old? Or if they sick? Or get hurt really bad?”

Hoseok shook his head, his eyebrows furrowing. Yoongi met Namjoon in a gay bar of all places – the same disconcerted expression on his face. It took four whole minutes of Yoongi trying to strike up a conversation – and Namjoon ignoring him because he hadn’t been looking at him – to realize that he was deaf.

But, Namjoon had a good way of articulating his feelings. Yoongi couldn’t do that. He couldn’t put to words the churn of emotions inside of him. That’s why he took to music so much, because with music you didn’t need words, you just needed soul.

“Seokie,” Namjoon started. “Do you know what happens when people get really old? Or if they sick? Or get hurt really bad?”

Hoseok shook his head, his eyebrows furrowing.

“Okay,” Namjoon chewed on his lip. “Do you remember at the beginning of Finding Nemo, what happened to Nemo’s mom?”

Yoongi winced. Don’t equate Hoseok’s mom to a cartoon. He thought. Okay, maybe Namjoon wasn’t as articulate as Yoongi thought. Or maybe he was struggling as bad as Yoongi was
“She got eaten.” His hands laced together like a big fish taking a big chomp.

“Right,” Namjoon nodded. “When that happens to living things – when they get old or really sick or hurt to the point where doctors can’t help them, they die. That’s what it’s call.”

“Die.” Hoseok mimicked the sign. He nodded in understanding.

“We got a call today,” Namjoon started to sign and Yoongi pressed his hand to Hoseok’s leg. “That your momma has…” He made the sign that Hoseok just made.

Hoseok’s eyebrows furrowed. “What?” He signed, his eyebrows shooting back up in question. Confusion swept up his little features.

Hoseok didn’t really bring up his parents very much anymore. And really, he didn’t have a reason too. He had support here. He had a rhythm here. He had a schedule and love and wet after-bath kisses and bedtime stories and being chased around the backyard right here with them. He had parents. Good parents.

But, they were his actual parents. And Yoongi knew that Hoseok didn’t stop thinking about them. That was his mother. He grew underneath her heart.

His face crumpled a little, but his eyes still showed confusion. “She’s…dead?”

Namjoon nodded. “She’s gone, baby. I’m so sorry.”

“But,” He started to sign. “But, what about me?”

“What do you mean?” Namjoon and Yoongi both moved in on him, sandwiching him between them. He looked between the both of them.

“She didn’t…” He started to sign and then dropped his hands. He picked them back up. “She didn’t come for me…after she got out of…jail.” His signs were little. Small.

“No,” Yoongi shook his head. “But, she did leave a note.” He grabbed Hoseok’s little hand and drew a heart in his palm – his mother’s way of telling her deaf son that she loved him.

“But,” He signed and slid off the bed. He went to his desk and pulled on a drawer, pulling out a bunch of old homework assignments and drawings. “I was…going to show her.” He held up his award for last quarter – Good Helper Award - for earning the most stars on the star board. “I wanted to show her my award.” His little face crumpled.

“You will,” Yoongi assured. “But-,”

“She’s…” He signed again, his eyes on his feet. “She’s never coming back?”

They both got off the bed, crouching low to get to his eye level. “No, baby.” Yoongi signed, feeling his own eyes sting and a knot work its way up his throat.

Hoseok’s face heated red with tears. “Momma.” He said sorrowfully.

And Yoongi’s heart shattered into a million pieces.
please comment! <3
So one more chapter and then we'll introduce Jungkookie! <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Shhh.” Yoongi bounced Hoseok in his arms as he cried. “Shhh.”

They had been at it for a couple of hours. Namjoon and Yoongi took turns holding him as they walked around the house with him. His nails dug into Yoongi’s arms as he pressed his face against Yoongi’s shoulder. Yoongi was having a lot of déjà vu to when Hoseok was withdrawing off of meth. “Momma.” He wailed.

If Hoseok completely understood what happened, Yoongi wasn’t sure. He knew that Hoseok knew that his mother wasn’t coming back. He knew that Hoseok knew that he wasn’t going to ever see her again. And that was enough to Hoseok. That was enough to break his tiny, precious little heart.

“You want to try some water, baby?” Namjoon signed and then rubbed his back, offering his water bottle as they stood in the middle of the kitchen.

Hoseok shook his head and sobbed, fisting the sleeve of Yoongi’s t-shirt as he pressed his face into it.

“You might feel a little better?” Namjoon tried again.

“No.” Hoseok signed and dug his face into Yoongi’s sternum, a new ripple of sobs coursing through his body.

“Shhh.” Yoongi hushed, his lips in Hoseok’s hair so he could feel it. “Shhhh.” He squeezed his eyes shut, bracing himself against each sob that stabbed Yoongi right in the heart like a dagger.

“Daddy?” Tae said, almost a whisper as he stepped around the counter. He was dressed in his Iron Man PJs, his wide eyes concerned and his steps hesitant as he walked on his bare tip-toes. “Is Seokie okay?”

“Seokie got some bad news and he’s sad.” Yoongi said. “He’ll be okay. Just get back in bed.”

Tae chewed on his fingers, but didn’t move. Instead his other hand wrapped around the edge of the kitchen counter. “Can I give him a hug?” He whispered.

Yoongi gently got on his knees and Namjoon lowered too until they were both sitting in the middle of the kitchen floor. Tae squatted and placed his hands on his knees.

“Baby,” Yoongi stroked Hoseok’s cheek and he peaked his eye out. “Tae’s here.” He signed. Although, he wasn’t sure if Hoseok saw.

Tae crept closer, his eyes shining stars underneath his black bangs. He gently hugged
Hoseok’s back. “Love you, Seokie.” He whispered.

Hoseok made a noise, pushed himself away from Yoongi and gripped Taehyung around the shoulders, new tears rolling down his face. Tae looked shocked for a second, but then he shifted so that he could grip Hoseok tight. They both squeezed their eyes shut and held each other for a long moment. Yoongi felt a tear roll down his face, but he banished it away.

Hoseok pushed Tae away. “My mom’s gone.” He signed.


Hoseok sniffled and pressed his fingers into his eyes. Taehyung rubbed his shoulder. “Can I sleep in Tae’s bed tonight?” He signed up to Yoongi.

“Taehyung,” Yoongi said aloud. “Is it okay if Hoseok sleeps in your bed tonight?”

Tae nodded ferociously. “Yeah. That’s okay.”

“I’m thirsty.” Hoseok signed and Namjoon gave him his water bottle. He used both hands to hold it, sucking on it and then offered some to Taehyung, who drank a little too. Hoseok sniffled and rubbed his face clumsily with the back of his hand.

“Are you sleepy, Hoseok?” Namjoon signed and he nodded, his lips in a wishbone-shaped frown. He held up his arms, looking younger than his six years and Namjoon pulled him up into his arms, putting him on his hip.

Yoongi grabbed Tae’s hand before he had a chance to trot off after them. “Tae,” He pushed his bangs off of his forehead. Tae’s eyes, large and wide, fell on Yoongi. “You’re being a good brother.” He said.

“Brother?” Tae whispered, eyebrows scrunching.

“Is that okay? Would you like to be Hoseok’s brother?” Yoongi asked.

Tae glanced back down the hallway and he nodded. “Yeah.”

“He’s sad right now.” Yoongi said. “But, I know you’ll help him. Can you help him? Be nice to him?”

Tae nodded, his eyes flashing with determination. “I can do that.”

Yoongi pressed his lips to Tae’s forehead. “And if you need anything, let us know, okay?”

“Okay, Daddy.” Tae wrapped his arms around Yoongi’s shoulders and Yoongi lifted him up. He carried him into his room, where Namjoon was tucking in Hoseok. Yoongi got Tae in next to him and they curled up against each other, Tae’s head on Hoseok’s shoulder.

Namjoon and him each took turns giving them kisses and then moved to the door together, glancing at them before heading out the door. “Our boys.” Namjoon signed.

“Yes.” Yoongi signed back as he watched Hoseok cross his arm around Tae. Our boys.
Namjoon watched over the edge of iPad as Yoongi called both Tae and Hoseok’s school, checking them out for the day as he leaned against the counter of their kitchen, his mug behind him. He bounced his fingertips on the edge of the counter as he navigated through the automated menu. “Kim.” He said, for like the fourth time in the row, his lips enunciating. He rolled his eyes.

They decided as they both laid in bed the night before, Hoseok’s tiny, twisted face swirling in their minds and their hearts heavy, that school would be the last place he would want to be after receiving news like that. So, they bounced ideas off of each other in the dim light for how to lift Hoseok’s spirits, how to get his mind off of his grief.

While they were thinking about what to do, Namjoon was thinking about something else – adoption. And he knew, he knew that it was going to be something discussed down the road. He knew that the priority was to get Hoseok through this, to mend his broken heart. But, he couldn’t help himself. Hoseok…could be theirs. He was going to be theirs.


Yoongi turned and clicked on his bedside lamp. “Yes?” He signed and sat up.

He twisted on his pillow. “We can…” He sucked in a breath as he signed the word. “Adopt.”

Yoongi’s lips pursed and he held up his hand to sign.

“I know,” Namjoon signed with one hand and held out his hand to stop him. “I know that it’ll be down the road. But,” He squeezed his fists. “We can adopt Hoseok now.”

Yoongi dropped his hand and his eyes, rubbing the material of their duvet between his fingers. “What about Tae?” He signed.

“What about him?”

Yoongi’s eyes looked up into Namjoon’s face. “He’s eligible to be adopted too.”

Namjoon completely straightened in bed and scooted closer to his husband. “Do you want to adopt Tae too? Both at the same time?”

Yoongi nodded. “I know he’s only been here, what…” His fingers twirled in the air. “A week? But, I can’t adopt Hoseok and not Taehyung.” He signed. “They’re already brothers.”

“I know.” Namjoon smiled at his husband’s face. He had – to his chagrin – put on, like, four or maybe five extra pounds from good eating as they tried to fatten Hoseok up a little this past year. Namjoon loved that it all settled in his cheeks, making them round and full. He ran his hand down his face. “I feel the same.”

Yoongi smiled a little. “We’re going to have two boys.” He signed. “Two beautiful boys.”

We’re going to have two boys. That thought echoed around Namjoon’s head. Our boys.

Suddenly, without warning, Namjoon choked up. A sob tore through, punching the air out of his lungs. It was like a tsunami of emotions, a dream coming to life. Namjoon honestly didn’t know what to do with himself.

“Baby,” Yoongi signed fast. “Are you okay?”

“Yes,” He shook his fist up and down. “I’m just so happy.”
Namjoon felt Yoongi’s knobbled fingers on his face. He was pulled down into a kiss and Namjoon kissed him hard back, fevered and emotional and just…happy. He was happy.

Hoseok and Tae emerged from the hallway together, Tae’s hand wrapped around Hoseok’s as they both sleepily came down the hallway, their hair crazy stacks on their heads and their hearing aids still out. *Our boys.* Namjoon thought.

“Hey guys.” Namjoon signed and said as he squatted. “Good morning.”

Tae waved as a big yawn split his face and Hoseok signed “good morning,” lazily back.

“We’re going to have a special day today.” He simcommed. “We’re playing hooky.”

“Hooky?” Tae asked. “What’s that?”

“Where you skip school to have fun.”

“Skip school?” Hoseok asked, his eye squinting in the light.

“Yes.” Namjoon said as he grabbed Hoseok’s hand and pulled both the boys closer to him. “You can’t do it all the time, because you’ll get in trouble. But, a day off every once in awhile is okay.”

They both glanced at each other and then at Namjoon, confusion twisting their little faces. *My boys.* Namjoon just thought as he looked at the both of them. *My beautiful boys.*

“If you could go anywhere in the world,” Namjoon signed and said at the same time. “Where would that be?”

Tae’s eyes dropped to his feet and he mumbled something.

“Baby,” Namjoon grabbed his hand that wasn’t holding Hoseok’s. “Dad’s deaf. Can you repeat that?”

“The aquarium.” He said, his chin tipping up.


Hoseok chewed on his lower lip and he shrugged. “Wherever Tae is.” He signed.

Namjoon squeezed both of their shoulders. “Would you like to go to the aquarium?” He fingerspelled aquarium and then made a bunch of fish signs.

Hoseok nodded, his eyes brightening a little. “Yeah.” He shook his fist.

“Okay.” He nodded and glanced up at Yoongi, who was looking at them with this calm fondness in his dark eyes. “The aquarium it is.”

They took them to the aquarium across town. Tae was very excited as he fidgeted hard in his car seat behind them, talking about fish and octopi and “sea enemies” and jellyfish. He wanted to
touch the manta rays and spouted random ocean facts that he learned from Discovery Kids.

“I heard sea turtles can live to be a hundred years old.” He said and Yoongi interpreted. “That’s so many. How old are you guys?”

Yoongi exchanged a glance with Namjoon as he pulled onto the interstate. They both snorted. “A hundred and one.” Yoongi twisted so Tae could see him talk.

“Nuh-uh.” Tae shook his head, his square-smile over his face. “You’re only like…” His eyes drifted to the window. “Like eleven.” His eyebrows furrowed.

Hoseok wasn’t as enthused when he heard that there were sharks there, his lips forming an anxious frown. But, most animals scared Hoseok, as did heights, Halloween decorations, jump scares, shadows coming out of his closet, scary-looking trees, etc. He gravitated towards comforting things – his dads’ laps and puppies and flowers and Care Bears and Frozen. Yoongi worried every once in awhile how he was going to handle middle and high school, since kids were rough – both in personality and mannerism. But, he assumed that would be a bridge to cross when they came to it. For now, he fostered Hoseok’s soft and gentle personality.

Tae coaxed him out of the car and dutifully held his hand as they walked towards the massive building of the aquarium. Their aquarium had two floors, with the second floor being kid-focused with touch pools and activities like coloring sheets. That’s where Yoongi wanted to get them to, as he knew Hoseok would loosen up in an environment he knew was safe.

But, Tae saw a picture of otters and then politely asked if they could see the otters, his eyes sparkling like he held tiny universes in them and his fingers vibrating with barely contained excitement. And really, Yoongi couldn’t say no – not when he looked at him like that.

So, using the map, they trekked through the first floor, stopping to let the boys take in different tanks and displays.

“Seahorses.” Hoseok signed as he pressed his face against a small window that let him see into the seahorse exhibit.

“You know,” Namjoon squatted next him, signing and talking at the same time. “That the seahorse daddies take care of the babies.”

“Like you guys.” Tae said and looked up into Yoongi’s face.

Yoongi giggled as he held Tae’s hand. He glanced in the tank, watching a little seahorse with a cute, curly tail float in the blue water. I guessed he didn’t mind being equated to a seahorse.

“But, what about the moms?” Hoseok asked, his eyebrows furrowing. Yoongi watched them flash with sadness and he chewed on his bottom lip.

Namjoon smoothed Hoseok’s hair down, being careful with his hearing aids. “They’re there.” He signed. “The moms trust that the dads will take extra good care of the babies and because the dads give the best hugs.”

“How do they hug with no arms?” Tae asked, his chin tipped up at Yoongi.

“Oh, Yoongi signed, feeling a little out of depths. “Let’s move on, okay?”

They moved on, passing weird-looking fish, big fish, small fish, colorful fish. They found the clown fish, where Tae pointed and said “Nemo!” And Yoongi cringed internally at their use of
metaphor last night when they broke the bad news to Hoseok.

He glanced at him. Hoseok was still withdrawn, his lips pulled down and his eyes darting everywhere. Yoongi couldn’t tell if that was grief or anxiety or both. He kept his hand on Namjoon’s hip and clung hard at his side. Namjoon reached down and scooped him up. “Baby,” He signed, noticing it too. “Are you not having fun? We can go home if you’re not having fun.”

“I’m having fun.” Hoseok pressed his head against Namjoon’s shoulder. “I’m sad.”

“Yeah?” They all stopped at a bench located outside the bathrooms. Yoongi asked if Tae needed to go, but he shook his head as he watched Hoseok with concern shining in his eyes. “Do you want to talk about it?”

“Do the mom seahorses get sad that the dads take care of their babies?” He asked, his fingers going quickly and his eyes wide. He made anxious vocalizations. “Do the babies get sad that they don’t have their moms?”

“I’m not sure, honey.” Namjoon signed back.

Hoseok frowned, not satisfied with this answer. He made a noise. “I want to know.” He said. “It makes me sad not knowing.”

“I’m sure that the moms know that their babies are safe.” Yoongi signed as he sat down, pulling Tae up onto his lap. “And that’s the most important thing to a mom – knowing that their baby is safe.”

“Did my mom know I was safe?” He signed.

Yoongi nodded, thinking back to the pictures he emailed to Seokjin to be shared with his mother. He wasn’t sure if they ever made it back to her. But, he did attempt, at least, to keep her in the loop with how Hoseok was doing with them. “She did, Seokie.”

Hoseok’s face heated red. “I miss her.” He signed, his chin quivering.

“I know, baby.” Namjoon shifted him on his lap. “I know. I’m so sorry. I wish I could bring her back for you somehow.”

Hoseok just responded by digging his fists into his eyesockets, his cries low and muted. “I miss her.” He signed again.

“I know. I know.” Namjoon signed as Hoseok twisted in his lap and pressed his face into Namjoon’s neck, his body popping with little sobs. Namjoon rubbed up and down his back.

“Should we go?” Yoongi signed to Namjoon.

Hoseok pulled away for a second. “And I don’t want to see sharks!” He shrieked with his signs.

“Is Seokie okay?” Tae asked, his eyes wide.

“I don’t think we’re going to see the otters today, Tae.” Yoongi rubbed his arm. “I’m sorry.”

“That’s okay.” Tae nodded, his little hands laced together on his lap. “I don’t want Hoseok to be sad.” He shook his head.

“You’re a good brother, Tae.”
“Shhh,” Namjoon ran his fingers against Hoseok’s scalp. “Shhh. Do you want some ice cream? Or maybe-.”

“Home.” Hoseok signed and pressed tighter against Namjoon’s chest.

“Okay, baby.” Namjoon signed back. “We’ll take you home. We’ll take you home.”

“Taehyung,” Yoongi said as he covered Hoseok with a throw blanket as he rested on the couch, calm and congested from crying hard. His round cheeks reflected the light off the television and his eyes were drooping like he was on the verge of falling asleep. “Do you want to do a puzzle with me or something?”

Taehyung was sitting next to Hoseok – Hoseok pressing his bare toes against Tae’s thigh – his little hands tangled on his lap and his feet swinging. He looked up into Yoongi’s face and shook his head. “I wanna be a good brother for Hoseok.” He said with a resolute nod.

Yoongi carded Hoseok’s feather-soft hair off of Hoseok’s forehead as his eyes slid shut. Yoongi carefully removed both of his hearing aids, clicked them off, and set them on the coffee table. “I know, but he looks like he wants a nap.” An idea popped into Yoongi’s head. “Why don’t you draw him a picture?” He asked. “You can sit in my studio?”

Taehyung nodded and hopped off the couch and Yoongi turned off the television, leaving the house in silence. Namjoon stepped out to grab takeout, leaving the three of them in the dimming light of sunset that streamed through the blinds.

Taehyung grabbed his art set from his bedroom and Yoongi got him set up at Yoongi’s desk in front of the computer and Yoongi sat down at his keyboard, working out a soft, sad melody that had been playing in the back of his head all day. A ballad that spoke of grief and pain.

“You play good, Daddy.” Taehyung said after a couple of moments of quiet scribbling.

“Yeah?” Yoongi leaned over and touched his head.

Taehyung’s eyebrows furrowed. “Eomma said when I was little that I don’t hear good.” He said. “And that’s why I wear my aids.” He pointed at the side of his head.

“That’s right. Your aids pick up on noises that you don’t normally hear.” Yoongi nodded.

“Why don’t I hear good?”

“I don’t know.” Yoongi shrugged. “Sometimes people are born that way. Some people get that way after accidents.” He nodded.

“Hoseok can’t hear.” Tae said. “He’s deaf.”

“He is. Dad too.” Yoongi said.

Taehyung picked up his drawing. In it he had him and Hoseok – drawn little and squat like oompa loompas – and then him and Namjoon were drawn with legs that were skyscraper high.
Yoongi was only marginally shorter than Namjoon. That made him feel good.

In a purple-crayon cloud, there was a woman with long, dark hair. “Is that Hoseok’s momma?” Yoongi asked.

“Yes,” Tae said. “That’s his eomma.” He pointed with his little finger. “She’s happy because Hoseok has two daddies and a brother, who is me.” He poked his own chest. “Do you think Hoseok will like it?”

Yoongi took the picture. “I think he’ll love it, baby.” He said.

It took four days – two days spent off of school, one day where Hoseok was so upset, Yoongi was called to pick him up and finally one day that seemed to go okay – for Hoseok to smile his normal smile again. Briefly. And it let Namjoon know that Hoseok was healing. There was healing that was taking place. That his heart was mending after his loss.

It happened while Tae and Hoseok were playing in the bath together. They were a little too big to bathe together. Really. But, Namjoon and Yoongi had a corner garden tub in their bathroom that was large enough to accommodate them both, so they got them in there with a bunch of bubbles and toys. They weren’t against spoiling Hoseok for a bit. Not after the news he received.

Tae was playing with the foam – forming it into shapes and mushroom clouds, patting it down and fashioning it back up. Hoseok sunk until only his eyes were above the water. He moved forward and sprung up, splashing Tae a little. “I got you.” He signed.

In retaliation, Tae picked up a handful of bubbles and squashed them on Hoseok’s cheeks, giving him a beard. “You look like Santa.” Tae giggled.

Hoseok picked up a pile and plopped it on Tae’s head, mushing it into an afro of sorts. They sculpted bubbles onto each others faces until they looked like little homeless, old men. Hoseok pulled Tae’s beard down into a point.

And then he burst into giggles – his gigantic sunshine smile over his face – lighting up the whole room and the inside of Namjoon’s heart.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment! <3
This chapter is full of ALL the uwus <3

“Look at your brother.” Yoongi signed to Hoseok, who wasn’t paying attention to him at all as he stood between his knees – unwilling to sit down. He fidgeted and made noises as he watched Tae receive his awards for the end of the school year.

It was Tae’s kindergarten graduation day. He got a little red cap and a little tassel that was rainbow in colors. He had a bunch of awards from their reward board in his hands. All of his stars he collected, a paper mouth that was missing its bottom two teeth where Tae had lost his.

“We have one final award before we hand out our diplomas.” Tae’s kindergarten teacher said to the audience of proud parents as she held onto a kid that was crying for some reason or another. “The All-Star award. This award is given to one student who showed the best character all year long.”

“Dad,” Hoseok signed up at Yoongi. “Can we go outside and play?”

“No.” Yoongi signed. “Taehyung’s getting his diploma. I’ll let you play afterwards.”

Hoseok frowned. “But, I can’t understand what they are saying.”

“I offered to interpret for you.” Yoongi reached underneath his armpits and dragged him onto his lap. “See, Tae’s teacher is saying that there is one more award – the big one.” Yoongi signed as he pointed to a plastic Oriental Trading Company trophy she was holding. “The All-Star award.”

“Tae’s going to win it.” Hoseok signed.

“You think?”

Hoseok nodded, his chin tipping in pride and his eyes flashing. “He’s the best.”

“This person displayed all six pillars of character and made it he or she’s job to make sure that others were too. He or she helped not only before class, during recess and after class. He or she was always caring and displayed good citizenship by encouraging smiles.” The teacher explained. “And I’m very happy that this person is Taehyung!”

Taehyung leapt out of his seat and bounced all the way to get his trophy, clutching it to his chest, his little tassel waving.

“See?” Hoseok signed. “I said so.”

“Taehyung also wanted to do a special project for today’s graduation.” The teacher dropped to one knee and set down his trophy for him. “Right, Tae?”

Tae nodded, suddenly turning shy as he looked at all the eyes on him. He carefully moved
“You want to tell them what it is?” She prompted.

“Um,” Tae said, his head turning towards his teacher for reassurance. She nodded and he twisted his fingers together. “My daddy and my brother are deaf.” He started to mumble against his chest.

Yoongi fumbled with his phone and turned on the camera to get video. Unfortunately, Tae’s graduation fell on the same day as finals at the college, so Namjoon couldn’t make it. He was so upset that he couldn’t make it to Tae’s graduation after they all attended Hoseok’s. Yoongi assured him that he would take all the videos for him so he could relive it later.

“And I am too. Sort of.” Tae said, looking so cute in his overalls. “And so I wanted to do a poem for them in sign language!” He burst, getting excited.

Yoongi smiled. The teacher had stopped him one day about a month ago, asking if he would assist them, as she always had one of the kids read a poem from *Oh, The Places You’ll Go!* by Dr. Seuss. But, since Tae was deaf, she wanted to know if Tae could do it in sign language.

So, they practiced every day on the way to school after Hoseok was dropped off, Yoongi watching and correcting him in the rearview mirror.

“Oh! The places you’ll go!” Taehyung started to sign, his face expressive and his hands big. The teacher signed with him, saying the words out loud. “Congratulations! Today is your day! You’re off to great places! You’re off and away!”

Hoseok made a noise, his eyes widening. “Dad!” Hoseok signed, his thumb hitting his forehead. “Tae’s signing!” He signed and pointed.

“I know, baby.” Yoongi smiled, his heart never feeling so overwhelmingly full before. He watched the camera screen. *Namjoon’s going to cry when he sees this.* “Watch him, okay. Both eyes.”

“And will you succeed? Yes!” Tae shook his fist excitedly. “You will, indeed! Ninety-eight,” Tae’s tongue stuck out with concentration as his fingers formed the correct numbers. “And three-fourths guaranteed. Kid, you’ll move mountains. There is fun to be done! Oh, the places you’ll go!”

The crowd clapped for Tae – Hoseok and Yoongi shimmying their hands, clapping deaf-style - and he twisted his fingers together and beamed his rectangular smile, one sneakered foot balancing on top of the other.

Yoongi wiped a tear out of his eye and squeezed Hoseok’s shoulder. *Yeah, he’ll definitely cry when he sees this.*

“You’re so mean.” Namjoon said brokenly as he pressed his palm to his cheek, tears falling as he desperately tried to will them away. His other hand held Yoongi’s cell phone as he watched Tae’s performance from that afternoon.

Yoongi giggled as he sat in Namjoon’s lap on near the head their bed, his head jammed
under Joon’s chin. He pressed up against his chest. They had put the kids to bed about half an hour ago and Yoongi waited until they both were in bed to share all of his videos.

“Why would you put him in those overalls?” Namjoon asked out loud. He swiped to the next video of Taehyung getting his diploma. "He looks so cute, I could die."

“Just to make you cry.” Yoongi pouted his lip as he made the sign for ‘crying.’

“That is cruel.” He said as they both watched. The video ended and Namjoon set the phone down and wrapped his arms around Yoongi’s waist, cinching him close. “You’re cruel.”

“You have to admit that he’s adorable.”

“Achingly so.”

“He was so proud to sign.” Yoongi signed to his husband as he nuzzled the hollow of Yoongi’s ear. “And Hoseok was so happy to watch. I’ve never seen his eyes so wide.”

“Can you believe their going to be ours?” Namjoon said as he started to run his hand down Yoongi’s waist, slipping them up underneath Yoongi’s shirt as they cuddled closer together.

Yoongi pressed up against Namjoon, circling his arms around his husband’s broad shoulders. He honestly couldn’t. He couldn’t.

It had been about seven weeks since they told Hoseok about his mother’s passing. And it took him awhile to come to terms with it, to realize that she was actually gone forever. And while he was dealing with it in some ways – and may deal with it forever - Yoongi was reminded of the resilience of children watching Hoseok bounce back slowly.

While they were helping Hoseok grieve, they quietly started the process of adoption for both boys. It was a lot of paperwork. A lot of paperwork. Meeting with a family lawyer. Starting the court process. Trauma training. Working with Seokjin to get records and files. It was a lot. Almost as much as getting licensed to foster in the first place.

They didn’t want to tell the boys until they were 100%. Once they got the call from the lawyer that they were on the docket for the hearing. Once that happened, it was sealed. It was permanent. And it was going to happen. Very, very soon.

Namjoon pressed little kisses against Yoongi’s shoulder, moving the material to the side to get to his bare skin. Yoongi sighed as he shifted, his body flushing with heat as his husband ran his hands all over his body.

His heart never felt so full before. He didn’t realize how fiercely he could love.

They got the call three days into summer vacation, while Hoseok and Taehyung were playing Mario on the Nintendo Switch in their living room - shorts and t-shirts on and heads full of messy hair. The call that they were scheduled for their hearing next week. That they were going to visit a judge who was going to sign off on the adoption, making Hoseok and Taehyung theirs
Namjoon and Yoongi, really unable to contain their excitement, took the boys out to dinner to give them the news and celebrate.

They went to a pizza place in their neighborhood where the plates were printed with pictures of pizza and the soda came out of plastic tumblers you refilled yourself from the fountain against the wall.

“Dad,” Tae signed. “May I please play?” He asked and pointed to a pinball machine. They were starting to teach him to sign and he was picking it up fast. But, Tae’s teacher always praised him for how well he learned things.

“We’re going to eat first,” Namjoon said, his hands vibrating so bad from elation, he almost fumbled his signs. “And then you can. Okay?”

Tae laced his fingers together and smiled up at him. “Okay, Daddy.”

Mine. Namjoon thought. All mine.

Hoseok was clinging to Yoongi’s leg as Yoongi ordered at the counter, his flip-flops contrasting against his olive skin. “No mushrooms.” He signed and played with his hearing aid.

“Is your hearing aid bothering you?” Namjoon asked.

“No, it died.” Hoseok signed and pulled it out, stuffing his finger into his canal to massage out the build-up of moisture there.


They got sat down, their little metal stand displaying their order number placed on the edge of the table. “Thirty-seven.” Taehyung signed and pointed at it and Yoongi praised him.

Namjoon felt Yoongi lace his fingers into Namjoon’s. He was trembling almost as much as Namjoon was.

“Boys,” Namjoon started. “We want to ask you something.” He tried to keep himself cool and level. “We want your honest opinions, okay?”

They both nodded as they sat across from them, looking small in the booth. “Okay, Dad.” Hoseok signed.

“What do you guys think about,” Namjoon squeezed Yoongi’s hand and Yoongi squeezed back. “If you guys were to be adopted by us and we could be your daddies forever?”

They both stared with equal blank expressions. Namjoon desperately wanted to know what they were thinking. He wanted to be in their heads.

“Adopted?” Tae asked, his hands clapping and a big smile over his face. “Adopted?” He knew what it meant. He had been in the system since he was nine months old. He knew the permanency of that word. The intransience of what that meant. “Yes.” He nodded, his bangs flopping over his head. “Yes!” He threw his hands up.

Hoseok didn’t know. He had parents, not too long ago. Namjoon watched the gears turn behind his eyes as he worked it out. “We’ll live with you...” His fingers formed into y’s. “...
Yoongi nodded. “Yes, baby.” He signed quickly, his narrow eyes alive and lit with fire. “Dad and I will be your parents and Tae will be your brother. How does that sound?”

Hoseok’s eyebrows furrowed and for a second the fire of excitement in Namjoon was replaced with the ice of fear. What if Hoseok didn’t want to be adopted by them? What if he wasn’t happy in their home? What if he didn’t want them as his parents? Namjoon never considered this a possibility. But, it was and it terrified Namjoon. His hands shook for a completely different reason.

“Brother?” He signed, little and small as he looked at Tae. “Tae will be my brother?”

“Yes, baby.”

“And you’ll be my dads?”

“Yes.”

Hoseok’s face suddenly twisted and he burst into tears.

“Oh, baby.” Yoongi launched himself out of the booth and into Hoseok and Tae’s booth, scooping Hoseok up in his arms. Tae looked surprised. “What’s wrong? What can I do?” Yoongi signed.

Hoseok looked up. “Nothing’s wrong.” He shook his head. “I’m happy.” He signed and sniffled.

Namjoon let out a breath he didn’t realize he was holding. Oh, baby. My baby.

Yoongi wiped his face. “You’re okay. Shh.”

Hoseok opened his eyes and glanced at Namjoon. “Tae’s right.” He signed. “You are angels.”

Yoongi had two signs made - one for Taehyung and one for Hoseok.

“Okay,” Yoongi said as Taehyung squatted next to his sign in front of the judge’s bench, his hands on his little cheeks as he smiled. After 1387 days in foster care, today I’ve been adopted.

Namjoon had gotten up early with Yoongi to help with breakfast, shaping pancakes into lopsided hearts and putting them on their matching set of plastic Iron Man and Captain America plates with a spoonful of almond butter.

He got up each boy slowly, rubbing their backs, reminding them what day it was. Tae opened his eyes immediately, a big smile over his face. Hoseok had to be coaxed. But, he wasn’t a morning person, really, anyway. Namjoon could relate.

Yoongi dressed them matching outfits – button down shirts with tiny bow ties and slacks and shiny loafers. They got them dressed and combed their hair back off of their forehead. Although, Tae had a beret that he loved to wear backwards and put that on, messing up his hair.
And then they went to the courthouse, getting them through the security metal detectors before heading over to their assigned courtroom. And ASL interpreter and their lawyer were waiting for them.

Butterflies. Namjoon had legitimate butterflies in his stomach. He couldn’t believe he was here. He couldn’t believe how lucky he was. He couldn’t believe that he had a wonderful, beautiful husband and two beautiful boys and he was here.

The finalization hearing was actually, surprisingly, pretty short. No frills. The judge asked the boys - with the help of the interpreter - if they were happy, why they wanted to be adopted. They asked Yoongi and Namjoon why they wanted to adopt. And four stamps and a signature later, they were done. It was over.

Hoseok and Taehyung were theirs.

“Pictures.” Yoongi signed and said at the same time. Yoongi was stopping to take pictures of them every five minutes like a tourist, their signs tucked under his arm. It was completely odd for Yoongi – Namjoon’s docile, monotone husband – to be acting like a giddy child, his gummy smile wide over his face as he danced from foot-to-foot.

Tae and Hoseok obediently sidled up to the baroque wood bench. Namjoon squatted as he watched them smile big for the camera. They were theirs. It was permeant. They were theirs.

“Okay, with signs.” Yoongi said and handed the signs off. Hoseok was first. He hadn’t been in the system that long – 389 days. Not in comparison to Taehyung, who had been in almost fourteen hundred.

But, each day in foster care, each day without a permanent family was too long to a little soul like them. And Namjoon and Yoongi were their permanent family now. Their forever family.

Yoongi was in the middle of making lunch for the boys when he received a call from Seokjin towards the end of summer. Taehyung was hanging out with him in the dining room, coloring in a coloring book with his art set. Hoseok was two-hours deep into Zelda game in the living room and Yoongi was about to cut it short and get him engaged in something that wasn't a screen.

Yoongi glanced at his cell phone as he was cutting up a cucumber. He wiped his hands on a towel and picked up the phone.


“Thank you, baby.” Yoongi said back as he slid to answer. “Hello?”

“Hi, Mr. Min-Kim?”

“Seokjin,” Yoongi scolded gently. “You can call me Yoongi. I feel like almost two years is long enough that we can be on a first-name basis.”

Seokjin gave a slightly-squeaky chuckle. “Well, ah, Yoongi then.” He said. “I was hoping
that you would have room for a temporary, *temporary* placement.” He said. “Like a night to maybe a week *tops.*”

“Oh,” Yoongi managed, caught off guard. “A placement?”

“He’s um,” Seokjin stammered. “He’s four. His grandmother passed away suddenly while he was at daycare – a stroke-,”

“Oh my god.” Yoongi breathed.

“Yeah,” Seokjin said lowly. “I’m trying to track down his other family. It should go quick. But, I really need to get him a roof for a couple of days while I do that.”

“Oh,” Yoongi managed again. “I, um-,”

“I called you guys because, well, you see,” Seokjin was stammering again. “He’s autistic and nonverbal and he only talks in basic sign language. And you guys *know* sign language. I feel like that would be easier on him if someone could…actually…communicate to him.”

Yoongi felt his heart pulled in two different directions. He didn’t want any child left behind. Ever. But at the same time, he had no familiarity with autism. Neither did Namjoon. He wasn’t really sure what autism *was* outside of that it was a learning disability of some sort and that his crazy aunt posted on Facebook that vaccines cause them. “I don’t know, Seokjin.” He said. “We don’t have any training or experience with autistic kids.”

“He’s a really good boy.” Seokjin assured. “He is. I swear, I wouldn’t place you with anything you couldn’t handle.”

Yoongi tried to imagine a little soul out in the world, cold, hurting, *grieving* over the loss of his grandmother. He glanced into the living room, where Hoseok was sitting cross-legged on the floor with his little face tipped up at the television screen. And they *did* know sign. He imagined him trying to communicate with a family that didn’t while going through all of that.

It had Yoongi caving fast. “Let me call Namjoon.” He said finally. “And I’ll get back to you.”

“Thank you.” Seokjin breathed. “Thank you, Yoongi.”

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!
Namjoon rubbed his palm on the back of his neck as he leaned back in his office chair. “Autism?” He repeated, trying to make sure he got that right.

Yoongi nodded on Namjoon’s iPhone screen. He glanced up – probably at the boys – and then back. “Yeah.” He signed near his face. “Autism.”

“I don’t know, Yoongi.” Namjoon said. “We don’t know a thing about autism.”

“I know,” He started to sign. “I know we don’t have experience. But, put yourself in his shoes, baby.” His eyebrows furrowed. “How you would feel being yanked from your home unable to communicate with anyone?”

Namjoon sucked in a breath. He did know that feeling. When his parents’ car rolled off the side of the road into a ditch when he was only four. When he was taken to the hospital and then picked up by strangers who couldn’t sign, who didn’t know what to do with a deaf child. He did know that…alienation. That isolation. It was miserable and confusing and...

But, autism? Namjoon felt out of his depths. He had no experience with that. He had no knowledge. And isn’t that something that required knowledge? Training? He didn’t want to take a child on and hurt him – even accidentally. He chewed on his lower lip.

And there was one other thing.

“We don’t have room.” Namjoon said. “All the bedrooms are full.”

“Actually, I asked the boys if they would be okay sleeping in the same bedroom together.” Yoongi signed. “They were fine with it.”

They stared each other down for a second. Yoongi’s hair was a soft maroon now and framed his dark irises, bringing the honey hues out in them. Or maybe that was his empathy, the love that bright the golden shine to his husband’s normally analytical eyes.

Namjoon felt his lips quirk into a smile. “You’ve gotten soft Min Yoongi.” He accused gently.

Yoongi’s pale cheeks heated red. “That’s what sticky fingers and macaroni noodle art does to you.” His little lips pursed.

“I like it.” Namjoon said. “Fatherhood looks good on you.”

“Doesn’t look good for my waistline.” He signed. “Please, Namjoon? I have a good feeling about him. I feel like he’ll fit right in.” He signed. “And if he doesn’t, he’ll only be here for a couple of days.”

Namjoon was the one that opened the door to Seokjin and Jungkook. He greeted their case manager and then looked at their newest addition.

Jungkook was small, but he was also a bit younger than Tae and Hoseok were when they got to them. His hair looked like it was in desperate need of a haircut, his hair falling over his forehead. His eyes moved up towards the sky and then down towards his shoes. One hand waved intensely in front of his face, his wrist limp so his hand flapped up and down. The other was wrapped around a *Bop-It* toy.

Namjoon glanced at Yoongi. *This was your good feeling?* He thought as took in Yoongi’s equally as surprised expression. They had no idea what they were doing when it came to autism. Namjoon felt very…overwhelmed.

“This is Jungkook.” Seokjin pushed him in through the door gently. He moved and then stood with his eyes averted to the floor. “Jungkook,” Seokjin bent at his waist. “Can you say hi?”

Jungkook’s eyes didn’t raise, but he stopped flapping his hand to give a little wave and then turned his face towards his toy and hit the middle button. It lit up and he started to twist and pull the ends with the lights.

“Jungkook is very,” Seokjin’s eyes widened a little as he handed over Jungkook’s stuff and his file. “very sensitive to smells.”

*What does that mean?* Namjoon thought as he watched Jungkook play with his toy, hitting and twisting it with the lights. He glanced back up at their case manager, who was patting Jungkook on the shoulder.

“Hi, baby.” Yoongi squatted to get Jungkook’s field of vision. He started talking, but Namjoon couldn’t see his mouth. Probably welcoming him in.

Jungkook signed “hungry.”

“Are you hungry?” Yoongi signed back out of habit, also talking probably. “You want some food?”

Namjoon felt his shoulder touched and looked up to Seokjin. “He’s been participating in therapy at the Spectrum House on Bolden and Fifth according to his daycare.” Seokjin said as he handed over his file. “I had them write up something for you, so you have a bit of an introduction on him.”

“Thanks.” Namjoon said and glanced at the folder apprehensively.

“He’s actually a really good boy.” Seokjin said. “In the six hours I got to know him. He just…” Seokjin shrugs. “Looks at the world a bit differently.”

*Looks at the world a bit differently.* Namjoon thought and went back to watching Jungkook play with his toy. It made him feel a bit better.
They said their goodbyes to Seokjin and Namjoon glanced behind him through the sliding glass door that led to their backyard. They put the boys outside while they got Jungkook in. They didn’t want to overwhelm him just yet with Hoseok’s abrasiveness or Taehyung’s cuddliness.

Namjoon turned back to watch Yoongi grab Jungkook’s hand. Jungkook yanked it out of Yoongi’s grip, his face flushing with what looked like anger. He started to wave it again. It made him look like he was trying desperately to get a bug out of his face.

“Okay,” Yoongi said. “We don’t like holding hands. That’s okay.”

“Do you want me to grab a snack?” Namjoon asked as he set Jungkook’s stuff down on the dining room table.

“That’ll probably be good.” Yoongi signed before turning back to Jungkook. “This is a cool toy.” He said, trying to engage him.

Namjoon went to the kitchen and opened the fridge, scanning the contents. He looked in the snack drawer, finding cans of sparkling water and fruit cups – mandarin oranges. He pulled out a fruit cup and opened the lid and then poured out most of the juice.

Jungkook was still standing in the middle of their mid-century rustic dining room, his face tipped towards his Bop-It as he played with it. Yoongi had seemed to have given up trying to get him to show him the toy. Instead he just rubbed his back gently.

“Hey, Jungkook.” Namjoon said, offering him the plastic spoon and the cup of fruit. “You want a snack?”

Jungkook recoiled like he had been slapped. He shook his head from side to side, his face contorting. He turned away, his hand going in front of his face again.

“Are we not a fan of oranges?” Yoongi said and signed.

Namjoon remembered what Seokjin said and sniffed them. They had a smell. But, it wasn’t overpowering, he guessed. Or maybe it was…to Jungkook. He dropped them on the counter and went back to the drawing board as he rummaged around the pantry, pulling out a bag of Goldfish crackers. He sniffed them. They…didn’t really smell. Or well, they did. But, like cheese. Cheese could be pleasant? Right?

He offered them to Jungkook, who shook his head again.

“There’s gotta be something he wants.” Namjoon signed.

“Maybe I should just make him a sandwich?” Yoongi asked with a shrug.

“Jungkook,” Namjoon squatted to get on his level. “You want to pick out a snack yourself?”

Jungkook didn’t make eye contact, which was…uncomfortable to Namjoon. ASL relied on eye contact. You didn’t watch hands when you signed, you watched the person’s face. Words in sign were just that – words. To get what people actually meant, you watched their face. It was apart of the grammar of the language.

Jungkook did not do this. Actually, it was like he was actively avoiding eye contact, his eyes going up and then down to his shoes and then at his Bop-It toy. But, Jungkook saw the world a little differently, interacted with the world a little differently. Namjoon could at least empathize with that, even though their languages were different.
Namjoon gently led him into the kitchen and opened the snack drawer of the fridge – which was perfect height for little kids – and let Jungkook examine the contents. He pulled out a juice box. And then another and then another, lining them carefully on the counter.

“Jungkook,” Namjoon watched him pull out all the juice boxes. “Honey, I thought you were hungry?”

He ignored Namjoon.

“Honey, let’s put these away.” Namjoon reached for the juice boxes, grabbing three of them at a time.

Jungkook wheeled around, his face flushed like he was upset. “No.” He signed, dropping his Bop-It on the floor. “No. No. No.” His hands started to flap in front of his face again.

“Let’s take a breather.” Yoongi signed, picking up a juice box and punching the straw in. He handed it to Jungkook, who sipped it. “Hmm? You want to watch TV?”

Jungkook nodded. “Music.” He signed.

“Watching…music?” Yoongi asked as he picked up the Bop-It and handed it to Jungkook. “Like music videos?”

Jungkook nodded as he sipped on his juice box. He glanced up at Namjoon through his fringe of black hair and then into the snack drawer that was still open. He pointed at a cup of green jello. Namjoon grabbed the jello cup for him and opened the lid, handing it off to Yoongi.

“Let’s get you settled, okay?” Yoongi said and pushed on Jungkook’s shoulder. “And we can watch music videos and eat jello. How does that sound?”

Jungkook sat on the floor, his Bop-It on his knee as he watched a Taylor Swift music video play from VH1 with laser-focus intensity. Three empty jello cups were lined up neatly next to him.

Namjoon was leafing through his file while sitting on the couch, trying to crash course himself on their newest addition.

He had been sitting like that for awhile and Yoongi watched him for a couple of moments. Introducing a new kid, he learned, was always a challenge. There were scars inflicted by past homes. Trauma. Tae still wet the bed and had nightmares over his past families. Hoseok was still so behind in language, he almost wasn’t promoted up to the first grade.

It was just how it went.

Jungkook started to rock, holding his Bop-It against his chest like a teddy bear. Yoongi turned from him to his husband, who was holding stacks of paper in his fists. He waved to get his attention. “Anything good in there?” He asked.

Namjoon’s forehead was crumpled. He shook his head and dropped the papers. “Not really.” He signed back. “It’s a lot of jargon I don’t understand.”

“Well,” Yoongi rubbed his shoulder before picking up his hand to sign. “Don’t get too
stressed. We’ll figure him out.” He glanced outside where Taehyung was chasing Hoseok around the backyard with a foam sword, a napoleon hat on his head. “We have before.”

Namjoon sighed and closed the file. “You’re right.” He rubbed Yoongi’s hand. “I’m worrying needlessly.”

Yoongi just smiled at his husband and then glanced at the back door. “You want to bring them in so we can do introductions before I start dinner?” Yoongi asked and Namjoon nodded and stood to his feet.

Yoongi squatted next to Jungkook, who was still rocking intensely. Yoongi felt a flash of worry as he watched him and hoped that he wasn’t doing that out of anxiety, like a stress tic of some sort. Although, Jungkook’s face didn’t look terribly stressed – just a tiny line between his eyebrows. “Hey, buddy.” Yoongi said.

Jungkook stopped rocking to take in Yoongi, he jammed the Bop-It under his chin and pressed his little cheek against it. He was such a sweet looking boy – his eyes wide and cheeks full. Yoongi gently comb his long hair out of his eyes.

“How are you doing, baby?” Yoongi asked. “Did you get enough to eat?”

Jungkook’s hand came up to his forehead and he signed “grandma.”

Yoongi felt his heart skip two beats. Jungkook’s grandma had passed away suddenly. Yoongi couldn’t imagine the confusion, the chaos going on inside his little head. Yoongi just wanted to make it easier for him somehow. “You’ll be picked up soon, okay?” He assured, rubbing his back.

The sliding glass door whooshed opened and they both turned to the noise.

“Daddy,” Taehyung danced in and then froze, causing Hoseok to bump into his back.

“Come on, guys.” Namjoon signed, pushing on them a little. “Inside.” He closed the door behind him.

“Jungkook,” Yoongi signed. “This is Tae,” He signed his name. “And Hoseok.”

Jungkook waved and then turned his head to his Bop-It, hitting the middle button. It came to life and Yoongi watched his fingers dexterously start to play with the toy.

“Boys,” Namjoon signed and dropped to one knee in front of them. “Jungkook is going to stay with us a couple of days. You have to be good hosts and welcome him in. Okay?”

Taehyung was the first to approach, stopping a couple of feet from Jungkook. “Hi, Jungkook.” He said, but Jungkook didn’t turn towards him, his eyes trained on his game.

“Is he deaf?” Hoseok asked, his head tipping up to Namjoon.

Namjoon shook his head. “He’s not deaf, but he does sign.”

“And he’s had a long day,” Yoongi said. “Hoseok, can you set the table? And Tae, baby, can you grab the ketchup and lemonade from the fridge?”

“Okay, Daddy.” Tae said and toddled off towards the kitchen. Hoseok followed him, his hands swinging.

Yoongi looked back at Jungkook, his lip between his teeth as he played with his Bop-It, the
Yoongi was in the middle of cooking chicken – sans onions or other smelly things – when a streak of black and red zoomed past the breakfast bar – just tall enough that Yoongi could see the top of his head.

“I said no running in the house.” Yoongi grumbled to himself lowly as he moved around the counter, getting in the way to cause a collision. His mother just shouted at him to stop when he was a kid, but that method wasn’t really effective on deaf children.

But, instead of one of the boys, it was Jungkook that ran into his leg – his forehead narrowly missing Yoongi’s groin. He pushed himself away, his hands just…flapping again. His eyes tipped down towards Yoongi’s knees.

“Hey, buddy.” Yoongi said gently. “We don’t run in the living room, okay? There’s a lot of corners you can hit your head on and-,”

“Where’s grandma?” Jungkook signed, his eyebrows scrunching.

“Um,” Yoongi started. A family member needed to go over this with him. Jungkook needed to hear it from someone he trusted. Not a stranger. But, Yoongi didn’t want to lie to him either. That would just make everything worse. “Someone’s going to pick you up real soon, okay?”

Jungkook twisted his hands together and jammed them under his chin, his eyes still trained on Yoongi’s legs. His eyebrows furrowed.

“You want to take a seat at the table?” Yoongi pointed at their dining room table. “I’m gonna rally the rest of the troops for dinner.”

“Music?” Jungkook signed.

“Uh, no.” Yoongi said. “We’re going to eat. Are you hungry?”

The line in Jungkook’s eyebrows deepened, but he dutifully climbed into a kitchen chair – in Hoseok’s spot. Yoongi hoped that he wouldn’t notice as he grabbed the boys out their bedroom and waved for Namjoon as well.

When he got back to the dining room, Jungkook wasn’t sitting in the chair anymore. He was leap-frogging in the living room – squatting and then jumping big.

“Jungkook,” Yoongi said. “Are you hungry? You want some dinner?”

Jungkook stopped and straightened. He didn’t answer. Instead he tangled his hands up like before and pressed his cheek against them. Yoongi squatted in front of him.

“Hey, baby.” Yoongi said. Jungkook turned his face away from Yoongi’s. “Do you want to eat with us? You don’t have to. But, we would love to have you at the table.”

Jungkook nodded and Yoongi gently led him to the table where he climbed up into a chair. He rocked so ferociously, he rocked the chair a little, causing it to squeak.
“Why does he move like that?” Hoseok signed, his eyebrows furrowed as he watched him.

“He’s…” Namjoon started, his eyes wide as he watched Jungkook too. “Just getting out his wiggles.”

“Wiggles?” Tae asked, making the same sign.

“Like when you eat a lot sugar.” Namjoon said, jamming his fingertips into Hoseok’s ribs to tickle him. “And have to run around like a chicken with its head cut off.” Hoseok laughed loudly and cringed away from Namjoon's hand.

Tae got up on his knees on the chair. “Like a squirming wormy on the sidewalk after it rains.” He beamed and then wriggled his own body. Hoseok mimicked him and they both turned into wiggly noodles.

There was a laugh – tiny and cute – and Yoongi’s head snapped to the sound as he was dropping a plate of food in front of Tae. It was from Jungkook, who was laughing at the boys – his fingers tangled together in front of him. His nose was scrunched up and his two front teeth made an appearance. “Silly.” He signed and then pointed at them. He started to flap his hands again, laughing happily.

“Yes,” Yoongi sighed as he ran his fingers through Tae’s hair and looked around their full table of smiles. “Silly.”

Jungkook ate… the chicken.

He was an extremely methodical, slow eater. Every bite of cut up chicken was inspected and then sniffed carefully and then popped into his mouth. Yoongi encouraged him to eat the steamed carrots, but he was having none of that – recoiling away from the bite Yoongi offered him like it was a poisonous animal. And he ate a bite of the noodles, but didn’t really care for that either. That surprised Yoongi, because both Tae and Hoseok devoured their carbs.

No, Jungkook was fine with the chicken. He ate about half before he hopped down off the chair. And Namjoon tried to offer him more, get him to sit and take a couple of extra bites, but he ignored Namjoon. Instead he found his Bop-It toy and started to play with that while standing in the middle of the living room – his fingers moving so fast over it as he played the game, that the toy couldn’t populous the voice fast enough.

“You want to take the boys for baths and I’ll take him?” Yoongi offered as they both washed dishes – his hands dripping soap as he signed.

“Are you sure? I can help.”

“I think it’ll be fine.” Yoongi signed. “Seokjin was right – he’s a good boy. He’s just particular.”

Namjoon chewed on the inside of his cheek as he rinsed and dried dishes while Yoongi washed them. Never in his life did he feel so nervous about a child. He was nervous when they first brought home Hoseok and Tae. But, that was more for how they were adjusting to them. Not the other way around.
And maybe Namjoon was getting himself worked up for nothing. Maybe it was the media’s overblown idea of what autism was that was having an affect on him. Maybe autism was Jungkook just being a little ‘particular.’ And that was fine. Namjoon could work with that.

He hoped.

He got the boys’ their baths. Or well, Taehyung. Hoseok had switched from baths to showering, citing that baths were for “little kids.” Namjoon always started the water for him though so he wouldn’t accidentally scald himself.

“Daddy,” Taehyung asked as Namjoon helped him get on his shirt. “How long is Jungkook going to be here?”

Namjoon picked up his towel and dried his hair. “Just for a couple of days.”

“Is he a foster?” Tae’s eyebrows furrowed.

“Sort of.” Namjoon signed and said. “They’re trying to find his family. It might take them a couple of days, so he’s staying here in the meantime.”

Taehyung nodded, his eyes flashing knowingly. “He’s nice.” He said. “I like him.”

Namjoon grabbed his son’s little shoulders and jammed his face into his neck, making munching sounds. Tae squeezed his eyes shut in a giggle and weakly fought Namjoon off. “You like everyone.” Namjoon said as he pulled away, kissing his forehead. “You made friends with the bird outside.”

Tae pouted his large lips a little. “But the bird was nice after I gave it a Frito.”

“Go get Hoseok so we can brush teeth.” Namjoon said. “We’ll do it in my bathroom so Dad can bathe Jungkook.”

“Ohkay, Daddy.” Taehyung toddled off, dressed in fresh pajamas.

Namjoon stood up and rummaged around in the bathroom drawer, finding a new toothbrush for Jungkook. He put it on the counter and then stared at it for a second. After Hoseok, they kept triplicates of every toiletry, just in case. Just in case the case manager called with a new placement - a child that needed a warm bed and a roof and a kiss goodnight.

That was Jungkook.

And it shouldn’t matter if he had autism or not. It shouldn’t matter if he was a bit particular. He needed them right now. And that was enough.

Namjoon grabbed the boys’ toothbrushes and headed out into the hallway. Jungkook ran past him, his bare feet smacking hard on the floor.

“Is he okay?” Namjoon signed.

Yoongi had a hand on his hip. “He’s just,” He signed, his eyes following him as he ran back down the hallway. “energized.” Yoongi stepped in his way to stop him. “Jungkookie,” He said. “Let’s get a bath, okay?”

Jungkook flapped his arms, but let himself be turned and led down to the bathroom. Namjoon just chuckled as he turned into his bedroom and went to the bathroom, where he found Hoseok and
Taehyung trying to balance together on their scale.

“Dad,” Hoseok signed when he saw him. “Together we weigh,” He glanced at the number. “Ninety-five pounds!”

“Wow!” Namjoon signed big. “That’s a ton!” He handed each boy a toothbrush. “Brush your teeth, okay?”

He leaned against the counter as he watched the boys brush their teeth, Hoseok giving pointers to Taehyung in sign. Of course, his mind wandered to a daydream of Jungkook standing amongst them, his little face struggling to see into the mirror on his tip-toes. Namjoon’s eyebrows furrowed and he kicked himself. Jungkook was a temporary placement. 

Tae and Hoseok were rinsing and Namjoon opened his mouth to tell them to get in bed, when Tae’s eyes widened. "Daddy," He said and signed. "Someone's screaming."

"What?" Namjoon signed, making sure he got that right.

"Someone's screaming."

Oh, no. Namjoon started to turn.

Jungkook.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!
Sorry this took so long to get up. My soul is slowly being eaten by BTS World. To make up for my absence, I give you sweet Namkook. I'm such a sucker for them.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Namjoon ran so quick from the bathroom, he accidentally bumped into the dresser and toppled all of Yoongi’s cologne bottles on top. His heart was beating so loud, it was a drum in his ears. Oh God. Oh God. Oh God.

He found Jungkook plastered against the far wall of the hallway in nothing but his undies, his eyes wide and his fingers fidgeting near his face. He squeezed his eyes shut and his mouth was popped open in an upset scream.

“What’s going on?” Namjoon asked.

“I don’t know.” Yoongi signed, his eyes lit with panic. “I started the water and everything was fine and then-,”

Namjoon caught a whiff of fake-strawberry smell from the bathroom and his head whipped around. He’s very, very sensitive to smells. Seokjin’s words bounced around the inside of his skull. “The bubbles.” He signed and approached Jungkook. “He doesn’t like the bubbles.”

Yoongi turned to the bathroom, his face blanching. “Oh,” He said. “I didn’t even-,”

In one of his classes, there was a student that wore nothing but Birkenstocks and insisted on drowning herself in patchouli oil. And while Namjoon didn’t have a problem with patchouli itself, he couldn’t stand being near her. It was that overpowering. The smell would actually make him nauseous as she sat in class and it would get worse when she moved around.

Namjoon was reminded of that as he watched Jungkook cry, his head turning from side to side and his fingers fidgeting.

“I’m so sorry.” Yoongi said and glanced at the bathroom. He reached behind him and turned the fan on. “I didn’t even think about it.”

“It’s okay.” Namjoon yanked Jungkook up into his arms.

The only time Namjoon found relief from patchouli girl was by going outside and inhaling fresh air. Namjoon moved away from the bathroom, through their house and stepped through the sliding glass door onto their back patio. Jungkook wiggled in his arms, his face red as he cried hard. Namjoon snapped on the porch light and bounced him, thanking God that it was summertime since he was only in his jimmies. “Shhh.” Namjoon said as they paced. “You’re okay. No bad smells out here, huh?"

Jungkook wasn’t having it, though. He just squirmed as he cried, his fingers twisting and clenching. Namjoon wondered how sensitive one could be to smells. What that meant to Jungkook as he watched his little face twist. Were they so bad that they were painful? Did fake strawberry
smell cause him pain? Was this a combination of things? The stress of the day on top of not seeing his grandmother on top of confusion and whatever else was going on inside his sweet mind just send him rocketing over the edge into an emotional breakdown?

Namjoon’s heart clenched and he circled his arms a little tighter around him. Jungkook finally ceased to writhe like a fish in his grip. Instead he scrunched his face up and dug it into Namjoon’s shoulder.

Namjoon turned to see Yoongi, looking remorseful as he stepped through the sliding glass door. He had Jungkook’s jacket that he was wearing earlier his hand. “I started both fans.” He signed. “And drained the tub.”

Jungkook pulled his face away from Namjoon’s shoulder, his teeth clamping on his lower lip. He fluttered his hand a little and then dug his face into Namjoon shoulder again, inhaling deeply. He pulled away and bunched the material of Namjoon’s cardigan up into his fists and then mashed his face into it and inhaled again.

“What’s he doing?” Namjoon asked, unable to crane his head around to look.

“I think he likes your sweater.” Yoongi signed. “What does it smell like?”

Namjoon jammed his nose against his own sleeve and inhaled. He pulled back and shrugged. “Laundry?”

Jungkook’s face turned desperate – his eyebrows furrowing and his eyes sharpening - as he tried to get as much material as he could gathered in his tiny fists.

“You can have my sweater, if you want.” Namjoon said to Jungkook. He handed him to Yoongi so he could take it off and he immediately started to twist, his arms out for Namjoon and his lower lip pouting. His face heated red and he started to freak out again. Namjoon got his cardigan off in a flash, wrapped it around Jungkook and took him out of Yoongi’s arms.

Jungkook gave a little cough as he sniffled, pulling the sweater to his face and inhaling deeply. His breathing started to finally even out and he seemed to calm down a little. At least, he didn’t look like he was in pain any longer.

Yoongi rubbed his back. “I think you made a friend.” He signed.

Namjoon watched him settle as he hugged him tight, the pain in his eyes finally dulling completely out. He looked small in Namjoon’s large cardigan. Tiny even. “Yeah,” He said. “I think I did.”

They skipped bathing that night.

Instead Namjoon held and bounced Jungkook around their living room, his little body wrapped up in Namjoon’s green Mr. Rogers cardigan. His face would screw up like he was going to cry when Namjoon would stop walking, so Namjoon paced in circles around their coffee table, keeping him moving, feeling his little sighs blow out of him.

“You like being held tight?” Namjoon asked him as he rubbed up and down Jungkook’s
back. His eyes were fixed on the ceiling and he was still chewing on his lower lip. Every once in awhile he would sniff the bunched part of the sweater in his fist. “Hmm?”

Jungkook didn’t answer. He just dug his little cheek into Namjoon’s shoulder and clutched the sweater tighter like it was a teddy bear.

“I’m not a big talker either.” Namjoon continued. “My voice sounds funny to people. It throws them off. They don’t like it because it’s different.”

Jungkook’s eyes shifted, focusing on Namjoon’s face but still not making eye contact. His eyebrows furrowed. Namjoon continued to slowly drift in circles around the living room.

“It’s okay to be different, you know.” Namjoon continued to talk to him. “The world says you shouldn’t be different, that’s it’s not okay to be different. But, it is. Different,” He sighed and pushed his hair out of his face. “Different moves mountains.”

Jungkook’s fingers emerged from the sweater and touched Namjoon’s face, on his cheek – his finger rubbing over Namjoon’s dimple. He shifted so his face was jammed into Namjoon’s shoulder. His fingers writhed, but then they settled as his eyelids started to get heavy.

Namjoon pushed his bangs out of his face again. “Different,” He whispered. “Different is beautiful.”

“You guys better not stay up past lights out.” Yoongi warned as Tae hopped off of Hoseok’s bed and launched himself into his own. Yoongi tucked in the eldest first, checking his hearing aid case that had his name written in Sharpie on it. He was terrible at remembering to put them up at night – usually leaving one in until it buzzed at him that his battery was dead.

“Can we get bunk beds?” Hoseok signed, his eyes widening cutely as Yoongi leaned down to kiss his forehead.

“Yeah!” Tae said behind him. “Bunk beds! I call top.”

“I want top!” Hoseok argued in sign, rolling to face Tae’s bed.

“You’re afraid of heights.” He signed to Hoseok first and then turned to Tae. “And no bunk beds because you have two perfectly good beds. Now, it’s bed time.” Yoongi leaned down and kissed Tae’s head.

“Can we have one more bedtime story?” Tae asked, pushing his lips out into a pout.

“Sure,” Yoongi smiled. “Once there was a little boy who closed his eyes and went to sleep. The end.”

“That’s a bad story.” Tae said, his eyebrows furrowing. “There was no res-resovution.” He tried, the word too big for his little mouth.

“Resovution?” Yoongi repeated with a chuckle.

“Yeah,” Tae said. “I heard Dad complain about a book he was reading. He said the resovution wasn’t good.” He shook his head.
“Well, this resolution,” Yoongi smiled at his son. “Is that you go to sleep.”

Hoseok waved to get Yoongi’s attention and glanced at Tae’s closet. “No monsters?” He signed small.

“No monsters.” Yoongi shook his head at Hoseok. “I promise.”

“Can we stay in the same room even after Jungkook leaves?” Taehyung asked.

Yoongi sighed a little, a pang of guilt running through him at the thought of their newest addition. He didn’t mean to...trigger him or whatever. He didn’t even think about the smell of the bubbles; he was so used to them now. He just wanted to give Jungkook a nice bath, let him play with toys – enjoy himself a little. Have fun before he was given the bad news that his grandmother was no longer with him.

“We’ll talk about it, okay?” Yoongi moved to their doorway and snapped off their lights. Their nightlight that was shaped liked the Avengers logo automatically turned on across the room.

The house groaned as it settled as Yoongi made his way to the living room to find his husband. Namjoon was asleep on the couch with Jungkook curled in a little ball on his chest, still wrapped in the cardigan.

Yoongi gently carded his fingers through Namjoon’s hair, rousing him awake. Joon shifted and then glanced at the child that was sleeping hard on his chest. “Hey,” He said and smacked his lips.

“Hey,” Yoongi signed back. “You got him to sleep.”

“Yeah,” Namjoon very, very gently sat up, cradling Jungkook against him. Wrapped in the sweater, he looked younger than four. He looked like an infant. Namjoon adjusted the blanket. “He likes movement. Rocking.”

Yoongi had started that afternoon making lists of Jungkook’s likes and dislikes in his head. He wasn’t like his other kids where they could be coaxed to eat the vegetables they don’t like or bribed to get through the two minutes of teeth brushing before they streaked off to play games. Jungkook’s likes and dislikes were firm. Concrete. Black and white. There was no budging on them. And that was fine. It was fine because Jungkook’s autism told them that it needed to be fine.

So far, Yoongi had noted that Jungkook didn’t like artificial strawberry smells, carrots, mandarin oranges, holding hands, eye contact or sitting down. And that was just the first five-ish hours they had him.

Another wave of guilt washed through him at the picture his upset face, the sharp almost-pain in his eyes. “I’m sorry,” Yoongi signed. “For not being careful.”

“Baby,” Namjoon said and grabbed his hand before signing. “It wasn’t your fault. We’ve only had him an evening. And we don’t have experience with autism. It’s going to be a learning curve for the both of us.”

“I know.” Yoongi said. “I just...feel like I forced him on you and now you’re the one that’s...” He motioned. “Dealing with my mistake.”

“He’s not...” Namjoon shook his head, his eyebrows furrowing. “Taking Jungkook on wasn’t a mistake, Yoongi.” He said. “He’s beautiful and different.” He sucked in a breath and glanced at him. “It wasn’t a mistake. He’s fine right here with us.”
Yoongi stared at him as he slept, his eyelashes fluttering with his sweet baby dreams. He did have dislikes, but he had likes too. A lot of them. He liked the smell of their laundry detergent, he liked his Bop-It toy, he liked waving his hands, he liked to giggle, he liked pop music videos, and running around. And Namjoon. He liked Namjoon.

Yoongi chewed on his lip. “I just don’t want to hurt him.” He signed. Ever.

“I know.” Namjoon glanced down at him. “And that’s why he’s perfect right with us.”

“Music.” Jungkook signed and then pointed at the television that was turned off, his face pointed at Yoongi.

“Why don’t we eat some breakfast first?” Yoongi held up a hard-boiled egg from behind the counter. Hard boiled eggs were smell-less for the most part, Yoongi hoped.

“I’m late!” Namjoon half-sang as he shuffled quickly from the back hallway, his tie not completely done and his hair still a little disheveled. “Late. Late. Late.” He kissed Tae and Hoseok’s head from where they sat eating chunks of hard boiled eggs and toast. He kissed Yoongi on the cheek and opened the fridge, pulling out his lunchbox. Yoongi handed him his thermos and got a proper kiss before Namjoon hurried to the garage.

Yoongi shook his head and smiled as he listened to the garage door open. Namjoon’s alarm was a pad that sat underneath their fitted sheet and vibrated when it went off. He always slept through it. Always. He was worse than his students sometimes.

Yoongi glanced at the living room where Jungkook had a slightly shocked expression as he stared at the door that led to the garage. His face flushed red and he burst into tears.

“Oh, baby.” Yoongi hurried around the breakfast into the living room, dropping to one knee. “It’s okay. He’ll be back.”

Jungkook started to flap his arms, his head turned from Yoongi’s as he cried.

“Oh, Jungkookie.” Yoongi lifted him up into his arms. He made an angry noise and he started to wriggle, trying to get out of Yoongi’s grasp. “I know I’m not your favorite.” Yoongi carried him to the dining room table and sat him down in an empty chair. “But, he’ll be back. You want some breakfast?” Jungkook just responded by immediately slid off of it and ran back into the living room, where he twisted his hands together and jammed them under his chin as he sniffled.

Yoongi grabbed a plate and put an egg on it and some buttered toast with a bit of strawberry jelly. He grabbed Jungkook’s Bop-It too from where it sat on the counter. He hoped that maybe Yoongi could bribe him to eat some breakfast with his toy.

He moved to the living room and sat down on the floor, balancing the plate on his knee. He started the toy. “Twist it!” It ordered. “Flick it!”

Jungkook turned towards the noise. He sniffed and untangled his fingers and they writhed around his face as he watched the toy intently.
“Do you want to play with me, Jungkook?” Yoongi asked and offered the toy.

He nodded and stepped forward, close enough that Yoongi could dab his face of tears real quick. He chewed on his lower lip and played with his fingers.

“Will you eat some egg for me?” Yoongi picked up the hard boiled egg and offered it to Jungkook. Jungkook dutifully took it and bit a chunk out of it and then tried to hand it back to Yoongi. “Can you eat the whole thing and then I’ll give you the toy?”

Jungkook squatted as he ate, making himself look like a little monkey. He bit and thoughtfully chewed his food, making sure to sniff carefully between each bite. Egg is good. Yoongi noted. Not a bad smell.

He ate the whole thing and Yoongi offered the half a slice of toast. “You want some toast?”

Jungkook’s eyebrows furrowed and he made an angry grunt and pointed at the toy. Yoongi put the toast down and handed him the Bop-It. He was right. Toast wasn't apart of the deal.

Jungkook sat down on his butt and started the game, his fingers moving quick. Yoongi sat the plate down next to him, just in case he did want it and got to his feet to take care of the other boys. He smoothed out Hoseok’s hair as he before grabbing his empty plate.

He turned and glanced at Jungkook who was still playing with the toy, the toast gone from the plate.

A wave caught Namjoon’s attention and he glanced up from his computer to one of his students in his office doorway, clutching her books to her chest. “Hey, Kelsey.” He simcommed. “What’s up?”

“Hey, Professor Kim.” She stepped in, signing clunky and slow. “I need to talk to you about making up that assignment?”

“Ah, yes. Take a seat.” Namjoon motioned and he glanced back at his computer, sighing a little as he minimized the article he was reading on autism.

He had spent his free period between classes going down the Google rabbit hole for autism and had no less than six different pages going over the symptoms and the treatments and the description of ASD.

And he was learning a lot. Such as, the freak out that Jungkook had the previous night was a called a ‘meltdown’ and occurred because he was having a sensory overload with the strawberry-scented bubbles. And that hypersensitivities such as smells could be painful. And that everyone was completely unique, there were no two autistic people that were exactly the same.

He was unique. Jungkook was unique.

“So, I was thinking…” Kelsey’s face tipped down and usually Namjoon would interrupt her to get her mouth back up so he could lip-read, but his thoughts were far away. And frankly, he didn’t really give a crap what she had in mind for her assignment, she already got an F for missing it.
He knew Jungkook was a temporary placement. He was only going to be there for a couple of days. But, that didn’t stop Namjoon from wondering. Wondering what would happen if he didn’t have any family or had family, but family that were unable to take him on. Like Hoseok’s biological uncle or grandmother.

That would mean that Jungkook would have to be re-placed or he would stay with them. And while Namjoon and Yoongi didn’t have experience with autism, it didn’t mean that they weren’t against learning. They would do anything for their children. *Anything.*

And Namjoon couldn’t guarantee another family would do that for him. He couldn’t turn Jungkook away knowing that he might get hurt – *feel pain* – with another family. He was perfect where he was, where he had family that knew what it was like to be different than what the world wanted, knew what it was like to be diverse. He would be perfect with them.

Perfect.

He mentally kicked himself a little. He was falling in love too fast. He was being soft to the downfalls of fostering – the temporary kids. The kids that needed love, but not for forever. He didn’t want Jungkook to leave. But, he was going to. Someday.

He chewed on his pinkie nail as Kelsey continued to chatter. If he focused hard enough, he could heart his own pulse in his ears. He focused on that rhythm. The rhythm of his heart that was held so firmly in the small hands of his children.

It was Saturday – Jungkook’s fifth day with them – when Namjoon took all three boys to the park so Yoongi could get some quiet time to work in his studio.

Jungkook was…settling in. Sort of. At least, there had been no more meltdowns the past couple of days. They were figuring out his unique personality, little by little. Everything he did revealed another piece of the person that was Jungkook. And every piece revealed just made Namjoon fall in love with him that much more.

He was struggling with connecting with the other boys and seemed to prefer to play by himself. Namjoon knew that went along with autism - even though he hoped that he could be friends right away with them. So, he wasn’t completely surprised. But, he was a little disappointed that they weren’t clicking right away. He tried not to read into. He tried not to think that an no automatic connection meant that Jungkook didn't belong with them. Because he did. Namjoon felt it in his soul.

Taehyung made an effort to be Jungkook's friend. He really, truly did. If it was his determination to be friends with anything that had a pulse or his compassion for everyone kept him trying, Namjoon wasn’t sure. But, Taehyung always offered to let Jungkook partake in whatever he was doing.

Hoseok himself already had his own struggles with social skills and while he had to be prompted to interact with Jungkook, he was kind to him and tried to be a good big brother.

But, Jungkook kept to himself mostly – playing with anything that had buttons and lit up. He found that his favorite place to do that was sitting on Namjoon’s lap most of the time. The other time was when he would run and jump around in fits of energy.
Jungkook was doing just that – zooming around their house at top speeds – when Namjoon decided to take them all to the park to let out some pent-up wiggles.

“Daddy,” Tae pulled on Namjoon’s hand. “Can you push me on the swing?” He pointed to the swing set.

“Me too!” Hoseok bounced next to him.

“Okay,” Namjoon said as he held Jungkook on his hip. “Okay.” Jungkook was switching back and forth between flexing his fingers and flapping his hands. It was a movement of self-stimulation, Namjoon had learned from his research. Stimming. That’s what it was called. “You want to swing, Jungkook?” He pushed his long bangs out of his eyes.

Jungkook pressed his nose against Namjoon’s shoulder and inhaled. He nodded eventually and they all moved to the swing set, where Namjoon put Jungkook in the bowl swing with the leg holes so he wouldn’t accidently fly out and started to push him.

Hoseok sat down on his swing and Namjoon pulled him back. Hoseok freaked out if he went too high, so he went nice and slow with him. Tae sat down on the swing and started to turn in a circle, twisting the chains of the swings together only to let himself go and spin so fast he turned into a blur.

Namjoon moved to the front of Jungkook to gauge his reaction as he swung him gently, a little apprehensive that he wouldn’t like it. But, Jungkook had his big smile on his little face that scrunched up his nose and showed off his two front teeth. “You like that, Kookie?” Namjoon smiled fondly as he watched him enjoy himself. “You like the swing?”

He patted the swing and then pointed at Taehyung, who had let himself go and was turning. “Spin.” He signed.

“You want to spin?” Namjoon grabbed the bowl and twisted it and twisted it and then let it go. He watched Jungkook’s hair fly around his face as he spun. “Again.” He demanded once he came to a stop. “Again.”

“Race you to the jungle gym.” Hoseok challenged Tae in sign.

“Okay!” Tae signed and they took off.

Jungkook watched them and then frowned and pointed at the jungle gym, his expression turning serious. “They left.” He signed.

“Do you want to go with them?” Namjoon asked hopefully.

Jungkook nodded and Namjoon pulled him out of the swing and placed him on his feet. He watched him toddle towards the jungle gym, stop about halfway turn and head towards the seesaws. Namjoon smiled fondly as he watched him. Yeah, maybe he was falling in love. And yeah, maybe it would break his heart when Jungkook was taken by his biological family. But, that’s what Jungkook needed right now.

Love.
Please comment!<3
I'm glad that you're enjoying bby Kookie! But, my dudessss, I started writing Jimin and he's going to be SUCH a little heart breaker. I'm so excited to get him introduced because I have so much planned for the whole family! <3

There was a deep sigh on the other line. “Tracking down Jungkook’s biological family is proving…difficult.” Seokjin said. “He doesn’t have a reported father. I trying to track down his mother, but I have twenty-two other active cases I’m managing right now and-,”

“Seokjin,” Yoongi interrupted.

“Jin.”

“What?”

“You can call me Jin.” He said gently. “That’s what my friends call me.”

“Jin,” Yoongi said. “It’s okay.”

He sighed again. “I know I promised a week, but that was a gross underestimation. I can have him re-placed.” He said. “I have a family who already has autistic foster willing to take him on, if you need. I know you were hesitant taking him because of that.”

Yoongi glanced from where he stood in the kitchen to the living room, where Jungkook was hanging out on the couch with his husband. Jungkook was laying belly-down on Namjoon’s lap, using his arm as a pillow. His eyes were rolled almost all the way up as Namjoon massaged his back – reading somewhere that deep-pressure helped.

“No,” Yoongi said with a little smile. “He’s adjusting fine with us.”

“I’m glad to hear it.” Seokjin said. “He does attend therapy. His next appointment is Tuesday. They’ll probably be able to get you more information – literature, stuff like that – on him.”

“Yeah,” Yoongi agreed. “That’ll be be good.”

“And as soon as I hear anything, I’ll give you guys a call.”

“Thanks, Jin.” Yoongi said and he hung up the phone.

Jungkook wasn’t a temporary placement anymore. That meant that it was their job to break it to him that his grandmother had passed. Yoongi glanced at Hoseok, who was playing two-player MarioKart on the floor with Taehyung and his heart felt heavy. He didn’t want to have to put another child through that pain. He didn’t want to have to help a little soul grieve. Being ripped from a home was traumatic enough without this added weight.

He grabbed three juice boxes as he procrastinated going into the living room and gave one to
Hoseok and Taehyung. He turned to the couch to give one to Jungkook, but he had fallen asleep – his little face serene as he was cradled in Namjoon’s arm.

“Was that the case manager?” Namjoon asked as he kept his fingers rolling up and down Jungkook’s back.

Yoongi nodded and sat down on the coffee table. “He’s having trouble finding his bio family.” He said. “He’s trying to track down his mother.”

Namjoon nodded and sucked in a breath. “So, he’s staying with us.” He murmured, his eyes kaleidoscoping with emotions.

Yoongi glanced over his shoulder to make sure Tae wasn’t listening, but he had a hard time discerning words if he wasn’t looking at your face. He turned back. “For now.” He answered. “We need to break it to him.”

Namjoon looked down at Jungkook. He had gotten so attached to him the past couple of days. And Jungkook had grown attached to Namjoon – seeking him out for big hugs. Not falling asleep without him. Namjoon was the one that got him to eat all of his food on his plate. “After shopping?” His eyebrows furrowed.

It was two weeks from the first day of school for the older kids. They had to go to Target and pick up school supplies before everything got picked through. And they hadn’t completed the Min-Kim household tradition of letting a new placement pick out a toy yet.

“Okay.” Yoongi nodded, completely willing to push off that hard conversation for as long as possible.

Instead he shuffled through his to-do list. He had a lot to do before the kids started first grade – an eye appointment for Taehyung since he kept squinting. Haircuts for the both of them. Meeting with Hoseok’s speech therapist at the school. Parent night. He still had two projects to finish for Post Malone’s studio. A lot to do.

He carded Jungkook’s hair off of forehead. The conversation had to happen though. As soon as it did, Jungkook could accept it and move on. Postponing the inevitable would just cause more pain. After shopping. He vowed.

“Daddy,” Hoseok signed up at Namjoon. “I want that one.” He pointed.

Namjoon glanced at the backpack that was bright pink and covered with a pattern of donuts. His eyebrows furrowed. “This one?” He pointed.

Hoseok smiled and hopped. “Yeah! That one!”

Yoongi leaned on the handle bar cart, where Jungkook was playing with a sensory toy they discovered in a weirdly specific corner of the educational toys aisle. It was a ball that was covered in rubber spaghetti. They were letting the boys pick out their own school supplies. Taehyung’s current favorite obsession was Pokémon and all of his school supplies – including his lunchbox and backpack – were Pokémon-themed. Hoseok was just drawn to color and loud prints, picking things out of the girls’ section mostly.
Yoongi didn’t have a problem with Hoseok choosing things from the girls’ section. But, he also had a lot of clothes in his closet that were also chosen out of the women’s’ section of the store. Namjoon, on the other hand, was worried.

“He’ll be okay.” Yoongi assured Namjoon with his words. “Let him choose what he wants.”

Namjoon sighed and put it in the cart. They moved on down the aisle to the bulk supplies. Yoongi pulled out some big canisters of Lysol wipes for the teachers and Namjoon grabbed a five-pack of tissue boxes.

Namjoon was worried that Hoseok – who already struggled to make friends to – showing up to school and being bullied because his pencils had hearts on them. And it was written all over his face.

“I know he’ll be fine.” Namjoon said lowly as he held the tissue boxes in his hands. “And I’m not trying to force him into a gender role, I just-,”

Yoongi put his hand on his arm to stop him. “I know.” He signed. “But, if there’s an issue, the teacher will intervene.” He shrugged. “He only has eleven classmates, including Taehyung. It’s a lot better than public school.”

Namjoon nodded, but his forehead was still crumpled in deep thought. Yoongi pushed it from his head and turned back to the cart.

“Music.” Jungkook signed from the baby seat of the cart, his eyes hidden by his fringe of black hair. Yoongi was apprehensive with this being their first shopping trip. At home, triggers could be controlled. But, out in the world, it was different.

But, he was doing great. He had his toys that were keeping him engaged and he didn’t seem to be completely uncomfortable in the baby seat. They passed by Starbucks in the front that always reeked of burnt coffee and Jungkook just sniffed the air and made a face and they hurried past.

“Baby,” Yoongi said back. “We can watch music videos when we get home.”


“No, baby-,”


“She’s…” Yoongi grimaced. He couldn’t even tell him that he was going to be picked up soon. Because he wasn’t. That was a lie. Yoongi reached into his back pocket and pulled out his cell phone, turning it on to a little kid game he used sometimes to keep Tae entertained if they were doing something really boring.

Jungkook deftly maneuvered out of the game, flicked up all of his applications, got to YouTube and started one of Yoongi’s playlists. ‘Rap God’ by Eminem started to fill the air.

Yoongi cringed and hit the next button a couple of times. All of his playlists were rap, which wasn’t the most child-friendly genre of music. Especially to play at full blast in the middle of Target.

Jungkook made an angry noise and went back to ‘Rap God.’

“What’s he doing?” Namjoon asked.
“He’s a fan of Eminem, apparently.” Yoongi signed back.

“Who’s Eminem?” Taehyung asked, patting Namjoon’s hip.

“He’s a rapper.”

“What’s a rapper?” Hoseok asked as he held his new sparkly binder against his chest, signing with one hand.

“It’s a person who puts toys in their clear plastic containers.” Yoongi lied smoothly. “Now, let’s get out of here.”

Taehyung and Jungkook were playing a game of leap frog in the living room – trying to see who could jump the furthest. Namjoon watched as he helped Yoongi make dinner in the kitchen as Jungkook smiled as he jumped, his long hair flying everywhere.

It took a couple of days of Tae’s persistence, but Jungkook was warming up to him. There was a lot of…compromise, since Tae’s choice of playtime involved coloring or video games or something like that. Jungkook liked those too, but grew bored quickly and then had to move to get his wiggles out. There was a lot of “we’ll do this for a little bit and then we’ll do that.” Taehyung, being the easy-going guy that he was, didn’t seem to mind.

Hoseok was having a harder time.

“Hoseok,” Namjoon signed as he set the carrot he was chopping into sticks down. “Why don’t you play with them?”

Hoseok walked past him to the fridge, where he fished out a Capri-Sun from the snack drawer. He shrugged. “They don’t want me to play.” He signed.

“Why would you say that?” Yoongi signed as he put some steak in a cast iron. “Did you ask them?”

“No.” Hoseok signed and pouted.

“Well, you can’t sit around waiting for someone to ask you.” Yoongi nudged him. “Go ask if you can play.”

Hoseok moved around the counter, keeping one hand on it and watched them hop around each other. He dropped his eyes to his feet. “I don’t want to butt in.”

Namjoon sighed and scooped Hoseok up in his arms and set him on the counter next to the cutting board. “Well, will you help Dad, then?” He asked. “Peel this carrot.” He showed him how to peel the carrot with the peeler, holding it over the bowl so he didn’t get the bits everywhere.

Namjoon went back to cutting carrot sticks, keeping his eye on Hoseok to make sure he didn’t tumble off or get himself with the peeler. He was also watching his eyes. Hoseok was so expressive, he wore his thoughts like a loud shirt. And his eyes held a mixture of wistfulness and disappointment and…something else.

“Do you want me to ask them for you?” Namjoon pulled the carrot out of his hand and put it
on the cutting board.

Hoseok pouted, his little shoulders slumping. “Why did we have to have a third kid?” He asked. “It was fine with just two of us. Jungkook’s not even deaf.”

Ah. There it was. That something else was jealousy. Hoseok was jealous of Jungkook for monopolizing Taehyung.


Hoseok broke eye contact to stare at his hands. “You guys take kids.” He signed simply.

“That’s right.” Namjoon leaned his hip against the counter. “We tell the foster people that we have room for kids that don’t have parents or whose parents are unavailable so that they can be taken care of. You were a foster and so was Tae before we adopted you. Now, Jungkook is a foster too.”

Hoseok’s eyes rose. “Are you going to adopt him?” He signed.

Namjoon glanced at Jungkook as he pogoed around the living room. The answer to that question is that he wanted to, even though Jungkook had been with them only a week. Every kid that stepped through his door he wanted to keep safe, he wanted to love. And they was forming this unique bond with Jungkook as they figured out his differences. He didn’t want that to be severed.

But, he potentially had a mother out there. A mother that gave birth to him, that could take him back. Nothing was guaranteed.

“I don’t know.” He answered truthfully.

Hoseok didn’t like that answer. He scowled. “I hope you don’t.”

“Why not?” Namjoon asked. “Has Jungkook done anything to hurt you?”

“No.” Hoseok signed. “He…” He held his hand out towards him and then sighed. “It was fine with just Tae and I.” He finally signed, his little cheeks puffing red.

Namjoon cupped Hoseok’s face and dotted him with kisses, a wash of fondness for his son filling him up. “You know; you have a very important job as the oldest. I hope you aren’t forgetting.”

His eyebrows furrowed. “What do you mean?”

“Well, you’re the ambassador, of course.” Namjoon exaggerated his surprise that he didn’t realize this sooner. “You have to welcome all the foster kids in, Hoseok. Remember, when you first got here how scared you were?”

“No.” Hoseok shook his head. Namjoon sighed again. To be fair, Hoseok spent his first three weeks withdrawing off of meth. He’d imagine that would be a bit of a blur. “Okay, do you remember how quiet and scared Tae was when he first got here?”

Hoseok nodded and shook his fist. “Yes.”

“And you made him feel extra welcomed,” Namjoon signed. “Because you were a good ambassador. When new kids come here, it’s your job to make sure that they feel good and loved. You have to be happy and sharing, so they don’t feel so sad.”

Hoseok’s face scrunched. “Ambassador?”
“It’s a very important job for only a big kid. I can’t give it to Taehyun, because he’s too little.”

Hoseok seemed to consider this as he swung his bare feet. He nodded. “Okay.” He signed, puffing out his chest a little. “I’ll be a good ambassador.”

Namjoon lifted him from underneath his arms and put him on his feet. “Good.” He signed. “Now go play.”

Hoseok smiled his big, beautiful smile. “Okay.” He signed and Namjoon sighed as he watched him run into the living room to play with the others.

They told Jungkook about his grandmother the same way they told Hoseok the news about his mother – after baths, caged between their two bodies on his bed, ready to pick up the pieces once they fell.

Jungkook was wearing a Cookie Monster onesie that he liked because of the soft microfiber ‘fur.’ He kind of drowned in it, making him look a lot smaller than Hoseok did when they told him. And with his large eyes that darted between the two of them with confusion in them, Yoongi had to remind himself to breathe. Because he wasn’t. He had to remind himself that everything was going to be okay eventually. Because all he could see was the fact that they were breaking another child’s heart.

“Jungkook,” Namjoon started after Jungkook made a big thing of getting comfortable on his lap, reclining backwards with his head on his shoulder and his Cambelbak water bottle full of chocolate milk in his little fist. “We need to talk to you, okay?”

He didn’t answer. Well, he actually didn’t seem to be paying attention to them at all. That had been one of the hardest things to manage. Because, Jungkook never seemed to be listening to them – always spaced out as he flapped his hands or played with his toy. The deaf kids had to be looking at you with both eyes to get what you were saying or signing, because they couldn’t rely on their ears.

But, words did get to him. Yoongi was sure of it. He just…listened in his own way. In his own Jungkook way.

Jungkook had one of his toys – this squishy tube full of liquid and glitter – that he was massaging in his hands. His face was relaxed.

“Baby,” Namjoon said, running his thumbs down Jungkook’s back in circles, massaging him. “We need to tell you that your grandmother died. Do you know what that word means?”

He didn’t answer, but Yoongi watched a little line form between his eyebrows.

“Jungkook, you didn’t answer. Well, he actually didn’t seem to be paying attention to them at all. That had been one of the hardest things to manage. Because, Jungkook never seemed to be listening to them – always spaced out as he flapped his hands or played with his toy. The deaf kids had to be looking at you with both eyes to get what you were saying or signing, because they couldn’t rely on their ears.

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“It means when people get old or sick and their bodies can’t go on anymore, their heart stops beating and they die.” Namjoon said gently. “That’s what happened to your grandma. She got really sick while she was in the shower and fell.”

He grunted and looked at Namjoon, offering him the toy. Namjoon took it and he slid off of Namjoon’s lap, onto his feet. He moved to the desk and picked up his Bop-It, squatted and started to play with it.
“Well,” Namjoon signed to Yoongi. “That’s not what I was expecting to happen. Do you think he heard me? Like, was I clear enough?”

Yoongi nodded. “You did fine.” He sighed as he watched Jungkook play with his toy. “Kids grieve differently, you know. He just might need time to process the news.”

Namjoon grabbed Yoongi’s hand and rubbed it. “I hope he’ll be okay.” He signed.

“He will be.” Yoongi kissed his husband’s cheek. “He has us, after all.”

The next day, Jungkook asked where his grandmother was.

Yoongi and Namjoon shared a look across the dining room table as they were eating dinner. And then he looked at the two elder kids as they ate and flicked peas at each other, giggling.

Yoongi rubbed his shoulder. He was not digging the peas – cringing away from them like they were dangerous – so Yoongi had replaced them with one of the approved vegetables. Namjoon and Yoongi were trying to figure out Jungkook’s palate by introducing a new food at every meal. Some were okay (cucumbers were an absolute favorite) and some he only seemed so-so on and others he reacted like he was being tortured by even being in the same room with them.

Yoongi picked up a cucumber slice for him and he took it in his little fist, jamming it in the ranch on the side of the plate before taking a bite. “Honey,” He said lowly. “Your grandma has, um,” He glanced at the other boys again, but they were chatting with each other in sign. “Your grandma has died, baby. I’m so sorry.”

Jungkook’s eyes diverted to the movement across the table from the other boys and he scrunched his nose as he ate on his cucumber. He glanced back at Yoongi and then his eyes fell on the table. Yoongi waited for…something. Questions? A reaction? He knew Jungkook was small – only four – and he may not grasp the concept of death. But, he was expecting…something.

“Do you want to talk about it?” Namjoon offered.

Jungkook’s fingers writhed and clenched next to his face and he started to rock his body. That…could mean a lot of things. Jungkook stimmed when he was bored. He stimmed when he was happy. He stimmed when he was upset.

Yoongi shared another glance at Namjoon. “He’ll get there.” He signed. “I’m sure.”

Namjoon was pulled out of sleep to a little hand patting his face.

He cracked open his eyes and Jungkook took a full step backwards, startled. He started to flap his hands, his eyes trailing on the ceiling, tracking the the streetlamp light that was filtering through the blinds.

“Hey, honey.” Namjoon sat up and clicked on his light. “Everything okay?”
Jungkook looked like he had been crying – his face red and puffy. He didn’t respond. He stopped flapping his hands, instead he pressed the butts of his hands to his forehead and swayed on his feet. His face twisted and a sob tore through him.

“Oh, sweetie.” Namjoon pulled him into his lap. He immediately twisted and jammed his face into his Namjoon’s shoulder, inhaling deeply. He loved Snuggle, or whatever Yoongi bought for their laundry detergent so much that Yoongi washed all of his stuffed animals so that he could smell them. “Are you okay? What’s wrong?”

“Grandma.” He signed and started to cry again.

Namjoon watched the other light click on in his peripherals and he looked up to Yoongi – his maroon hair a stack on his head and his face puffy – as he sat up. “Everything alright?” He signed.

“I think we’re figuring it out.” Namjoon signed back as Jungkook pressed his body up against Namjoon’s. “Figuring out that Grandma isn’t coming back.”

Yoongi moved the blankets and scooted closer to Namjoon and Namjoon shifted Jungkook so that they could both cradle him between their chest. “Baby,” Yoongi murmured. “Oh my God. I’m so sorry.”

Jungkook didn’t respond except to press his face tight against Namjoon’s shoulder, his little fingers flexing. Yoongi ran his hand up and down his little back. Namjoon held him tight like he liked. His body shuddereded with his sobs under Namjoon’s palms.

“We can’t bring her back for you.” Namjoon murmured into his hair. “But, we’ll do anything we can to help, okay? We love you, Kookie.”

Yoongi rested his head on Namjoon’s shoulder and they both cradled him until he cried himself to sleep. He was safe. And warm. And loved. But, they were not who he wanted. They were not who he had lost.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!<3
Be Okay

Chapter Notes

Alright, Jimin will be in the next update. I’m soooo excited!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“So, we’re going to take this little guy here to the room across the way and do an electroretinogram.” The doctor said as he clicked through Taehyung’s chart on the computer.

Yoongi spelled that out for Namjoon, whose face twisted with confusion.

“What’s that for, Doctor?” Namjoon asked as he cradled Jungkook, whose fingers going on a cell phone game. Hoseok was massaging his eyelids as he sat next to Yoongi, trying to get them to focus back up after having his pupils dilated.

“It’s a kind of like a camera that’s going to allow me to see into Mr. Taehyung’s retina.”

They were at the eye doctor’s, getting the older kids eye exams before school. Hoseok went first, going through the list of letters in sign while Yoongi spoke them aloud for the doctor. He said that Hoseok had perfect vision.

“Don’t rub.” Yoongi pulled Hoseok’s hands off of his face.

“Dad,” Hoseok signed as he pouted. “I can’t see.”

Taehyung was next. He went through all the steps that Hoseok did – he had his pupils dilated and a glaucoma test and went through the letters on the wall to test his vision. And then the doctor did the exam of his eye where Tae had to put his chin on the cup and the doctor looked through a camera into his eyeballs.

“Is there something wrong?” Namjoon asked, his forehead crumpling.

The doctor’s smile went tight and something twisted hard in Yoongi’s middle. “I just need to take a closer look.”

They allowed him to be led out of the exam room across the hall, leaving the four alone in the cramped exam room. Yoongi reached over and snapped on the overhead lights. Jungkook flinched a little and then resettled as he played his game.

“What’s wrong?” Yoongi signed.

“I don’t know.” Namjoon signed back. “It’s probably nothing. Didn’t you say he was squinting?”

“Yeah, but I thought that was nearsightedness.”

“He might have astigmatism.” Namjoon shrugged. “I read an article that broke down eye disorders by race and Asians have the most prevalence in myopia.”
“That’s farsightedness, babe.” Yoongi said. “Like, when you can’t see things close up.” He held his hand close to his face.

Namjoon’s lips rolled into a ‘o.’ “Well, I don’t know then.”

“Stop rubbing.” Yoongi said aloud, since Hoseok couldn’t see him to sign anyway, pulling his hands off of his face again. “You’re going to hurt yourself.”

“I can’t see.” Hoseok signed and then slouched in his seat. “Everything is blurry.”

Yoongi pressed his head against the top of Hoseok’s and held his hand as they waited. He hoped it wasn’t anything serious. Doctors throwing large words and then disappearing with your child was always unsettling, however. About half and hour went by before Taehyung skipped back into the room holding a lollipop, followed by the doctor.

“Daddy.” He said as he bounced in front of Yoongi’s knees. “They stuck a camera to my eyeball.” He peeled down his lower eyelid.

“They did?” Yoongi asked. “Was it super weird?”

“Yeah,” He nodded. “I felt like an alien ex—exp—spearmint.”

Yoongi grabbed Taehyung and dragged him into his lap, circling his arms around his middle.

“How familiar are you guys with Usher’s Syndrome?” The doctor asked.

Yoongi, being the only who could hear, spoke for the group. “We’re not.”

“Okay,” The doctor clicked through the computer chart again. “It’s a genetic condition that affects the ears and the eyes. In the eyes, it causes a disorder called retinitis pigmentosa or RP. The picture of a healthy retina comes across as orange, but I noticed two tiny brown spots.” He pulled a picture and pointed them out. “That may be the beginnings of RP. Since, Tae is also deaf, I wanted to do a test just to confirm my suspicions.”

Yoongi signed this to Namjoon, feeling like his head spinning with all of this information thrown at them.

“What…does this mean?” He asked.

“I would suggest a chromosome test with a geneticist just to make sure, but I’m pretty sure Tae has Usher’s. What the RP does is degenerates the retina, causing gradual vision loss.”

“So…what you’re saying…” Namjoon said slowly, enunciating each word carefully. “Is that Tae is going…blind?”

The doctor nodded. “I’m afraid so.” He nodded. “Now, he probably won’t have any noticeable symptoms until he hits his late teens, early twenties. But, RP causes loss of peripheral vision and nightblindness. He’ll keep some vision, but…” The doctor made a face. “Not…very much. Usher’s the number one cause of deafblindness in the U.S.”

“Oh.” Was all Yoongi could manage as he gripped his son tighter. He glanced at his hearing aid. They got him a new pair at the beginning of summer. The receivers were blue and the wires were thin as they went into his little ear canals. You couldn’t even tell he was wearing aids with his long hair. Not like Hoseok’s. Whose still bent his ears down like a little elf. Or Namjoon’s, whose would cause a squeal of feedback when he cocked his head when he was thinking.
Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed. His family was Deaf, but it wasn’t ever a disability. It was just a character trait. A culture. A part of the people that he loved. He had never feared that they were hindered. Inconvenienced, sure. In a world made for ears, they were constantly inconvenienced. But, they made the world adapt to them. It wasn’t a big deal.

But, he feared it now as his mind raced. What would Taehyung be able to do for work? Could he go to college? Could he have a normal life? What about driving? What about having a family for himself? Could he care for an infant being deafblind?

“I wish I had better news for you all.” The doctor said solemnly. “In the meantime, I do have a prescription for his mild nearsightedness.”

“Thank you, Doctor.” Yoongi managed a fake smile as he held onto his son a little tighter.

“I need wine.” Namjoon announced once they got all the kids to bed. “You want some?” He asked as he fished out two glasses, not even bothering to look over for Yoongi’s answer. He opened the wine cooler that sat on their counter and grabbed a bottle, inspecting the label before he sat down.

Yoongi was sitting at the dining room table with his laptop open, researching Usher’s Syndrome. Basically, all he found was what the doctor had told him. Tae was born deaf and will slowly go blind. Nightblindness first and then his peripherals until he was left with tunnel vision.

But, that wasn’t what Yoongi was looking for. His questions didn’t have answers. The biggest bouncing in his mind – whether or not Taehyung could live a happy, fulfilled life with this – wasn’t listed somewhere on the internet.

And it was making him panic.

“Thanks.” Yoongi signed as he clicked out the WebMD article he was reading, grimacing as he sipped his wine. He glanced at the wine itself, swirling it and watched the legs stick themselves to the side of the glass.

“He’s going to be fine.” Namjoon signed.

Yoongi pulled off his own reading glasses and rubbed the bridge of his nose. “Are you sure?” He signed.

Namjoon’s eyes flashed with challenge. “Of course I’m sure. I-,”

“No,” Yoongi signed back. “Not with the Deaf power,” He made the sign – one fist in the air and the other covering his ear. “Thing. Just…with the world in general. Will he be okay?”

He needed an answer. He needed to hear it from someone. He needed that concrete reassurance before he hurdled into a panic attack.

Yoongi’s panic attacks escalated hard right before he met Namjoon. He had one once every couple of days. And it was always over stupid existential stuff. Stuff that really shouldn’t matter in the grand scheme of the universe, but did anyway. At least, to Yoongi’s brain.

And then he met Namjoon. He met this sweet, clumsy tree of a person that had a horrible
childhood, but decided to make the best of it anyway. He met this person that was proud to be who he was after years of being told he was broken. He met the person who lived in the moment, instead of dwelling on the future.

Yoongi needed him. He needed him right now.

Yoongi got out of his chair and sat down on Namjoon’s lap, pressing his face into Namjoon’s neck. “Will he?”

Namjoon rubbed Yoongi’s back and Yoongi pulled away. “He will.” He whispered. “Taehyung’s smart and charming and he can get through life on that alone.” Namjoon smiled, his dimple peaking out. “And he has a family and a support system. There was a deafblind person in my psychology class at Ga.” He shrugged. “She made it work.”

Yoongi sucked in a deep breath, his lungs finally expanding all the way. It calmed the storm that brewed in the back of his mind a little. “It’s not something we have to think about right away.” He added in sign and then picked up his wine glass.

“No,” Namjoon continued to rub up and down his back. “But, we can do things now to prepare for the future – teach Tae braille – that sort of thing.”

Yoongi nodded. “Yeah. Be proactive.”

“Yeah,” Namjoon kissed his forehead and Yoongi let himself wilt in his husband’s arms. Namjoon moved to cup his face. “You’re gorgeous, you know.” He murmured.

Yoongi scowled. “Ah, yes. Worry lines are the latest trend in beauty.”

“No,” Namjoon snorted at Yoongi’s snark. “Just…” He sighed as he massaged Yoongi’s scalp. “Your love for our kids. It shines through you.”

Yoongi felt his lips pull up in a smile. He set his wine down and wrapped his palms around Namjoon’s neck. “Well, you don’t look too bad with a kid hanging off each limb yourself.”

Namjoon chuckled, his eyes squeezing shut for a second. “It distracts from the extra ten pounds I’ve gained.”

Yoongi giggled and pressed his forehead to his husband’s, thankful that they were in this together.

Even with this news about Tae’s eventual decline in eyesight, life moved on. He got new glasses – bright blue to match his hearing aids and impact resistant. They had a band that went around his head like swim goggles so they wouldn’t interfere with his hearing aids.

The boys got haircuts. Even Jungkook, who had a meltdown when the clippers came towards him and Namjoon had to bounce him outside of the MasterCuts until he calmed down. They ditched the clippers and just cut his hair with scissors – his little face puffy and red in the mirror - leaving his bangs floppy and long.

And then they had the parent night at the school so they could meet Tae and Hoseok’s
“You must be Hoseok and Taehyung.” The teacher – a young lady with red curly hair greeted them.

Namjoon was trying to keep a handle on a wriggling Jungkook, who was making it his mission to get down and probably flop in the bean bag chairs across the room. A four-year-old barreling around the classroom probably wasn’t the safest, especially since he was a little ninja and gave you no warning before sneaking up on you.

“You guys want to join the other kids on the rug?” She signed and pointed. “They’re playing a big game of charades.”

Tae grabbed Hoseok’s hand and pulled him along. Namjoon gave up on trying to hold Jungkook, whose face was starting to flush red as he became more and more upset. He placed him on his feet and he zoomed at high-speeds right to the bean bag chairs.

“Hi, you must be dad and dad.” She signed and shook their hands. “I’m excited to have your boys in my class. Are they twins?”

“No,” Yoongi signed. “Hoseok’s seven. He was late to the party with kindergarten. They’re both adopted.”

“Ah,” She signed. “I see.”

“Tae’s…signing.” Yoongi cringed. “Is getting there. He’s picking it up. But, it’s still pretty basic.”

“No worries.” She signed back with big smiles. “Vocabulary in both English and ASL will be a part of the curriculum. And most English-speaking kids pick up ASL faster when they’re talking with their friends.”

Namjoon let his eyes wander around the classroom as Yoongi conversed with the teacher. Each kid had cubbies with their names on them, alphabetized by first name. Hoseok’s was in the middle and Tae’s was on the end next to a girl named Zoey.

He watched Jungkook stim from his bean bag chair, flapping his hands and giggling at the students playing charades. His feet stomped and he seemed to be having a good time spectating.

He found Taehyung, already sitting with a little girl with frizzy red hair, a big smile on his face as he showed off the bracelet he made earlier. He spelled his whole name all by himself.

And then he found Hoseok, clinging to Taehyung, his eyes on his lap. Namjoon sighed. They were working on Hoseok’s shyness. His fear of putting himself out there, taking that risk. His separation anxiety. He prayed that having Taehyung with him the upcoming school year would help him come out of his shell a little.

He looked at his kids having fun and smiled a little. His family.

“Shhh, bunny boy.” Namjoon whispered into Jungkook’s hair as he bounced him around the
living room, trying to keep quiet so the other boys – or well, Taehyung - wouldn’t wake up. “Shhh. I know.”

Jungkook’s grief was a bit different than Hoseok’s.

During the day, Jungkook was fine. He smiled and giggled and played and stimmed. It was like grief hadn’t touched him at all. It was like he didn’t know. Or didn’t care, even though Namjoon knew that wasn’t true.

Then, in the middle of the night, he would cry for her. He would cry and cry. He would be inconsolable. None of his toys helped. He didn’t want to watch music videos. He didn’t want food. He just cried and demanded to be held in Namjoon’s arms. And Namjoon gave him what he needed until he cried himself out and fell asleep.

Namjoon had one lamp on so he wouldn’t accidentally trip over the coffee table as he held a sobbing Jungkook. Namjoon petted his head and murmured against him. “Shhh. I know. I know.”

Jungkook responded by writhing his fingers near his face and then fistig his own hair. His cheeks were swollen and wet. He huffed breaths as he tried to breathe around his sobs and then coughed a little. Namjoon pinched the snot off of his nose and wiped it on his pant leg.

“I know, baby.” He said, his heart feeling like someone had poured concrete into it, it was so heavy. He hated seeing him in pain, not understanding that his grandmother wasn’t coming back. Not understanding why he wasn’t at home with his family. “I know. I’m so sorry.”

There was a shadow that caused Namjoon to turn. Hoseok hovered in the doorway of the hallway, one hand on the wall. “Is JK okay?” He signed, his eyes wide with concern.

“He’ll be okay.” Namjoon signed back with one hand. “He’s just sad right now?”

“Why is he sad?” Hoseok stepped forward and then stopped, putting one bare foot over the other.

Namjoon sat down on the floor, unable to hold Jungkook’s weight up anymore. Jungkook made a noise, but then it dissolved in sobs. “Come here, Hoseok.” He signed an his son came forward and squatted in front of them. He sucked in a breath. “Jungkook’s grandma died.” He signed.

Hoseok pressed his cheeks up with his fists as he listened intently. “His grandma died?” He signed back, his eyebrows furrowing in question.

Namjoon nodded and rubbed Jungkook’s back. “He’s sad because of it.”

Hoseok moved forward and sat down on Namjoon’s other knee. He grabbed Jungkook’s hand, but Jungkook’s face flushed like he was upset and he yanked his hand out of Hoseok’s grip. Hoseok, instead, placed his hand on Jungkook’s shoulder. “JK,” He signed and patted his shoulder.

“Kookie,” Namjoon rubbed his arm. “Kookie, Seokie wants to give you some love.”

Jungkook turned his head towards Hoseok, his eyes focusing down towards Namjoon’s lap.

“JK,” Hoseok signed. “My mom died too.” He rubbed his own lap. “I was sad too. But, it’ll be okay.” He nodded. “It’ll be okay. Our dads are nice and it’s really hard in the beginning. It’s really hard because you feel lonely and sad. But, it gets better.” He nodded. “I know it gets better.”
Jungkook just responded by hiccupping. At least he had stopped crying. That was a small improvement. Namjoon rubbed his back as he hiccupped again. He glanced at Hoseok and kissed his forehead. “Thank you, Seokie.” He signed. “That helped a lot.”

“Can I give him a hug?” Hoseok asked.

“That’s up to him.” Namjoon signed back. “Jungkook, is it okay if Seokie gives you a hug?” Jungkook’s fingers writhed, but he eventually nodded and Hoseok scooted forward and gave Jungkook an awkward hug. Jungkook hugged him back with one arm.

“Do you want to get in bed, Kookie?”

Jungkook’s eyebrows furrowed, but he nodded and pressed his face into Namjoon’s shoulder.

“Do you want to get into our bed?” Namjoon offered. At least, he did have to wait until he fell asleep in his arms. He didn’t have to wait until he cried himself to exhaustion.

He pointed at Hoseok. “His bed.” He patted his face for the sign for ‘bed.’

Namjoon looked at Hoseok apologetically. “He doesn’t have to.” Namjoon signed quickly. “But, it would make him feel better.”

Hoseok nodded. “Yeah,” He signed. “He can sleep with me.”

Namjoon smiled and kissed his son again, his chest swelling with pride. “You’re a good big brother.” He signed.

Namjoon got to his feet, adjusting Jungkook in his arms so that he could hold Hoseok’s hand as they walked back to his and Tae’s bedroom together. Hoseok climbed into bed and Jungkook climbed in too, clinging to Hoseok and burying his face into Hoseok’s shoulder. “It’s okay, JK.” He signed to him. “It’ll be okay.”

Namjoon ran his hand through their hair as he said goodnight again. It’s okay. He thought. It’ll be okay.

Yoongi announced during dinner the evening after the first day of school that he needed a bigger vehicle, since his Honda Accord wasn’t going to cut it anymore for three children. And it made sense to get a bigger car anyway. Something that Tae and Hoseok could grow into. Something that he could cart them around in to sports practices and school and clubs. Something they could take on long road trips to visit Nini. Something that they could hold beach stuff in or camping equipment or luggage.

But, not a goddamn motherfucking minivan.

“I’m not driving a minivan.” Yoongi signed as they stood in the middle of the new car lot of the dealership, his arms around Jungkook. “No. I refuse.”

Namjoon, being the academic he was, took it upon himself to research the best vehicles. Nothing American, obviously. Korean or Japanese only. Something with an outstanding safety

And his pick…was a goddamn motherfucking minivan.

“I was a rapper.” Yoongi signed angrily. “A R-A-P-P-E-R. I’m not driving a minivan.”

“Why not?” Namjoon groaned, his head tipping back. “It’s literally the perfect car. Look at all the trunk space.”

“Yes,” Yoongi signed back. “To keep my body in, since the only way you’re getting me into a minivan is if I’m dead and you’re transporting me to the ocean to dispose of my corpse.”

“You’re so dramatic.” Namjoon signed back.

Yoongi glanced at the salesman – this young guy that looked no older than nineteen – as he kind of hid behind his clipboard as Namjoon and Yoongi angrily signed at each other. He smiled. “We’ll be a second.” He said aloud before turning to his husband. “I’m not driving a minivan.” He signed. “And I’m not dramatic. It’s literally my one request.”

Jungkook started to stim by flapping and Yoongi grabbed his wrist so he wouldn’t accidentally clock him in the chin.

“No one’s going to judge you for driving a minivan, Yoongi.”

“I’m not a soccer mom named Linda.” Yoongi signed. “I’m not driving a freaking minivan.”

“You’re being ridiculous.” Namjoon signed, his narrow eyes flashing. “It’s a good car. You just can’t see it over your...ego or something.”

Yoongi felt the offense smart hot and red like a slap on his cheeks. He turned, ending the conversation and started to stomp off towards the SUVs. That’s what he wanted – a nice, spacious SUV that didn’t scream I have a Live. Laugh. Love. decal on my wall.

“I don’t know why he gets so hell bent on stuff.” Yoongi muttered under his breath. Jungkook just flapped and then pointed at the balloons that dotted the parking lot. “I am a producer, a master mixer, an artist, a rapper. You know who drives minivans? Middle-aged women who sell Scentsy. That’s who drives minivans.”

“Yoongi,” Namjoon said behind him and Yoongi stopped and turned around to his husband. “Wait.” He caught up to them.

Yoongi shifted Jungkook so he was on the other hip and stared his husband down, too stubborn and too mad to be the one that spoke first.

“Baby,” Namjoon signed. “We can get whatever car you want.” He signed. "I'm sorry I said those things."

“But,” Yoongi prompted, feeling like there was a ‘but’ in there somewhere.

“But, nothing.” Namjoon said. “It’s going to be your car. You should get what you’re happy with.”

Yoongi glanced at the Hyundai Palisades. “Even an SUV?”

Namjoon cringed. “Well, you know that the Odysseys have a better safety rating by half a
star-,” Yoongi felt himself scowl. “But, but…” Namjoon put on his irresistible smile that showed off both of his dimples and Yoongi felt himself deflate a little. “A happy husband is much, much more important.”

“Damn straight.” Yoongi signed and turned on his heels, heading towards the line of colorful SUVs.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment! <3
Yoongi emerged into the living room after pulling the clean clothes out of the dryer to Kookie sitting cross-legged on the rug watching music videos with his jaw slightly ajar and a glazed over look in his eyes. Yoongi overturned the laundry basket over his head, dumping the clothes onto the child. Jungkook responded by laughing and picking up one of Yoongi’s t-shirts and jamming his face into it.

“What are we watching?” Yoongi said and sat down next to him, picking up one of Hoseok’s pair of shorts and folding them.

Jungkook started to rock while clutching the warm t-shirt and pointed at VH1 on the television. Yoongi smiled as he recognized the song. “You know, I produced this song.”

Jungkook didn’t respond. He just stimmed and watched the television and clutched the fresh-smelling laundry. He had a toy that was partially dismantled next to him. He just needed some milk and he would be in his own Kookie heaven.

Yoongi watched the Young Thug music video with Jungkook, an idea occurring to him as he folded his family’s never ending pile of laundry. “Kookie, do you like music?” He asked.

Jungkook scrunched his nose and nodded.

“Have you ever made music yourself?”

He stopped rocking, his eyes falling to the carpet. He finally shook his head.

“Do you want to?”

Jungkook’s eyes raised and his eyebrows furrowed. He finally shrugged and went back to watching television. Yoongi got up, brushing a pair of Spiderman undies off of his lap. Yoongi picked up Jungkook, who made a half-annoyed groaning noise as he held his hand out towards the television.

“I just want to show you something.” Yoongi said as he walked down the hall and turned into his studio. “If you absolutely hate it, I’ll let you get back to watching Panic at the Disco. It’ll just take a moment.”

With Jungkook on his hip, Yoongi started his keyboards – two of them that sat on a two-tiered stand. One for his synth and the other for his 88 Kawasaki. He played a key and watched Jungkook’s eyes snap to the instrument.
“See?” Yoongi said, feeling a bit of pride swell in his chest. Both of his kids were deaf. And while he wouldn’t change them for anything, not being able to share that joy of music with them slightly disappointed Yoongi. Especially since Yoongi was sure that music notes were infused into his DNA. “It’s nice, right?”

Yoongi sat down with Jungkook on the bench. He started to play ‘Twinkle Twinkle Little Star’ with one hand. Jungkook’s eyes tracked his fingers with focused intensity, a little line between his eyebrows. Yoongi always wanted to know what was going on in Jungkook’s amazing, beautiful mind. What he was thinking about. How he connected things together. Because he wasn’t linear at all. But, at the same time, his eyes always held this old soul wisdom that went beyond his four years.

Yoongi finished the song and Jungkook made a noise and flapped his hand.

“Did you like that?” Yoongi asked.

Jungkook nodded. “Me. Me.” He signed, hitting his chest with his palm.

“You can go ahead.” Yoongi shifted him so that he was center on his lap.

Jungkook position his little fingers over the keys…

…and started playing ‘Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.’

Yoongi’s felt his eyebrows furrow in confusion. “Kookie, do you know this song?”

He shook his head quickly as he played with one hand, his bangs flapping over his face. He finished and flapped his hand. “Again.” He signed, smiled up at Yoongi, his nose all scrunched up.

“You want to learn another?”

Jungkook nodded and Yoongi played a slightly more advanced tune – Heart and Soul. Yoongi had to use two hands for this one. He hummed along with the melody as he played. Jungkook clasped his hands together under his chin as he watched with his head cocked to the side. Once he got to the end, Jungkook almost smacked his hands away as he took his place over the keys.

“Alright, alright.” Yoongi giggled. “I wish everyone was so eager to learn music.” He wrapped his arm around Jungkook’s middle and hooked his chin on his shoulder.

Jungkook started to play – exactly like Yoongi played - not missing a note. And there was some more advanced chords in that song. But, Jungkook got them all perfect the first time through. Talent. He was talented. Maybe more than that. Yoongi wondered if this was his first time being exposed to music like. If this was his first time on an instrument. It didn’t seem like it, even though Jungkook said he had never made music before.

Yoongi’s mind jumped to the future. To a Jungkook in his teenage years and maybe beyond. Him on stage as a musician. A pianist? Something else? Yoongi didn’t know. But, he saw Jungkook on stage, under a spotlight, creating beautiful, timeless music.

And he saw himself – and Namjoon, although the last time he took Joon to a concert he fell asleep – in the audience. And something swelled up in Yoongi’s chest. It made him feel light, like he had been blown up with helium. Love and pride and adoration.

//Love and pride and adoration for his son. His son.

Once Jungkook was finished playing, he looked up at Yoongi. “Again.” He signed, a big
smile over his face.

Yoongi pressed his lips to Jungkook’s temple. Jungkook made a happy noise and scrunched into his neck a little, his fingers wiggling. “We can go again.” He said, tears rimming his eyes. “We can play for as long as you want, my love.”

“Dad!” Tae greeted Namjoon first as he barreled out of the front of the school. His shoes lit up with his steps and his sweater and backpack was falling off his shoulder.

“Hi, baby!” Namjoon greeted as he fell to one knee to get his hug. “Where is your brother?”

Tae glanced behind him. “He’s coming.” He signed. “He’s being a slow poke.”

Namjoon ran his fingertips over Taehyung’s ribs. “Slow poke?” He said and signed. Taehyung’s eyes closed as he laughed, his square smile over his face.

Namjoon lifted his eyes to Hoseok who took each step that led to the entrance one at a time, his eyes turned down and his frown on his face. Something sunk hard in Namjoon. Hoseok didn’t have a good day. He could tell.

“Hey, baby.” Namjoon greeted and grabbed Hoseok’s hand. “How was school?”

He shrugged. “Okay.” He signed lazily.

Namjoon frowned and carded his fingers through Hoseok’s hair. “Everything alright?”

Hoseok’s eyes rimmed with tears. “No.” He signed.

“Oh, baby.” Namjoon pulled him into a hug. “What happened? What can I do to help?”

Instead of signing, he just bent over and pulled up the leg of his jeans, revealing two Spongebob bandaids on his knee. Namjoon looked down in alarm. Scrapes and bruises just went along with little boys, but he always hated seeing his kids hurting. His head spun with the possibilities of what happened, fear twisting his middle over the possibility of Hoseok being bullied.


“I tripped on the playground.” Hoseok signed, his chin quivering.

“Oh,” Namjoon sighed with relief. So, this was just roughhousing. That was okay. “It’ll be okay. Do you want me to kiss it and make it better?”

Hoseok scowled. “No.” He rubbed his face of tears. “I’m not a baby.”

Namjoon grabbed his shoulders and kiss his cheek. “You’re my baby.” He signed. “You’ll be thirty with kids of your own and you’ll still be my baby.”

A shy smile ghosted over Hoseok’s lips. “That’s silly. I’ll be old. I can’t be a baby.” He signed back.
“But, you’ll always be my baby.” Namjoon argued and stood up, taking Hoseok’s sparkly, colorful backpack from him. “You’ll be all old and wrinkly and you’ll still be my baby.”

Hoseok giggled. “That’s silly.”

Namjoon turned to Tae to take his hand as they crossed the parking lot of the school. His upper lip was clamped over his lower and his eyebrows furrowed. “Everything okay, Tae?” He said and signed.

Tae’s eyes flashed to Hoseok and then up to Namjoon. “Yeah.” He said, his eyes giving away the lie he was telling. “Fine.” He signed back, his little thumb hitting his chest.

“I need to talk to you.” Yoongi and Namjoon signed simultaneously as Namjoon crossed the threshold of the door that led to the garage. Yoongi’s eyes were shining and his nose was red and Namjoon knew that he had been crying.

Namjoon glanced down at his boys as they ran past him into the house. They dropped their things on the dining room table and then ran into the kitchen. “You first.” He signed to his husband.

“I want to adopt Jungkook.” Yoongi signed, catching Namjoon completely off-guard.

“Jungkook?” Namjoon managed to sign back.

Of course, he had thought about it. He had. He would catch himself daydreaming about it in the shower or at work. He imagined tiny Jungkook chasing after his brothers. He imagined him in middle school, figuring out a razor for the first time or writing notes to his crush. He imagined him graduating, his scrunch-smile wide over his face.

“But,” Namjoon signed the one thing that would stop his imagination dead in his tracks. “Isn’t Seokjin trying to find his family?”

“Yes,” Yoongi’s eyes dropped. “He is. But, it’s been like a month. Don’t you think if he had any, they would’ve been found by now?”

Namjoon sighed and leaned against the threshold of the garage door. “You have a point.” He signed. “But, Seokjin is also a busy guy. You know how stretched case managers are.”

“Do you…” Yoongi signed, his eyebrows furrowing. “Not want to...adopt him?”

“No. No. No.” Namjoon signed quickly, grabbing his husband’s wrist. “I would love to have Jungkook forever. I love him. I love him so much.” He signed fast. “I just…” He sighed and broke eye contact. “I don’t want to get my hopes up too high, you know?”

“I know.” Yoongi signed back, stepping forward into Namjoon’s arms. “I know. I don’t want to be disappointed either if he gets taken away from us. But,” His eyes misted over again. “If there is a chance, I would want to take it.”

Namjoon smiled and kissed his husband. “Me too.”

They both sighed as they held each other. Yoongi was short and his head fit perfectly underneath Namjoon’s chin. He was a puzzle piece that Namjoon didn’t realize he was missing until
“What did you want to say?” Yoongi signed after a moment.

Namjoon sighed, thinking back to Tae’s apprehensive expression. He was lying. He knew something about Hoseok and he was lying about it. But...why? That's what Namjoon wanted to know. That’s what Namjoon couldn’t figure out. “Hoseok got hurt at school.” Namjoon signed. “And Hoseok said that he tripped on the playground but Taehyung’s...expression said something different.”

Yoongi pulled away, his eyebrows furrowing. “Do you think...something happened?”

“I don’t know.” Namjoon shrugged. “And part of me wants to ask Taehyung what’s up, but another part of me doesn’t want to pry, you know? Like, I’m pretty sure he probably just got into a disagreement with Taehyung and they probably pushed each other and now they’re trying to cover it up so no one gets in trouble.” Namjoon rolled his eyes. “Sibling stuff.”

Yoongi’s eyes flashed. “So, you don’t think it’s a bully?”

“I would expect that the teacher would let us know if that was the case.” Namjoon signed.

“Well, bullies move in silence, Namjoon.” Yoongi’s eyebrow raised. “I should know. I was great at it.”

“You would be a bully.” Namjoon shook his head. “Why am I not surprised?”

“I’m just kidding.” Yoongi signed. “I was the friendless weird kid that wrote lyrics in the margins of my assignments.”

“And I was the friendless deaf kid.” Namjoon cinched his husband tighter. “Now look at us.”

“Yes,” Yoongi pressed his head against Namjoon’s chest and sighed. “Now look at us.”

“Stop, stop.” Yoongi signed. “Stop running. This is an office.”

Hoseok turned and grabbed Jungkook by the shoulders and squeezed him. Jungkook laughed, his body rocking, taking Hoseok with him. “Jungkook is so crazy today.” Hoseok laughed and Jungkook laughed with him, pressing his forehead into Hoseok’s shoulder.

“Well, he snuck a pixie stick behind my back.” Yoongi rolled his eyes.

Taehyung grabbed Yoongi’s hand and Yoongi smiled down at him and then at his two wild childs. At least, everyone was happy. It would make the rest of the errands they had to run go smoothly.

“Come on, come on.” Yoongi herded his children through the foster agency office. Yoongi had to drop off some updated records for Jungkook’s file and while he could’ve just faxed them, the agency was on his way to the post office, so he thought to make a stop.

Yoongi knocked twice before opening their case manager’s office. He was standing up, his polo looking a little rumpled as he paced behind his desk on the telephone. Yoongi let himself and
the kids in and told them all to hush, that Seokjin was on the phone.

Yoongi heard a noise and turned. “Boo!” A little voice said. “Boo!”

There was what looked to be a stroller-wheelchair hybrid thing. A contraption that Jungkook took interest immediately. He dropped to knees so he could examine a lever on the side. Something that Namjoon shouldn’t be allowed near because otherwise he would break it. It had red metal bars and small wheels. Brakes. It looked complicated.

In the seat of stroller-wheelchair hybrid thing was a little boy with full lips that were stretched in a big smile. His eyes were fixed on the ceiling. He sat at just about a forty-five-degree angle. He held a silky cloth in his tiny fist and was waving it around.

“Hi, baby.” Yoongi approached him, watching him cover his own face with the silky cloth for a second. He was really angelic looking – pale and full-cheeked. He looked like a cherub that should have wings and be painted on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

He ripped it back. “Boo!” He said and giggled, a big smile over his face. Yoongi realized he was playing peek-a-boo. Yoongi covered his own face with the papers and then lifted them up. “Peek-a-boo!” He sang.

“Hey, sorry guys.” Seokjin said. “I got stuck on the phone.”

“No problem.” Yoongi said and signed. “I’m making a new friend over here.”

“You have…” Seokjin rummaged around the papers on his desk for a second. He picked up a sticky note. “Jungkook’s updated shot records?”

“Yep.” Yoongi handed over the folder.

“How are the kiddos?” Seokjin reached for his big jar of candy that sat on his desk. Tae and Hoseok snapped to attention on him, Hoseok going so far as to press his chin on Seokjin’s desk.

“No candy, please.” Yoongi said and watched Jungkook play with the brake on the wheelchair. “We’ve had enough today.”

“But, Dad.” Tae groaned and pressed himself against Yoongi’s hip as he signed. “One piece?”

“Yeah, can we have one piece?” Hoseok begged too, his eyes wide.

“No.” Yoongi shook his head. “You’re going to have lunch in, like, an hour.”

They both groaned and Yoongi squatted down to watch Jungkook play with the brake. “Kookie,” He said and rubbed his back. “We gotta go, okay?”

“Boo!”

“Aw, someone’s awake.” Seokjin came around his desk as Yoongi was getting Jungkook back to his feet. Seokjin pulled the child out of the wheelchair, his hand on the back of Jimin’s shoulder.

“He’s ridiculously cute.” Yoongi said and squeezed his little thigh chub gently. “Yours?”

Seokjin shook his head. “No.” He said. “I am too busy taking care of the state’s kids to have my own. This is Jimin.” He bounced Jimin on his hip. “He needs a home.” Seokjin frowned. “And
I’m…struggling to place him. That was actually the nineteenth family I called.”

Yoongi chewed on his lower lip. “Nineteenth family?” He was so…adorable. Happy. Calm. Who wouldn’t take him?

Seokjin nodded. “He needed to be placed last night.” He ran his fingers through Jimin’s hair. “But, nobody would take him. And those who would were full. We ended up having a sleepover in my office.” He glanced at the couch that sat against he wall.


Seokjin shot him a look that said well, look at him. “He’s... he has a lot of needs. I can’t find a house that’ll take him more than a month at a time. Once, I got three whole months. That was a blessing.”

“Boo!” Jimin cried gleefully as he swung his cloth. His eyes were still turned the ceiling like he was staring at the lights. He had a perfect little smile and his cheeks were so full it hid his eyes.

Yoongi looked at him. He was... really precious. “Can I hold him?” He asked.

“Sure, just watch his hips.”

That was a horrible idea, because as soon as Jimin was in Yoongi’s arms, his eyes focused up on him and his smile grew wider and his little cheek dug into Yoongi’s shoulder and Yoongi’s mind started flashing mine, mine, mine at him like a neon sign.

Seokjin leaned against the edge of the desk. “You got any room for him?” He smiled sardonically.

Yoongi glanced at the wheelchair again, at Jungkook who was back on the floor getting his fingers greasy as he played with the gears underneath it. While his heart screamed yes at the top of its lungs, his brain was trying to work out logistics. He’s special needs. What’s wrong with him? What would Namjoon think? We have the room, but we don’t have the skills. But, we didn’t have the skills with Jungkook. We learned with him. We didn’t have the skills with Hoseok and we learned with him. We didn’t have the skills with Taehyung and we learned with him. But, this is different. He is different. Different. Different. Different.

“Um…” Yoongi just mumbled as he looked back and forth between their case manager and the wheelchair. “Um…”

“It’s shaken baby syndrome.”

“What?”

“Why he’s like that.” Seokjin almost whispered, even though the only kid that could hear him was Jungkook, but he was so absorbed in playing with the wheelchair, that he didn’t care. “He was being babysat by his mother’s boyfriend and I guess had a cold or something and wouldn’t stop crying. He shook him and then slammed his head against their kitchen counter when he was ten months old.”

Yoongi felt his arms tighten protectively as horror – hot and white and so painful that he almost cried out with it – shot through him like a lightning bolt, raising every single hair on his skin, twisting his guts up until he felt like he was going to be sick. He couldn’t even imagine that violence, his mind just…glitched. Blue screened. How do you do that to a child?
“I know.” Seokjin said. “I had about the same reaction when I found out.”


“Lucky to be alive,” Seokjin finished. “He spent almost five months in the hospital afterwards.”

Yoongi glanced at Jimin. “Boo!” He covered his face and uncovered it, giggling loudly. Yoongi felt himself tear up as he watched him. *How do you do that to a child? How do you put your hands on a child like that?*

Seokjin jerked. “I didn’t mean...I didn’t mean to make you emotional or guilt you. I just-,”

Yoongi stopped listening to him. Or well, he couldn’t hear him. Not over the sound of his own heart breaking. He ran his hand down Jimin’s head, feeling a dip in his little skull – a surgical site or a scar or something. He squeezed his eyes shut and held him tighter.

“We’ll take him.” Yoongi just said, his voice cracking with his heart.

**Chapter End Notes**

Please comment!
Chapter Notes

The number of comments I received on the last chapter were really, truly overwhelming! Thank you all! I'm glad you are as emotionally invested in this story as I am lol as a thank you I'm uploading the next chapter really, really early for y'all!~

Now that Jimin is here, I have so much planned. You guys have no idea. Some drama, ofc. But, growth, happiness, Christmas, Disneyland, Nini, love, etc. It's gonna be great.

Yoongi bounced Jimin – who he found out was a couple of months older than Taehyung – as he paced in front of their entryway, waiting for Namjoon to come home from work.

Older than Taehyung, but had a brain that was frozen in time at a little over ten-months-old from head trauma inflicted on him for what? Fifteen seconds of frustration? Fifteen seconds that completely changed his life. He found that out from Seokjin. Actually, he found out a lot of things about Jimin from Seokjin as they started paperwork to transfer guardianship.

He found out Jimin spent five months in the hospital after the incident where his brain swelled three sizes too big, where he went into a coma for nine weeks, where doctors were sure he was going to come out that brain dead or worse.

Yoongi found out that he was mostly blind – only able to see a little out of his left eye only. That he had cerebral palsy. That he was intellectually disabled. That he had epilepsy.

All of these...disorders were thrown at Yoongi like darts as he held the child like he was a precious artifact to his chest and listened to him giggle to himself. He was a precious artifact. He was priceless. He was exquisite. A jewel.

And he would never, ever know violence ever again.

Yoongi inhaled through his nose and out of his mouth as he paced around the house.

Yoongi had to focus hard to keep himself from freaking out on his way home as he listened to Jimin gleefully play with his silky cloth, foregoing the errands he had scheduled for today. All the other boys were confused. Why do we have a new kid? Who is this? Why does he act like that?

Yoongi ignored them and tried to figure out how he was going to tell Namjoon as he tried to keep his hands from shaking on the steering wheel. He was still trying to figure out how someone could do that to a child? A baby? How do you inflict violence to innocence? He was trying to figure out how they were going to take care of a such a special needs child. They learned with Jungkook, but Jungkook could take himself potty and feed himself and walk.

And Jimin...couldn’t.

Yoongi couldn’t figure out how to put his wheelchair back together after Seokjin dismantled it to get it into the back of his SUV when they got home. But, Yoongi didn’t want to put him down anyway. He was light and very small for six years old – even perhaps a little smaller than Jungkook.
– so it was no big deal to Yoongi, really. At least when he was being held, Yoongi knew that that he was safe. That the little soul in his arms was safe.

Yoongi texted Namjoon to come home immediately. He manically cleaned the counter with one hand with a sponge. He ate on a popsicle and gave some to Jimin, who sucked on the pop with his full lips, making little cooing noises. They played some more peek-a-boo, then Jimin fell asleep on Yoongi’s shoulder, his mouth wide open and his cheek pressed against a towel to catch drool.

Yoongi heard the garage door opening and then a couple minutes later it shut. Yoongi gripped the counter with one hand and reminded himself to take regular breaths.

“Hey,” Namjoon said, speaking while he signed to Yoongi like he did when he was nervous. “What’s up? You scared the shit out of me with your text. Is everyone-,” His eyes dropped to Jimin sleeping against Yoongi’s shoulder. “Who is this?”

Yoongi’s breath caught in his throat and he shook it off and squared his shoulders. “This is Jimin.” Yoongi signed and rubbed his back. “He…needed a home.”

Namjoon froze and then his eyebrows furrowed and his eyes sharpened. “Yoongi,” He breathed. “Why didn’t you call me?”

“Because,” Yoongi felt his guts tie into knots and tears heat his face. He looked down at Jimin. “I-I wasn’t going to leave him.”

“Yoon,” Namjoon said. “Why are you crying? Start at the beginning, okay?”

So he did. He started with how he swung by the foster agency office to drop off records and how Jimin was there waiting for a family that would be willing to say yes. He told him about peek-a-boo and his light giggle. He told him about how Seokjin placed him in his arms and he fit there perfectly like a puzzle piece he didn’t realize was missing.

And then he got to that part.

“Shaken baby syndrome.” Yoongi said and cinched his arms tighter around the child.

“What?” Namjoon was leaning against the counter, his eyes intense on Yoongi’s face so he wouldn’t miss anything.

“Shaken baby syndrome.” Yoongi’s voice cracked. “Jimin is…special needs. His wheelchair is still in the SUV.” Yoongi signed. “He has a lot of issues. A lot. Like, he’s blind and he has epilepsy and as far as I know the only word he knows is ‘boo’ and I know that I should’ve called you first. But,” He sighed as he felt tears on his face. “Seokjin told me that he was shaken when he was a baby and that he spent five months in the hospital and he almost died and...” Yoongi felt his chin quiver. “I wasn’t going to leave him.”

“Shh.” Namjoon gripped Yoongi’s elbow and pulled him close so that Jimin was sandwiched between them. “Okay. Shh. You’re getting yourself worked up.”

Yoongi felt his face heat. “How does someone do that to a child, Joon?” He glanced down at Jimin to make sure he didn’t wake him with his outburst. He didn’t. “How do you shake a baby?” An unexpected sob tore through Yoongi – his emotions he kept bottled up just rocketing out of him like a shaken soda can. “How evil do you have to be?”

Namjoon’s eyes softened and he gripped Yoongi’s arm and pulled him close, sandwiching Jimin between them. “I don’t know.” He said gently. “I can’t answer that.”
“I wasn’t going to leave him.” Yoongi sniffled and Namjoon just carded his fingers through his hair, rubbed his back, hushed him. “I wasn’t going to leave him.”

“I know. I know.” Namjoon looked down to Jimin, who was still sleeping as hard as only a child could, drool making his chin moist. “Jimin,” He said and gently started lifting him out of Yoongi’s arms.

“Watch his hips.” Yoongi said as he transferred him to Namjoon, keeping one hand on his back. Yoongi wiped his face before he got resettled against Namjoon’s shoulder.

“We haven’t met yet.” Namjoon signed to him. “But, you have my husband – my realistic, level-headed husband – crying over you.” Namjoon locked eyes with Yoongi. “That means you must be someone special.” He pressed his cheek against the top of Jimin’s head.

Namjoon got the wheelchair out of the back of Yoongi’s SUV, this chair thing that had a bunch of straps on it but no legs, and what looked to be a complicated booster seat thing for a dining room chair. He got that set up in time Yoongi to make a quick dinner of tofu and veggies.

“I don’t like tofu.” Hoseok complained as he picked at his plate.

“Then don’t eat it.” Yoongi signed back as he held Jimin on his lap, poking chunks of tofu into his mouth. He wrung out his little silk cloth and chewed thoughtfully, his eyes on the ceiling. “I have some leftover meatloaf I can heat up for you.”

Everything happened so fast that afternoon, that they had nothing prepared. Namjoon and Yoongi decided to have Jimin sleep in their bed with them and tomorrow they would get a bed with rails for him. They also had a nurse scheduled to come out – Seokjin set that up for them. They got a nurse for one hundred and twenty hours with state insurance. And Yoongi was already writing down questions for them on a notepad as he held Jimin with his other arm.

“I don’t like meatloaf either.” Hoseok sulked.

Jungkook waved his hand to get everyone’s attention. “Who?” He signed and pointed at Jimin. “He’s new.” He signed.

Yoongi picked up a sippy cup – a spare they happened to have in the back of the cabinet – and stuck the end in Jimin’s mouth. Jimin dropped his silky to hold it up. “This is Jimin. He’s going to be staying with us for a bit.” Yoongi said, his eyes flashing protectively.

“He’s a baby.” Hoseok signed to the others, his expression turning sage-like.

“No, he’s not.” Yoongi shook his head. “He’s six, like Taehyung.”

Hoseok made a face. “But, then why does he act like a baby?”

Yoongi gently placed Jimin in his booster, hooking his straps over his his chest. Yoongi then spread his hands flat over the surface of the table. “Jimin is…special.” He signed. “When he was a baby he was…” Yoongi winced. “In an accident. How many of you know what the brain does?”

There was an exchange of glances. Jungkook started to rock in his chair, pinching the tofu
between his fingers.

“The brain controls everything.” Namjoon signed. “Your heart and breathing and when you walk and all of your thoughts.”

Yoongi nodded. “That’s right. Jimin’s accident hurt his brain. So, some things it can’t do anymore for him, like seeing and some things he needs some help doing, like eating and bathing.”

“Will he be okay?” Tae signed gently, his eyebrows furrowing in concern.

“He’s okay now.” Yoongi signed. “He just needs some extra help doing things because of it.”

The elder two nodded and Jungkook just stimmed quietly by rocking, his fingers tangled together. Namjoon knew he was listening by the way his eyebrows were furrowed, though.

“When you talk to Jimin,” Namjoon added. “Make sure he can see you. He doesn’t see very well.”

“And be gentle with him. Nice touches.” Yoongi said.

Jungkook stopped stimming, his head cocking to the side. “Nice touch.” He signed and then petted the back of his hand.

“Yes, nice touches.” Yoongi nodded. “Kookie’s got it.”

Jungkook smiled, his nose crinkling. He went back to stimming and Namjoon touched his arm to remind him to continue eating. He picked up a piece of tofu and stuffed it in his mouth.

Taehyung got to his feet and walked around the table to Jimin. “Hey, Jimin.” He said, rubbing his thigh. “My name is Tae. I’m your brother.” He said and signed gently.

Jimin dropped his sippy cup and Yoongi plucked it off of his chest and wiped his face with his bib. He gave a great big smile, put his hand over his mouth and blew a kiss. “Kiss!” He said and then giggled.

Tae smiled. “Does that mean he likes me?” He turned to Yoongi.

“That means he loves you.” Yoongi said, tears in his eyes again.

“Brush, brush.” Namjoon directed, making sure Jungkook was actually brushing and not just moving the toothbrush in and out of his mouth. He picked up the comb and gently started combing out his wet hair.

“Oh!” Jungkook signed, his toothbrush lighting up every time the bristles moved. It was supposed to help encourage the motion of teeth brushing. But, teeth brushing was just one of those tedious tasks that Jungkook lost interest in fast, it didn’t matter what the toothbrush looked like or did.

“Dad,” Hoseok popped his head into the bathroom. “Dad says he needs you.”

Namjoon directed Jungkook to spit and rinse. Jungkook smiled big at Namjoon for inspection and Namjoon kissed his head and the pushed him towards the door. “I’m getting Kookie ready for bed.” He signed.

“I know.” Hoseok signed. “He says when you’re done.”

Namjoon scooped up Jungkook in his arms. “Are you ready for bed?” He asked the eldest as he carried him across the hallway.

Hoseok smiled shyly, his hair glistening jet black from his shower. “Almost.”

“Did you finish your homework?”

“Dad,” Hoseok groaned. “It’s Saturday.”

“Okay,” He conceded. He couldn’t imagine what homework he would get as a first grader over the weekend. “No staying up past lights out.” Namjoon signed. “That goes for Taehyung too. I can see when the nightlights turn on so you can sign.”

Hoseok chewed on his lower lip, his eyes flashing mischievously before he scampered to his and Taehyung’s room.

“Don’t you pick up any bad habits from them, okay?” Namjoon signed as he tickled Kookie’s ribs.

Kookie’s face scrunched with his smile and his two front teeth popped out. He pressed his forehead against Namjoon’s shoulder and Namjoon squeezed him nice and tight like he liked, plopping him down on his bed.

“Music?” Kookie signed.

“Not tonight, bunny boy.” Namjoon signed and then nuzzled him. “I love you.”

Kookie signed “I love you,” back. Namjoon tucked him into bed and turned on his noise machine before snapping off his lights and moving to his own bedroom.

He found Yoongi changing Jimin on their bed.

“Hey,” Yoongi signed as he tugged up Jimin’s bottoms. His legs were slightly bent at the knees and were, like, frozen there. “Can you watch Jimin for, like, a second?”

“Sure, baby.” Namjoon carefully took Jimin and sat down on the bed. He supported Jimin so that he was sitting up on his lap, his head against Namjoon’s chest. His face was tipped up and his eyes were rolled back, making it look like he was staring at the ceiling.

Jimin smiled and blew a kiss. “Kiss.” He said.

“Kiss.” Namjoon said back, running his thumb down Jimin’s cheek.

This whole evening had been a whirlwind. Namjoon hadn’t really been able to let it sink into him that they have a fourth child now. A child that required constant care and attention. A child that was…well…brain damaged. He hadn’t really let it sink into him that Jimin was theirs now.

But, it sunk into him as he watched Jimin play with his silk blanket, a crease forming in his
eyebrows as he tried to grab at the strings of fray on the edge, his fingers missing. Namjoon grabbed his little hand and helped him grip the fibers. He smiled and giggled, spit bubbling to his lips. Namjoon gently wiped his face for him with his bib.

Yoongi’s eyes – his determined, panicked, horror-filled eyes – as he retold how Jimin was shaken, the fifteen seconds of violence that completely changed his life, consumed Namjoon. Yeah, maybe he rushed into this. Yeah, maybe Yoongi should’ve called him before deciding to take Jimin on. Yeah, maybe they were completely out of their depths.

But, if their roles were reversed, would Namjoon had done anything different? If he was the one that stood there while Seokjin retold the horror story of Jimin’s past, would he have just left him there?

No. He wouldn’t have.

“Thanks, baby.” Yoongi signed as he took Jimin back. “Are all the other boys in bed?”

“Just about.”

Yoongi sat down next to him, rocking Jimin like they did with Jungkook sometimes. His eyes were filled with anxiety and he gripped Jimin like he was afraid he was going to float away. Jimin seemed to like the rocking, because his little hand dropped and his eyes started to droop.

“He’s going to be okay, you know.”

Yoongi pressed his lips to Jimin’s forehead. “I’ll feel better when I meet with the nurse.” He signed, his eyes on Namjoon. “And I get some proper training.”

Namjoon scooted forward and placed his head on Yoongi’s shoulder, watching Jimin slowly sink into unconsciousness. “We get some proper training.” He corrected and touched Jimin’s black, feather-soft hair. “If we’re doing this.” He glanced at Jimin. “Then we are doing it together.”

“Hi,” Yoongi greeted the nurse – who looked incredible young, like fifteen but was probably somewhere in her mid-twenties – when he answered the door. “You must be Hazel.”

“Hi, hi.” She greeted, a big bag on her shoulder and clipboard in her arms. She was wearing scrubs with Hello Kitties on them. “You must be Jimin’s new foster parents.”

After introductions, Yoongi led her to the living room where he had parked Jimin in his wheelchair to watch cartoons with Jungkook.

Hazel had been set up for them through Seokjin, who said that Jimin had a nurse that loved him so much that she didn’t mind following him around to all of his new homes.

“Hi, Chimmy!” She greeted, touching Jimin gently on the arm to let him she was there as she got in his field of vision. “Good morning, buddy.”

Jemin started to…dance. Yoongi watched as he wiggled in his seat, his arms and butt going, excited to see the only constant in his life - his smile so wide, it pushed his cheeks up and hid his eyes. “Hi! Kiss!” He blew her a kiss and then reached up with both hands, his fingers gripping for
Hazel gently pulled him out of his wheelchair and sat down cross-legged on the floor, cradling him in her arm. “So,” She said as she opened her folder with one hand. “Every time Jimin goes to a new home, his hours reset with the insurance. Which is awesome.” She said, her voice extremely chipper for seven in the morning. “But, that also means I have to do a new prelim with y’all.”

Yoongi watched as he took a seat next to Kookie on the couch as Jimin wiggled, pressing his head against Hazel’s shoulder and playing with her hair. Namjoon took a seat with him after grabbing himself a cup of coffee. Yoongi automatically shifted so their hands were laced up.

“You want to help me out?” She asked Jimin as she grabbed a ball from her bag. “Can you hold that for me?” She handed it to him and he held it with both hands in front of himself. She turned back to his folder. “So, for the first couple of weeks, I usually just take over bathing and medications, as that’s generally the most complicated parents have to learn. We go over seizure response if y’all aren’t familiar with that yet. Positioning, bathing, daily life stuff and then, I have Jimin’s physical therapist’s card on me - since we are from the same agency – for the therapy side.”

Yoongi just nodded numbly and glanced at Namjoon to make sure he was tracking. He turned back to the nurse. “He’ll… Yoongi had a million questions running through his brain. He’ll be okay with us, right? He’ll be okay, even though we don’t hold nursing degrees? He’ll thrive and be happy with us? We’ll be able to learn, right? “…be like this forever?” He blurted, regretting his words as soon as he spoke them.

Hazel looked unphased. She just repositioned her legs and adjusted Jimin on her lap. “So,” She said as she coaxed the ball out of Jimin’s grip and replaced it with a squishy toy in the shape of a croissant. “You heard about what happened, right?”

“Vaguely.” Yoongi answered and turned his eyes to Jungkook, who was rocking, his hands tied together under his chin. He smoothed his hair down and tried to smooth down his anxiety and emotions with the same motion.

“Well, just to give you a kind of high-overview, when the brain swells and gets to the skull and can’t swell anymore, it kind of just starts,” She made a motion with her hand. “Sheering off, if that makes sense? And brain matter doesn’t regenerate. So, in a nutshell, yes. He’ll be dependent forever.” She said as she patted his back. “That doesn’t mean that Jimin can’t learn. That doesn’t mean he can’t be a happy, fulfilled person. He’s just…” She shrugged. “Going to need a lot of help.”

“Going to need a lot of help.” Yoongi repeated, feeling completely at a loss as he watched Jimin squish the toy, giggling like it was the funniest thing in the world.

Yoongi and Namjoon spent the first almost two hours of Hazel’s allotted 120 hours asking questions. Even after Yoongi had to get up to fix the boys breakfast. He asked questions from behind the breakfast bar.

They asked about diet restrictions. What he liked to eat. What he didn’t like to eat. How to make sure that he stayed healthy. Sleeping habits. Pooping habits. How to handle him. What cerebral palsy really was, since none of them really knew. What his epilepsy was like. How to keep him happy.
How to keep him healthy.

Unlike the other three, Yoongi didn’t want to figure him out as they went. He didn’t want leave any stones unturned. He wanted to know it all. He wanted to be as prepared as possible. It made him feel better as he watched Hazel answer all of their questions confidently, Jimin curled calmly in her arms, his little angelic face serene as he stared at the ceiling.

“He’s pretty much the happiest camper.” She said. “He only really cries after seizures, because he gets really disoriented and if he’s startled really bad. He’s starting to develop hip dysplasia and that bothers him—”

“Like causes him pain?” Namjoon cut off, his fingers flexing. Yoongi felt that concern too as he resettled on the couch next to him.

“Yeah,” She nodded. “A little. It’s pretty common with CP.” She said. “His PT will give you more info on that.”

Yoongi nodded and Namjoon played with his fingers. “He knows some words?” He asked it like a question. He knew that he knew a couple. Kiss. Boo.

“He does.” She smiled down at him. “He knows so many words. Jimin say ‘bye, bye.'”

He waved his hand. “Bye, bye.” He said with his tiny voice.

“And what’s your name, buddy?”

“Chim.” He said his fingers tangling into Hazel’s hair.

She tickled his belly. “And who do you love?”

“Chim.” He smiled, his grin turning playful, teasing.

“Chim?” She asked as she tickled his belly. “You silly boy, you’re supposed to say ‘you.’”

He shook his head, his nose scrunching. “Chim.” He said again, giving a loud giggle.

“You are the silliest boy.”

For the first time since they had taken Jimin home, Yoongi felt the knots in his stomach loosen as he watched the interaction between him and the nurse. He had spent all morning getting to know the issues, instead of getting to know the little boy. The perfect little boy that liked to tease his friends and blow kisses.

Yoongi got up off the couch and sat down on the floor. Hazel handed him over, directing him on the best place to support him on his body. He gave Yoongi a big smile and the knots loosened even further.

He blew Yoongi a kiss. “Kiss!” He said and giggled.

“That’s his way of saying ‘I love you.’” Hazel said.

“I know.” Yoongi whispered as he stared into his eyes. “I love him too.”

Chapter End Notes
Please comment! <33
Chapter Notes

As always, I have to have some conflict, but I assure you that it’ll be soft. Most likely. Like 87% sure that nothing too major will happen.

This chapter is Yoongi being the real mvp

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jimin’s lips pursed in concentration as he played with his silky piece of cloth, scrunching it in front of his face in his fists. He had little rolls on his arms. Yoongi wasn’t sure if there was a wrist-version of cankles, but Jimin had them. As well as little rolls on his thighs and around his middle.

Their first official day with him was a…success. And honestly, Yoongi was freaking out for nothing. Taking care of Jimin wasn’t very different than taking care of a baby. A large, blind baby that had fragile hips and legs that were rigid with spasticity and suffered from seizures and was never, ever going to get older.

He brr’d his lips, causing spit to bubble to the surface and Yoongi wiped his face as he finished changing him on Jungkook’s bed. He glanced at Namjoon, who was sitting on the floor cross-legged as he put together Jimin’s special bed that had railings so he would accidentally roll himself out. Jungkook was sitting amongst the mess on the floor with him, stimming hard by rocking, his hair flopping in his face.

“I’m horrible and building things. Ikea furniture. Legos. Tetris.” Namjoon signed as he scratched his head and looked at the instructions. “How much did we pay for this bed, again?”

“Well, insurance paid for some, but like a grand.” Yoongi said as he tugged on Jimin’s pajama bottoms.

“And it didn’t come assembled?” Namjoon eyebrows scrunched. Jungkook waved his hand and then pointed at two pieces that fit together. Namjoon snapped those together. “At least I have my trusty sidekick here.” He rubbed Jungkook’s shoulder and Jungkook responded by jamming his hands under his chin and smiling.

Yoongi gently lifted Jimin, using the technique show by Hazel that didn’t put stress on his joints and placed him in his chair, buckling him in. “Is is cool if I leave him so I can get the other two ready for bed?”

“Yes,” Namjoon pulled Jimin closer by the frame of his wheelchair. He rubbed his knee. “I promise I’ll have this done before bedtime.”

“Are you sure?” Yoongi asked incredulously as he looked around at the mess of parts that Namjoon created on Jungkook’s floor.

Namjoon shook his head and got to his knees to get into Jimin’s field of vision. Jimin smiled when he saw him. “Hi.” He said with his little voice, waving his hand.

“Hi, baby.” Namjoon said, making funny faces. “Daddy doesn’t trust me and that makes me
sad.” He pouted, putting both fists next to his cheeks in an attempt to be cute and shifting his eyes to Yoongi. “See how sad Daddy is?”

“You’re so full of it.” Yoongi groaned at Namjoon’s teasing. He stomped out of Jungkook and Jimin’s bedroom into the elder kids’ room.

“Dad,” Hoseok signed as he sat at the head of his bed. “Can you help me with this problem?” He signed and held up his math workbook. “I can’t get it.”

“You’re doing homework?” Yoongi asked.

“Yeah,” Hoseok signed lazily and then sighed. “I had to redo this worksheet because I wasn’t getting it at school.” He pouted.

“I-I tried to help.” Tae said quickly from the desk chair. “But, he still wasn’t getting it.”

Hoseok’s face dropped to the workbook. “I hate math.” He signed.

“Okay, okay.” Yoongi hurried in. “What aren’t we getting?”

It was a fill in the blank worksheet of both subtraction and addition problems. He had to fill in the blank on whether it was addition or subtraction by writing in the correct sign.

“So,” Yoongi signed. “This is really easy. If the number gets bigger after the equal sign, then it’s addition. If it gets smaller, it’s subtraction.”

Hoseok’s eyebrows scrunched and he filled in a plus sign when it was a subtraction problem. Yoongi glanced at the clock on the wall. The only one that had a bath so far was Jimin. The elder kids still needed to get showers done and then he needed to get Kookie bathed. Yoongi had to go through their backpacks still. None of their lunches were made. And then all kids needed to be in bed by 8:30 since it was a school night.

“Why did you wait until seven on a Sunday to do your homework?” Yoongi asked Hoseok.

Hoseok pouted. “Because, I hate math.”

Yoongi sighed. He couldn’t even get Namjoon involved because he was putting Jimin’s bed together. But, that wasn’t important right now. What was important was that Hoseok got this concept so he could move on to the next one. He rubbed his back. “I’m going to start Tae’s shower and I’ll be right back and we’ll tackle this together, okay?”

Yoongi signed at Tae to grab his PJs and Yoongi went to the bathroom and started the shower for him, making sure it was an okay temperature.

“Babe.” Namjoon called. “Can you come here?”

Yoongi stopped in the doorway of the bathroom and glanced at Hoseok’s room, trying to figure out who should take priority. He quickly stepped into Jungkook’s room. Homework could wait, he guess.

“Jimin knows another word.” Namjoon said as he cradled their newest to his chest, his hand patting his back. “‘Ouch.’”

“Ouch?” Yoongi approached him, alarmed. “What do you mean ‘ouch?’”

“I think it’s his hips.” Namjoon rubbed his thigh. “From sitting.”
“Oh, baby.” Yoongi rubbed his back. He seemed okay being held like that, a bit of drool dribbling from his little pursed lips and his eyes at half-mast. “I can lay him down on our bed.”

“Our bed is really high.” Namjoon said. “What if he rolls out?”

Yoongi chewed on his lip as he deliberated. “I’ll take him.” He signed finally. “I’m helping Hoseok with homework, but I only need one hand to do that.”

“Are you sure?” Namjoon asked, but Yoongi was already pulling the child out of his arms.

“Hi, baby.” Yoongi greeted, but Jimin didn’t say it back as he settled his full cheek against the towel on Yoongi’s shoulder. Yoongi hoped that he wasn’t in pain. *God, please don’t be in pain.*

“I’m almost done.” Namjoon said as he glanced at the mess around him. The bed was half-complete. At least, there was a place for Jimin’s twin-sized mattress now. “Twenty minutes and then I’ll be there to help put everyone down.”

“Okay, babe.” Yoongi said, but he was already spinning around.

“Baby, I’m sorry.” Yoongi said against Jimin head as he carried him into Hoseok and Tae’s room. He didn’t seem distressed, but Hazel had said that Jimin didn’t really show his pain until it was really bad. Jimin just gurgled and blew spit bubbles.

Yoongi sat back down on Hoseok’s bed next to him and Hoseok glanced at Jimin before looking down at his homework. “Did I do it right?” He asked and pointed to a problem.

Yoongi inspected his work as he patted Jimin’s back. “That one would be addition.” He signed and pointed out Hoseok’s mistake. Hoseok put his workbook on his lap and erased his answer, brushing away eraser bits with his long, delicate fingers.

Jemin pulled his head back a little and Yoongi wiped his face for him with his bib. He started to vocalize, talk - babbling as fast as he could go. Yoongi watched him with surprise as his expression turned so serious – like he was telling Yoongi off or reciting a dramatic soliloquy – his eyebrows furrowed and his lips pursed in a pout. Yoongi cracked up laughing.

“Dad?” Hoseok signed, his eyes wide. “What’s so funny?”

“Jemin’s talking.” Yoongi signed back. “Jemin,” He grabbed his hand and held it. “Do you want something, baby? Milk?”

Jemin just carried on. He started bounce, pushing off Yoongi’s lap with his toes a little. “Eh?” He finished in a question, holding his hand palm-up to the ceiling.

Yoongi wasn’t sure how to respond. “Sure, baby. Anything you want.” He adjusted him on his lap. “Are you sleepy? You’ve had a long day, huh?”

Jemin just responded with more spit bubbles and a wide smile. Yoongi wiped his face and kissed his button nose. He was so dramatic and playful and just…perfect. His little angel that was too good for the world he lived in.

“He’s silly.” Hoseok signed. “Is he going to come to school with us?”

Yoongi shook his head as Jimin resettled with a little sigh against him, getting whatever he needed off of his chest and relaxing. “He’ll…” Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed. “He’ll go to school, but probably the school down the street with a special teacher that’ll help him.” Yoongi felt his arms
reflexively tighten around their newest, a spark of protectiveness going off in him like a camera flash. He couldn’t imagine dropping Jimin off with a complete stranger now that he had him. Now that he had him and could keep him safe.

“Oh, will he do math?”

Yoongi felt his smile tighten. “No.” He answered.

“Lucky.” Hoseok sighed as he looked forlornly at his workbook.

Yoongi laughed again and kissed Hoseok’s head. “Let’s get this finished, okay?”

It took longer than twenty minutes.

Actually, it took, like, two hours. Namjoon was sure he was missing screws in the packet of bits and nuts and bolts. And there were three pieces that he was positive wasn’t actually on the diagram. He was boggled that they spent a mortgage payment on this bed and it didn’t come assembled.

But, he finished. Finally. He got the bed made in the galaxy sheet set and put the spare duvet on top and then collapsed one of the rails so that he could get Jimin into bed.

He turned and picked up Kookie from where he slept in a ball on the floor, his hair still a little damp from his shower. Yoongi got him bathed and then he went right back to helping Namjoon with fitting parts together, holding steady until his eyelids drooped and he passed out.

Gingerly, Namjoon put their youngest into bed, tucking him and saying goodnight. His nose scrunched up and then his face relaxed as his palms fell open next to his face.

Namjoon tip-toed to the elder kids’ room, checking on them. They were both asleep too – Hoseok in Tae’s bed as they cuddled against each other.

And then Namjoon moved across the hallway into his own bedroom. The overhead light was still on, but Yoongi was belly-down on the bed, one leg hanging off. His arm was wrapped protectively around Jimin, who was curled up sound asleep.

Namjoon grabbed Jimin first. He carefully picked him up and carried him across the hallway, putting him into his own new bed. He stuffed his middle and third finger into his mouth to suck on them and Namjoon rubbed one of his legs that were bent in sideways a little from the CP and gently pushed his bangs off of his forehead.

Namjoon traced his fingers down his back, feeling the little bumps through his spine. He had gone through his file – which was as thick as a textbook – that afternoon. It held his medical records from when he was hospitalized, all of his notes from the nurse, and the write-offs from his past homes. All of his last families reported that he was a sweet boy, but his needs were too great for them to take on long-term. Either parents who didn’t have experience with epilepsy or dependence to that degree – like Namjoon and Yoongi – or families who did but were already too full to really take on another.

And then Namjoon found the police reports and the court orders. The police report of the
monster that shook him. He was serving a life sentence. And his mother was serving time too for
child endangerment and possession. Her rights to him had been legally terminated.

Namjoon sighed as he rubbed Jimin’s cheek. When he propositioned fostering to Yoongi –
over pho at their local Vietnamese place – he had this grandiose vision in mind. He was going to take
on a deaf foster – maybe two – like Hoseok and Tae. They were never going to know pain like he
did. They were never going to know suffering like he did. They were going to be raised as children
should – in the sunlight and out of reach of being touched by trauma. They were going to have
support and dreams and be loved.

But, Namjoon realized that the vision he had was not possible. Because, fostering was
innately traumatic. Either by how the children got there, like Hoseok or Jungkook. Past families, like
Tae. Or all of it, like Jimin.

“It’s gonna be different,” Namjoon whispered as quietly as he could as he ran his hand down
Jimin’s back. “You don’t realize it yet. But, it will be.” He covered him with his blanket and tucked
his silky cloth in his hand. “It will be.”

Namjoon stopped in the hallway where he could see into everyone’s room. Hoseok in Tae’s
bed, both cuddled up to each other. Jungkook sleeping with his fingers twitching. Jimin sleeping in
his brand new bed that had rails. And his beautiful husband that had seemed to snail his way up the
bed a little so he could grab a pillow and jam it under his face.

Namjoon smiled as he looked between all of them, fondness filling him up with warmth. But,
then he frowned as he looked around, realizing something. Realizing something very, very
important.

He about-faced into the master bedroom and gently shook his husband by his shoulder.
“Yoongi.” He whispered. “Yoongi.”

Yoongi muttered something unreadable to Namjoon, twisted his face and shoved it into the
pillow.

“Yoongi, I need to talk to you.” Namjoon shook him again.

“Morning.” He signed with his eyes closed.

“Baby, I want to buy a bigger house.” Namjoon said.

That woke him up. His eyes cracked open and he sat up – his hair sticking up on one side
and his eyes still foggy from sleep. “What?” He signed.

“I think our house is too small for all of our kids.” Namjoon signed and spoke. “We should
get a bigger one.”

“We don’t have the money for a new house.” Yoongi signed back and rubbed his eye.

“What do you mean?” Namjoon signed back. “We have savings.”

“Yeah,” Yoongi said. “We also have potentially two sets of braces to pay for, college,
hearing aids…” He sighed, his lips pouting sleepily as he put his pillow back at the head of the bed and pulled the blanket back.

Namjoon rolled his eyes. “My practical, thrifty love, you earn a down payment for a house every time you master an album.”

“My intelligent, naïve husband,” Yoongi mumbled back. “You’re forgetting two things – Jungkook and Jimin aren’t ours and I haven’t had time to work on any projects bigger than a song or two at a time because I’m a stay-at-home dad.”

“I know.” Namjoon cupped his face before he had a chance to crawl underneath the blankets. “But, Jungkook will be ours and I know the boys won’t want to share a room forever.”

“What about Jimin?”

“What about him?” Namjoon asked.

Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed. “Where does he fit into the equation?”

Namjoon couldn’t answer that yet. It was love at first sight for Yoongi when it came to Jimin. His realistic, passive husband was taken by this little soul who had only known pain. This little soul whose only constant was a home health nurse and a piece of silk cloth. This little soul that smiled despite of it all.

And Jimin wasn’t theirs. But…he could be. His parents didn’t have legal claim to him. He could be adopted tomorrow.

But, the state paid for his medical care. And just based on the cost of his bed, Namjoon knew they were going to put every penny of their foster stipend to use. If they adopted him, they would lose both of that. And he was completely dependent and would be for the rest of his life. And while it was love at first sight to Yoongi, Namjoon was still wrapping his head around this monstrous challenge they now faced.

“I don’t know.” He answered truthfully.

Yoongi just sighed and moved to get underneath the blankets and Namjoon realized he had said the wrong thing.

“Baby,” Namjoon said, grabbing his wrist. “I love Jimin and I’m going to help him anyway I can. But, we just got him. Let’s cool our jets a little.”

“You said you wanted to adopt Tae on the first night he was here.” Yoongi argued.

“Yeah, but Tae…” Namjoon’s eyebrows furrowed as his sentence dropped off. Tae wasn’t special needs.

“Tae’s going to be deafblind in his twenties. He’s going to need a lot of help.” Yoongi signed and said. “Jungkook’s a nonverbal autistic and may need help too. What makes Jimin different from them?”

Namjoon dropped his eyes. He couldn’t answer that. “I don’t know.”

“Well,” Yoongi said as he got under the covers. “I’ll talk about buying a bigger house when you figure it out.” He put his cell phone on the charger. “Goodnight.” He signed and clicked off his lamp.
Yoongi had to go grocery shopping the next day. It was apart of the list he was going to do on Saturday, but then…Jimin happened. And all the plans got rearranged.

*Jemin happened.*

Yoongi looked into the rearview mirror at the babies sitting in their car seats as he drove to the market. Jungkook had Yoongi’s iPad and was fixed on this game where you hit the note in time with the music, like *Guitar Hero*. Except, all the songs were classic piano tunes. Jungkook only really liked Chopin’s Nocturne, however and Yoongi listened to the tune get restarted every sixty seconds.

Jemin had his silk cloth pressed up against his cheek and was making cooing noises. The other hand would gesture in the air every couple of minutes.

“Chim,” Yoongi said in the mirror. “Can you say ‘daddy?’”

Jungkook signed ‘dad’ on his forehead and Yoongi smiled. Jimin just moved his silk cloth to his other cheek and rubbed, his little face peaceful. *We’ll get there.* Yoongi thought as he refocused on the road.

Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed when he ran through Namjoon and his conversation last night in his head. Yoongi understood Namjoon’s hesitancy with Jimin. He did. He saw that his scholar of a husband was just being practical. Joon just wanted to make sure that they were capable of taking him on without rushing into anything. He wasn’t like their other kids. He was going to be work and dedication and a lot of love. Yoongi saw it.

It didn’t stop the flame of anger in Yoongi’s chest, though.

Because Yoongi saw that future. It was different than the future he had forty-eight hours ago. But, he saw it. And it included Jimin, even if that meant taking care of him for the rest of their lives. It included him. Their family wasn’t complete. But, it was now with Jimin in it. Their missing puzzle piece they didn’t realize that was missing until they had him. He was mad that Namjoon didn’t automatically see that too.

Yoongi pushed that from his mind as he stood in the cart corral at the front of the store and tried to figure out how to drive a cart and a wheelchair the same time. He really didn’t want to shop without a cart, since he needed to pick up more items than a hand basket’s worth. But, he was pretty sure that Jimin didn’t have enough core strength to keep himself upright in the kid seat of a cart either.

He wondered for a second if a sales associate would help. But, he was in a big chain store, so probably not. And he didn’t really want to ask either. That seemed…weak. Yoongi wasn’t weak. He could figure it out. For Jimin, he could figure it out. Adaptation. Jimin was apart of the family now. He had to be adapted to. That was all. Easy peasy.

Yoongi settled on pushing the chair with one hand while pulling the cart backwards behind him. That seemed to work if they went at a slow pace so Yoongi didn’t accidently bump the cart into the back of his ankles – which he did twice and had to bite his tongue from saying a curse word.
And they got through half the store without a hitch, making it all the way to the breakfast aisle with no issues. But, then Jungkook started growing anxious and was testing his limits by starting to hop down the aisles, getting farther away each time and hesitating listening to Yoongi when he called him back.

“Jungkook,” Yoongi grabbed his wrist before he tried to take off again. “Stay with me, okay?”

Jungkook responded by flapping his arms intensely in front of his face. He was growing bored. Or tired. Or both. Yoongi couldn’t tell.

“Just a big longer, okay?” Yoongi said. “I know the grocery store isn’t your favorite place.”

Jungkook made a noise and wrenched his arm out of Yoongi’s grip. “Home.” He signed.

“No, baby.” Yoongi responded, smoothing down his hair. “We have to finish grocery shopping. Just two more aisles, okay?”

Jungkook’s face flushed red. “Home.” He repeated in sign.

Yoongi pulled the iPad out of the little basket that sat under the handlebars of Jimin’s wheelchair. He tried to hand it to Jungkook. “Do you want to play games? Or watch music videos?”

“Home.” Jungkook just repeated.

“Kookie, no-,” Yoongi said, feeling frustration churn inside of him.

Jungkook turned and started to tear off at a full sprint down the aisle. Yoongi snatched his wrist just in time, jerking him to a stop. Jungkook yanked his arm out of Yoongi’s grip, wailed a low whine, and then threw himself on the floor in a fit.

“Oh-oh. Oh-oh.” A little voice said behind Yoongi and he turned to see Jimin’s silk cloth on the floor. “Oh-oh.” Jimin repeated, his hand out and his fingers squeezing.

Yoongi turned back to Jungkook, who was pounding the floor with his fist, sobs heating his face red. Yoongi straightened and sighed, wishing Namjoon was here to assist and thankful the store was pretty empty on a Monday morning. Having gawkers who probably just make Yoongi’s blood boil.

But, there wasn’t any use in getting mad. It would just make the situation worse. He settled for patience instead – not giving in and giving the audience Jungkook wanted and letting him just get his emotions out so they could finish shopping.

Instead, Yoongi turned and picked up Jimin’s cloth and putting it in his little fist. He beamed and threw the cloth on his face, yanked it back and gleefully yelled “boo!”

Yoongi squatted and rubbed Jungkook’s back, waiting for his sobs to die into hiccups as he realized he wasn’t going to immediately get what he wanted and his tantrum was for naught. He rubbed and pulled a box of Kix off of the lower shelf, turning it to inspect the sugar content.

“Uh-oh.” Jimin said again. And Yoongi turned to see the cloth on the floor again. Yoongi got up and replaced it in Jimin’s hand and he…

…threw it back on the floor.
“Uh-oh.” Jimin said, drool making his chin moist.

“All right, mister?” Yoongi asked as he scooped up Jimin’s silky again. “You’re doing this on purpose, huh?” He rubbed the cloth against Jimin’s cheek and Jimin smiled. “You’re an attention hog, aren’t you?”

Jungkook rolled on his back into a starfish position in the middle of the aisle floor, inhaling stuffed up breaths through his nose. His crying had ceased completely.

Yoongi left the cloth with Jimin, bent down and scooped Jungkook up and placed him on his feet. “Are you finished?” He asked pointedly, bending down to one knee to get on Jungkook’s eye-level.

Jungkook just twisted his hands and placed his cheek on them, not meeting Yoongi’s eyes. His nose was snotty and his cheeks were splotchy and red.

“I know you don’t like shopping.” Yoongi said as he fixed his hair. “I don’t either. But,” He sighed. “Sometimes you just gotta do stuff you don’t want to do. It’s just life.”

Jungkook pouted, but dutifully nodded. Whether Yoongi’s lesson got through to him was something else. But, he was calm now. And the moment of drama was over. They could start over.

“Okay,” Yoongi pulled the Kix cereal and the Life cereal on the shelf, presenting both to Jungkook. “Which one?”

Chapter End Notes

Please comment! <33
“Will you please let me help?” Namjoon rubbed Yoongi’s shoulders as he stirred something over the stove. “Please?”

Yoongi had been…cold-shouldering him all evening. And Namjoon knew that it was because of their conversation they had the night before.

“Please?” He pleaded and kissed the back of neck, underneath his ear.

“Can you check on the babies?” Yoongi signed and then went back to the pot.

Namjoon and Yoongi didn’t fight very often. Or ever. And honestly, he didn’t consider this a fight. It was more them…operating on a different frequency. And maybe some miscommunication. Or a lot of miscommunication. He did spring this on Yoongi when he was trying to fall asleep.

Because, he wasn’t against Jimin being with them long-term. He just…wasn’t sure if adoption was right. At least, not at this moment. They were still getting to know him. They were still figuring him out. Him and everything that went along with him.

And Namjoon needed to talk to Yoongi. He needed to let him know this. They needed to work this out.

But, the kids took priority at the moment.

Hoseok was sitting at the dining room table with a worksheet in front of him, his cheek on his fist. Namjoon waved to get his attention. “Okay?” He signed.

“Yeah,” Hoseok said and Namjoon started to move to the living room. Hoseok waved his hand and Namjoon stopped. “What’s three plus twelve?”

“Fifteen.” Namjoon signed back automatically and Hoseok wrote it down. Namjoon rolled his eyes and sighed. “Hoseok,” He signed. “You have to do your homework. I can’t do you homework for you.”

“I know.” Hoseok signed back. “I just couldn’t get that one.”

“Where’s Tae?” Namjoon signed.

“In the living room.” Hoseok sighed. “He already finished his homework.”

“I’ll come help,” Namjoon volunteered. “Let me just check on the others, okay?”
“Okay.” Hoseok signed back and then erased his answer on his worksheet, his eyebrows furrowing.

Namjoon moved into the living room, where Jimin was sitting in a special chair that had no legs on the floor in the middle of the rug, a tray and a strap keeping him in place. He had a play phone and his silky within reach.

But, he wasn’t paying attention to either. He was playing with Taehyung, who was on his knees behind Jimin’s chair. He popped out to one side, causing Jimin’s head to whip around in surprise and then hide and pop out the other side. “Peek-a-boo!” Tae sang and Jimin giggled loudly, his eyes turned up to the ceiling.

Namjoon watched Tae make a new friend, smiling as they had fun together. He loved that Jimin was settling in. He loved that Tae was taking to him so well despite their differences. Although, there wasn’t a shadow of a doubt in Namjoon’s mind that Tae would be Jimin’s friend. Tae made friends with the caterpillars that stuck themselves to outdoor deck. Tae talked to the receptionist at the dentist’s office. Tae thought he saw faces in the clouds.

Namjoon looked around for the youngest, not finding him. He waved to get Tae’s attention.

“Where’s JK?” Namjoon asked.

Tae looked around and then shrugged. “In his room, I think?” He said and signed.

Namjoon walked down the hallway and stopped at Jungkook and Jimin’s room. Jungkook was on the bed playing with his Bop-It toy, his fingers moving dexterously over it.

“Hey, buddy.” Namjoon said. “Everything okay in here?”

Jungkook didn’t respond. He just continued to play his game. Namjoon entered and sat down next to Jungkook on his bed, he moved his bangs out of his face and sighed as he watched him. Everyday Namjoon prayed that they would get a call from Seokjin that no family had been found. It had been three, almost four months now.

And he knew that as soon as he got the call, they would turn around and file for adoption and then Jungkook could be theirs forever.

Namjoon rubbed Jungkook’s back, pressed his thumbs in to give him a massage. Jungkook grunted and dropped the game, letting his head loll forward.

Jimin could be adopted too. He could. But…

The lights flashed and Namjoon glanced at the door, finding Hoseok. “Dad says that dinner’s ready.” He signed. “He also said to tell you to change Jimin.”


“Tae has his appointment with the geneticist tomorrow.” Yoongi signed as he spread peanut butter over four slices of bread.

“Yeah?” Namjoon signed back as he spread jelly on the other halves, completing the
sandwiches for tomorrow’s set of lunches for himself and the elder boys.

“Yeah, I made it at eight-thirty.” Yoongi signed. “So we could drop Tae off at school to make it to Jimin’s appointment with his therapist at eleven.”

Namjoon finished one sandwich and placed it in a tupperware container and snapped on the lid. And then he made another and another until he had a tower of PB & Js. He sighed and turned towards his husband, leaning on the counter with his hip.

He opened his mouth to speak, but Yoongi’s head turned and he grabbed the video baby monitor that he purchased at Target that day on Hazel’s recommendation in case Jimin had a seizure in the middle of the night. He also got a changing table that Namjoon was going to have to put together so they didn’t have to change him on the bed anymore.

Namjoon stiffened with concern. “Everything okay?” He asked.

“Yeah,” Yoongi signed back with a little smile. “He just threw his silky on the ground.” His smile faded and he put the monitor back on the counter.

“Yoongi,” Namjoon started. “I want to say I’m sorry about last night. I…had an idea and I got excited and I feel like I got…ahead of myself and-;”

Yoongi’s narrow eyes flashed up to him. “I agree that we need a bigger house.” He signed. “Or at least a house with wider wheelchair-sized doorways.” He grabbed the bag of baby carrots and opened it.

Namjoon sighed. “That would be good.” He said.

Yoongi’s fingers froze on the bag of baby carrots and he looked up at Namjoon, question marks in his eyes.

“I…” Namjoon started to sign. “I…” he huffed as he tried to figure out what he wanted to say.

Yoongi placed his hand on Namjoon’s. “I get it.” He signed. “I do. Jimin’s gonna be…” He shrugged and glanced at the monitor again as he signed. “Work. He’s going to take a lot of work. More than any of our other children need.”

“He is, Yoongi.” Namjoon agreed. “And I’m just…” Namjoon felt his eyebrows furrow. “I don’t feel confident…yet. Not like I did with Tae or Jungkook.”

“I know.” Yoongi’s eyes dropped, disappointment flashing in them. “I don’t feel confident either.”

“But, but,” Namjoon started quickly. “But, we have Hazel who is going to teach us and his therapists and his doctors. And while I’m not confident now, it doesn’t mean I’m not willing to learn. It doesn’t mean I won’t be confident in the future, y’know?”

Yoongi nodded. “I just,” He started to sign, his hands waving in the air. “I can’t give him up, knowing what he’s been through. I can’t turn him away.” His signs grew faster as anxiety made his eyes tight. “I just think about him in someone else’s house…” His eyes misted over and he shook his head. “Being neglected? Ignored? Only to be hot potatoed to another family? I can’t let that happen, Namjoon. He’s already been through so much. I need to keep him safe.”

Namjoon wiped a stray tear away from his cheek. “He’s staying right here, okay? He’s going to be loved and it’s going to be different with us. He has us now.”

Yoongi pressed his face into Namjoon’s chest and nodded. “He has us now.” He repeated in sign language.

Tae was playing a game of keep away from Jungkook as they waited in the lobby of the geneticist’s office. They offered to call with the results, but they also said it would only take an hour since they were really only looking for one particular thing. So, Yoongi and Namjoon opted to just wait it out.

Yoongi watched Rachael Ray make a thirty-minute pasta dish on the television on the wall as he tried to keep the wave of panic at bay in the back of mind. His palms were sweating. They were actually sweating as apprehension churned in his insides, threatening to turn his internal organs into a smoothie.

It shouldn’t worry him as bad as it did. Tae would be fine – whether he had Usher’s or not. It would just be another thing to adapt to, which Yoongi and Namjoon were pros at now. Adapting to make sure Tae still lived a long and happy life. Helen Keller did it right? If she could do it, Taehyung could.

But, Yoongi was still panicking. Of course he was panicking. He was a parent about to be told that his son was potentially going to go blind. On top of being deaf? And that he was going to have to navigate the world like that? With only three senses?

Yoongi reminded himself to inhale.

“Tae,” Namjoon said. “Be nice to your brother, okay?”

Tae nodded, a neon green ace wrap wound around the crook of his arm. They pulled one vial of blood with a butterfly needle and Tae was so intrigued that it was called a ‘butterfly’ needle that he didn’t even realize he was being stuck.

Tae looked at Namjoon through his glasses, his lips pursing into a little pout as he gave Jungkook’s noodle ball back to him. Jungkook wrapped his arms around the toy, jammed it under his chin, and started to rock. “Sorry, Daddy.” He breathed.

“It’s okay, baby.” Namjoon said gently, brushing his hair down. “Kookie’s little and doesn’t always know that you’re just playing when you do that.”

Taehyung settled back on the thinly padded, gray waiting room chair and opened the picture book he brought, crossed his legs and pretended to be a grown-up as he waited. Yoongi felt a wash of worry course through him and he turned and fiddled with Jimin to keep his hands from shaking.

Their newest had a ring toy in his hand and his silk cloth on his knee. He thrust the toy out to Yoongi. “Ah?” He asked.

“No, baby.” Yoongi said as he tugged Jimin’s shirt down. “That’s your toy.” He said and
pulled him closer so that Jimin could see him. “Hey, can you say ‘daddy?’” He said slowly. “Daddy?”

Jemin’s eyebrows furrowed and his head tipped to the side. “Ball.” He said instead, thrusting the toy out. “Ball?”

Yoongi took the toy and looked through the hole in the middle. “I see you.” He sang and Jimin giggled, his fingers reaching out. Yoongi handed him back his toy and he put it up to his face, mimicking Yoongi. “Boo!” He said and giggled.

Yoongi leaned forward and kissed Jimin’s forehead, wiping his chin off in the same motion. “My silly boy.” He said, feeling a little better basking in Jimin’s aura of purity and unadulterated cheerfulness.

It would be fine. *Fine.*

“Kim?” The nurse called from the doorway.

Yoongi stood up with Namjoon and shared a glance with him before they collected their children. Yoongi grabbed the diaper back and pushed the wheelchair and Namjoon grabbed the other two, holding Tae’s hand and Tae dutifully holding Kookie’s wrist as they all followed the nurse to the office.

The geneticist herself was a tall lady who was wearing a business suit and bright yellow Crocs. She was sitting on the corner of the desk and smiled when she saw everyone. Yoongi wasn’t sure if that was a good sign or not.

They all got settled – well everyone except for Jimin, who decided that right at that very moment was good time to start a babbling. Namjoon moved his bangs and held his hand. “Shhh, baby.” He said. “Shhh.”

“Well,” She said once everyone was seated, flipping through a couple of papers. “Taehyung doesn’t have Usher’s.”

Yoongi blinked as he computed that. “He…he doesn’t?”

She shook her head. “Not according to his genes.” She launched into a spiel about ‘protein folding’ and ‘rhodopsin mutations,’ ending with a shrug and a “he looks good to me. Just the usual autosomal recessive deafness.”

“So…” Namjoon blinked as he spoke slowly. “The eye doctor…was wrong.”

She smiled. “Contrary to popular belief, doctors are human too.” She glanced at the papers. “I would maybe schedule a visit to get a second opinion on whatever his first doctor saw. But, Taehyung doesn’t have Usher’s.” She shook her head. “Genes don’t lie.”

Namjoon smiled, his heavy-lidded eyes sparkling. “Especially, if they’re really tight.”

She gave a chuckle at his joke. “That’s not the first time I’ve heard that one.”

Yoongi just stared at his knees and listened to Jimin carry on his one-sided conversation. Tae was fine. He was…fine. He was going to be okay. He didn’t have Usher’s. Yoongi sucked in a full lungful of air and felt himself deflate like a farty balloon.

“I don’t get it.” Tae said, his eyebrows furrowing at Namjoon’s joke.
And Yoongi and Namjoon just giggled. Giggles that floated like bubbles around their head – light and airy and worry-free.

“Can I bring an ice cream for Hoseok?” Tae asked as he looked up at Yoongi with wide eyes.

“Well, it’ll be all melted before it gets to him.” Yoongi smoothed down his hair.

“I don’t want to leave him out.” Tae frowned and pressed his cheek to Yoongi’s hip. “He’ll be sad.”

Yoongi glanced at the menu of different ice creams and gelatos, looking for something that would survive a fifteen-minute drive to school. “How about a milkshake?” Yoongi pointed.

Tae nodded, his bangs flopping. “Okay,” He said. “Milkshake.”

Yoongi glanced behind his shoulder where Namjoon were keeping the babies entertained at the table he snagged in the corner. They were celebrating the good news with ice cream – even though Tae didn’t know that. He just thought he was getting a treat before having to go back to school.

Yoongi grabbed a small banana milkshake for Jungkook, since it was made with real bananas with no artificial stuff that could potentially smell. A small cup of ice cream for him and Jimin to share, a cake cone of chocolate for Namjoon and Taehyung ordered strawberry.

“You want some ice cream, baby?” Yoongi asked as he spooned some into Jimin’s mouth. He shivered at the sudden, unexpected temperature – his lips rolling into a surprised ‘o.’ “Is it cold?” Yoongi said and pulled the spoon back, but he chased it, his hands going as he leaned forward.

Yoongi glanced at Jungkook, who had both palms wrapped around his milkshake, sucking it as fast as he could go. “Slow down, Kookie.” He said. “You’re going to give yourself a…” Jungkook’s eyes squeezed shut and his hands started patting his head on his temples. He made a low moan and started to rock. “…brain freeze.” He sighed.

“Open your mouth.” Namjoon ordered Jungkook, who obediently opened – a dribble of milkshake dripping off his lip. Namjoon stuffed his thumb in Jungkook’s mouth and rubbed the roof, trying to warm him up.

Tae giggled as his own strawberry ice cream dripped onto his hand, his square smile over his face.

“What’s so funny, Tae?” Yoongi asked as he gave Jimin another spoonful and wiped his face as a little leaked out of the corner of his full lips.

“My family,” He licked his ice cream and signed with one hand. “Is silly.”
“Hi, Jimin.” The physical therapist – a deep-complexioned guy with a nametag that read ‘Paul’ greeted them at the front of the physical therapist’s office. It was run by the same company Hazel worked for and this guy had worked with Jimin in the past, so he already knew him. “I don’t know if you remember me,” He rubbed his leg. “It’s been a couple of weeks since we’ve seen each other.”

“A couple of… weeks?” Namjoon asked, surprised.

Paul looked up. “His last family came once, but…” His eyebrows furrowed. “They seemed to have their hands full. If you guys want to follow me back.” He motioned.

Namjoon and Yoongi shared a glance as they followed the physical therapist, the same thought running through their head – what situation did we rescue Jimin from?

“So for Jimin specifically, his PT aimed to increase his flexibility and mobility and help untighten his muscles.” Paul explained as he sat down on an exercise ball. “Are you guys familiar with stretches?”

“Hazel mentioned something about that.” Yoongi said as they sat down in some empty chairs across from him. Yoongi pulled Jimin’s wheelchair close.

“It’s important to do daily. Since Jimin’s muscles go rigid with the CP. Stretches help relieve that and prevent pain and complications.” Paul said. “I’m gonna do an evaluation of him real quick to see where he is, what we need to work on.” He said as he started to unbuckle Jimin’s lapstraps. “And then I’ll get you guys involved and teach you guys some things you can do at home to help him out.”

“Hi,” Jimin greeted Paul once he was close enough that he could see him, his little hand waving.

“Hi, buddy.” Paul greeted as he picked him up. “You wanna dance with me? Hmm? Yeah, I know you like to dance.”

Yoongi turned to Namjoon once Paul was out of earshot. “A couple of weeks?” He signed quickly.

“I don’t know.” Namjoon just signed back.

“That’s not good. He needs therapy.”

“I know.” Namjoon signed back. “I don’t know what his past situation was, though.”

Yoongi’s fists clenched and his face flushed red momentarily. “Why?” He finally signed, his middle finger wiggling. He balled his hands again and slammed them on his lap.

“There’s no use in getting worked up.” Namjoon signed. “He’s safe now with us. He’ll get regular therapy and-,”

“What if they hurt him?” Yoongi signed. “What if he’s been in pain?”

“Shhh.” Namjoon pressed his lips to Yoongi’s forehead. “It’s okay. He’ll be okay.”

“He better.” Yoongi said, his lips pursing out in angry pout.

“Or what? You’ll fight them?” Namjoon teased, rubbing his husband’s shoulder.

Yoongi’s eyes flashed up and he crossed his arms. “I used to live on the streets.” He argued. “I can fight.”
“For like a week.” Namjoon rolled his eyes. “And you didn’t live on the streets. You couch surfed in your friend’s basement apartment in Brooklyn.”

“I can still fight.” Yoongi said.

“I know.” Namjoon wrapped his arms around Yoongi’s as he watched Paul gently bend Jimin’s legs as he laid on a padded table, his silky cloth in his hands. “You’re protective of your cubs like a lion.”

“Like a bear.” Yoongi corrected Namjoon, turning his hands into claws and then pecked Namjoon on the cheek.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment! <3
Can't Do This Alone

Chapter Notes

Chapter Warnings: mentions of corporal punishment
To thank everyone for waiting, I give you a nice long chapter!<3

Like déjà vu, Namjoon and Yoongi were called in to have a parent-teacher conference regarding Hoseok in the first quarter of school.

“He’s an extremely bright boy.” The teacher simcommed from behind the desk. At least the chairs were bigger than in the kindergarten classroom. So was their family – and Yoongi kept having to look over his shoulder to make sure the boys weren’t completely destroying the classroom. “He’s eager to be helpful and thrives on praise.”

Namjoon was trying to calm down Jimin with his toy and listen to the teacher at the same time. Jimin wanted to play and kept throwing his toys out of his wheelchair and onto the floor, his cheeks puffed and spit bubbling on his lips. “That’s great.” He signed, feeling pride warm him from the inside out.

“However, academically…” The teacher started. “He’s struggling.”

Both of them snapped to attention at that. Namjoon placed Jimin’s toy on his lap and Jimin’s lips rolled into a purse and his fingers gripped thin air. “What do you mean?”

“Hoseok has been struggling with learning his sight words and completing the essays. And his math,” She pulled out a gradebook and flipped it open. “He’s having a hard time grasping the concepts. To help keep him on track, I’ve been keeping him in during recess to redo worksheets.”

“He’s been skipping recess?” Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed. “Don’t kids need to play?”

The teacher’s smile tightened. “Sure.” She signed. “But, if Hoseok keeps on this track, then he’ll have to attend summer school or even repeat the first grade.”

“He almost wasn’t promoted up to the first grade to begin with.” Namjoon signed and glanced at Yoongi, their concerned expressions mirroring each other.

The teacher gestured as she tried to find words. “It’s very common for kids to just …” She gestured again and then glanced at Jimin. “…need some extra time to grasp the lessons. It doesn’t mean there is anything wrong with Hoseok.”

Yoongi shifted and Namjoon could tell he was bristling with annoyance at the teacher. Before he could say something snappy and rude to the teacher, Namjoon quickly intervened. “What do you recommend?” Namjoon asked.

“Well, extra tutoring – either in a group setting or individually is always good.” She said. “Some assistance with homework, as well. I’m trying some different things here during the day – different methods of approach too and restructuring things so he can understand them more
thoroughly.” She nodded. “Even just practicing sight words at the dinner table or math during teeth brushing can help.”

Yoongi glanced behind him at the kids. Namjoon did too – finding Hoseok sitting on the floor with Jungkook in his lap, clapping his hands together for him as he played patty cake with Taehyung. He smiled as he watched his sons play and have fun.

His eyebrows furrowed and his smile faded. Isn’t that what childhood should be about? Having fun? Laughing? Enjoying being a child? All this extra...responsibility of academics and schoolwork and pressure just seemed so much for a seven-year-old.

Namjoon turned back to the teacher. “What about socially?” He signed as handed Jimin back his toy.

“Well, he has Taehyung, who is Mr. Popular around the classroom.” The teacher smiled fondly. “And he encourages him to come out his shell all the time. He’s a great brother to Hoseok.”

Namjoon nodded and glanced behind him again. Hoseok will be fine. He thought. He had them. And Taehyung. And his other brothers. “He’ll be fine.”

“With a little extra attention,” She glanced at Jimin again. “I’m sure he will be.”

“Is it our fault?” Yoongi asked Namjoon later that evening.

Namjoon had sat Jimin down on the counter in the bathroom and with an iron grip around his waist, was brushing his teeth for him using a special toothpaste that could be ingested. Namjoon wasn't great at keeping it all in his mouth, however, and Jimin had strawberry-flavored foam leaking down his chin, his eyes turned up and his fingers playing with the material of his sweater.

Yoongi was bathing Jungkook next to him – sans bubbles or other smelly soaps. He tolerated Dove sensitive skin bar soaps and Yoongi had found a scentless shampoo maker on Etsy that made shampoos that were specific for autistic kids. With a couple of floaty toys, baths had actually became an enjoyable activity for Kookie.

“No,” Namjoon said once he got Jimin to rinse and was finished wiping his face down. He picked him up and gently settled him on Namjoon’s hip, being careful of his legs. “I don’t think so.”

Yoongi hit the drain on the tub and pulled Kookie out, hooking his ducky towel with the hood on his head and wiping him down his legs with a bath sheet. “I just…” He signed as he handed Jungkook his undies and grabbed his onesie off the toilet cover. “I feel like it’s our fault because we haven’t been giving him the attention he needs.”

“It's not.” Namjoon said back as Jimin pressed his moist head against his shoulder. Namjoon gently carded his fingers through Jimin’s hair, feeling the uneven skin of a scar on his scalp. His eyebrows furrowed. “I don’t think.”

Namjoon always volunteered to help Hoseok with his homework. Whether he actually did, was kind of another story. His eyes dropped to Jimin, who was gripping the air with his little fingers, his lips going as he conversed with himself.
Hoseok was their eldest and he was independent. Maybe not as much as Tae was, but he did things himself now. A lot more things now than when he first got to them. Namjoon chewed on his lip. *But, maybe that's not always a good thing…*

“I don’t even remember the first grade.” Yoongi said as he combed Jungkook’s hair while Jungkook brushed his teeth with his light-up toothbrush. Namjoon read his lips in the mirror. “But, I don’t think we wrote *essays*? Did you write essays in the first grade?”

Namjoon shook his head. “I can barely remember what I had for breakfast, baby.” He smiled a little. “Let alone what school was like twenty, twenty-five years ago.”

They walked together across the hallway to the babies’ bedroom. Namjoon put Jimin down on his table and handed him his silk cloth to play with as he got a diaper on him. Yoongi got Jungkook into bed and then sat down next to him.

Jimin’s eyebrows were furrowed in concentration as he waved his silky around. Namjoon got Jimin changed and ready for bed, finishing with a big kiss on his full cheek. Jimin responded by blowing him a kiss back. “Kiss!” He said and beamed.

When Namjoon turned, Yoongi was rubbing up and down Kookie’s back as Jungkook played an iPad game on his belly – his eyes were faraway and his face was pinched with his thoughts.

“Baby,” Namjoon said as he cradled Jimin and Yoongi’s eyes snapped up to him. “When I was in school, I struggled hard. It wasn’t really anyone’s fault, except maybe the people who design the curriculum, you know?”

Yoongi sighed. “Yeah, but you didn’t have the parental support Hoseok has.”

Namjoon dropped his eyes to the back of his hand, where a line of thin, barely noticeable scars sat on his knuckles from when he went to a catholic school for two years and the nuns thought his sign language was fidgeting and would hit him with a metal-edged ruler. “No,” He agreed. “But, having support doesn’t mean he won’t struggle. He just has the means to get the help he needs now.”

“What should we do?” Yoongi asked.

“I think,” Namjoon said. “Let’s just start with blocking off time for him in the evening where we can sit down with him and help him do his homework. Even if it means extending bedtimes a little bit.”

Yoongi nodded. “Okay. That would be a good start.”

“And,” Namjoon pressed his lips against Jimin’s forehead and his cheek. “Making sure we are available for him – the both of them,” He added. “No matter how busy we get with the babies.”

Yoongi smiled as Jungkook cuddled up against his side. “These babies need to get to bed.” He said to Jungkook.

“Music?” Jungkook signed hopefully.

Yoongi kissed his head. “Tomorrow, okay? It’s sleep time now.” He pulled the iPad out of his hand and kissed his head.
Yoongi awoke to hushed whimpers and cries, surfacing quickly to consciousness and grabbed the baby monitor that he basically slept with his fist around now. Cerebral palsy – he quickly figured out in the last six weeks that Jimin had been living with them – didn’t know the meaning of ‘deep sleep.’ And Yoongi and Namjoon spent the nights now taking turns waking up to reposition Jimin when he got uncomfortable since he couldn’t do it himself.

There was also this edge of fear – thin and sharp like a razor – in the back of Yoongi’s head. The fear of seizures. Jimin hadn’t had one yet with them. Not a major one, at least. His arm would tremble and his face would grimace on one side every once in awhile in tiny seizures. But, he hadn’t had a full tonic clonic seizure yet.

But, Hazel had prepared them – all of them – for the inevitability of when one would strike. And that comforted Yoongi some – like a dam holding his panic at bay. But, the fear was always there, always threatening to slosh over the surface.

Yoongi sighed as he looked at the slightly hazy screen of Jimin on his belly, his eyes open and his lips pursed as he gripped his sheets in his fist. It was morning, he realized as he blinked himself completely awake. He glanced behind him. Namjoon was still in bed. That meant his alarm hadn’t gone off yet.

Yoongi groaned and sat up, feeling his joints pop. The whimpering continued – soft and sore - as Jimin let his parents know that his hips and legs hurt and it was time for him to be rolled and probably changed.

Yoongi cracked his neck and blinked his contacts in before glancing at his phone screen. It was six in the morning. The house generally didn’t wake up until closer to seven. He got to his feet and crossed the hallway into Jimin and Jungkook’s room.

“Hi, honey.” Yoongi whispered as he let Jimin know he was there with a gentle back pat. “Sleep well?”

“Hi.” Jimin greeted once he was in Yoongi’s arms, but his pinched expression let Yoongi know that he was still uncomfortable.

Yoongi got him changed and they both went to the kitchen where the early morning light was streaming in through their east window. He started the Keurig for himself and sippy cup of milk for Jimin.

And it wasn’t until Jimin was settled on Yoongi’s lap on the couch in the living, nestled in a position against Yoongi’s arm that took pressure off of his pelvis that his face relaxed and he smiled.

“That’s better, huh?” Yoongi pushed his bangs off of his forehead, trying to arc his head in his line of his sight.

“Kiss.” Jimin blew a kiss at him and nestled his cheek against Yoongi’s shoulder.

“I love you too, baby.” Yoongi said and handed him his cup. “You want to look at houses with me?” He asked and opened the cover of his iPad, navigating to one of the home search apps he downloaded.

“I want a pool.” Yoongi whispered to Jimin as he sucked on his sippy. “And a space for my studio and a walk-in shower for when you get older and daddy can’t lift you into the tub anymore.” He glanced down at Jimin. “Can you say ‘dad-dy?’”
Jimin didn’t respond. He just continued sucking on his sippy cup, his eyes sliding to half mast.

“Four bedrooms. One for you and one for Jungkook and one for the two boys. I’ll have to get them bunk beds because they will never let me live it down if I don’t.” Yoongi smiled as he navigated around the app. “There’s a couple of houses in good neighborhoods.” He sighed as he scrolled through them. “But, they’re insanely expensive.”

“No ball?” Jimin said with his little voice, his hand out with his palm up.

Yoongi leaned over and grabbed a stuffed bunny off the couch. Hoseok manically kept his own room clean in a fit of type-A perfectionism, but that didn't mean the rest of the house didn’t look like a Toys-R-Us dumpster. And at first, with one kid, Yoongi had kept the house clean enough that it was passable if he had guests over. Now, he was happy if the vacuum got plugged in to the wall with the intention of cleaning.

He handed the toy to Jimin, who felt it and then rubbed it against his cheek, making little cooing noises. Yoongi went back to his iPad, sighing as he scrolled through houses that were way out of their price range.

If he mastered an album, he could maybe negotiate enough out of the contract to make a sizeable down payment and that would make these perfect houses more affordable. But, he was also the stay-at-home dad. All of his work was done in the middle of the night now as he waited for Jimin to wake up and tell him that he needed to be repositioned.

He sighed and pressed his lips to Jimin’s forehead. “Maybe someday.” He whispered and closed his iPad.

Yoongi felt like he blinked and it was October.

And October to the kids meant Halloween. However, the term ‘Halloween’ had different definitions to each member of the family.

To Taehyung, it meant he could dress like Ash Ketchum and go trick-or-treating since he wasn’t allowed to last year with his foster family.

To Hoseok, it meant that they avoided the seasonal part of Target with the scary decorations of ghosts and ghouls. And scary movies on television. Pumpkin spiced cupcakes were okay though. Those were nice and tasty.

To Jungkook, it meant Michael Jackson music videos and clips from the Rocky Horror Picture Show as VH1 played an hour-long Halloween special of music videos in the morning.

To Jimin…well, it didn’t mean very much to Jimin. Except for maybe his chocolate milk tasted like pumpkin spice since that was the Nesquik flavor Hoseok picked out at the grocery store.

To Namjoon, it meant midterms. And dealing with students that were on the cusp of failing. It kept him at the college into the evenings as they made up assignments.

And because of that, Halloween meant taking on part of Namjoon’s share of the load to
Yoongi. And he understood. He did.

It didn’t stop it from being hard.

“Ah,” Hoseok practiced his speech as he hung on Yoongi’s hip while he cooked dinner, his foot standing right on top of Yoongi’s. “Ba, Ca, Da...”

Yoongi could see past the breakfast bar into the living room where Taehyung was tasked with tickling Jimin as he laid on a blanket on the floor. Namjoon usually did it in the evenings – tickling encouraged by Paul to force Jimin to roll and wiggle to help increase mobility. But, Namjoon had texted that he was going to be an hour late that evening. Jungkook was sitting on the couch, playing with a metal puzzle toy.


“You’re getting good.” Yoongi signed at him. “Can you say ‘see?’” He fingerspelled.

“See.” Hoseok said, his accent thick.

“To?”

“To,” Hoseok repeated, his eyes on Yoongi’s face.

“Like?”

Hoseok’s eyebrows furrowed and he shook his head. “We haven’t practiced ‘i’ sounds yet.”

“Can you spell it?” Yoongi asked.

“L-I...” Hoseok frowned, his pinkie hanging in the air.

“You can do it.” Yoongi prompted. He thought combining speech therapy and vocabulary words was a good idea, but he watched Hoseok’s eyes flash first with frustration and then disappointment with himself for not getting it and his frown deepened. “It’s okay.” Yoongi brushed his hair down. “Take your time.”

“These words are from last week’s word bank.” Hoseok signed. “And I haven’t passed my spelling test yet.”

“It’s okay.” Yoongi encouraged. “Just imagine the word on the page. What’s the letter that comes after ‘i’ that has two arms that stick out and-,”

There was a crash and Yoongi’s head snapped up to the living room. Jungkook had thrown his toy – narrowly missing the other two on the floor – an upset look on his face.

“Hey,” Yoongi said sharply, twisting the knob off on the stove before stomping around Hoseok and the counter. “We don’t throw things in the house.”

Jimin’s face dissolved from a surprised ‘o’ into startled tears. “Ouch. Ouch.” He said and pressed his fists to his face. “Ouch. Ouch.”

Tae’s eyes snapped to Yoongi with concern and then down at his brother. “Chim,” He said. “It’s okay. It’s okay.” He rubbed his arm.

Yoongi felt frustration flame in him and he bent down to get on Jungkook’s eye level. “Why would you throw your toy like that?” He demanded. “You could’ve hurt Tae and Jimin. Do you
“want to hurt your brothers?”

Jungkook didn’t meet his eyes, his lower lip just quivered slightly, a line between his eyebrows and tears on his cheeks. He started to stim, upset – his hands waving hard in front of his face and whimpers coming out of him.

Yoongi felt irritation lick at him, churning himself up on the inside. He grabbed Jungkook’s wrist to stop him. His own father’s voice boomed in Yoongi’s head. Look at me when I’m talking to you. And they were almost out of his mouth when he saw a drop of blood dribbling from Jungkook’s fingertip down to his palm.

Yoongi sighed, feeling the anger whoosh out of him. Yelling at Jungkook was only going to make things worse. And forcing him to look him in the eyes was only going to make this worse. And getting mad over Jungkook getting hurt was only going to to make things worse.

Yoongi turned to find the eldest. “Hoseok,” He signed at him. “Can you grab me a paper towel and a bandaid?”

Hoseok nodded from where he watched everyone with wide eyes and about-faced into the kitchen.

“Kookie,” Yoongi said softly, but firmly. “You can’t just…throw things when you get mad at them. Violence is never the answer, no matter how angry you are. Okay?”

Jungkook turned his head away and bounced from foot-to-foot as he got lost in his overwhelmed tears, his fingers writhing next to his head as he held out his bleeding hand for Yoongi to make better.

“Shhh, Jungkook.” Yoongi rubbed his shoulder. “You’re okay. I know it hurts.”

Hoseok reappeared with the things he was told to get. Yoongi cleaned up Jungkook’s hand and then told him to squeeze his fingers together to stipple the bleeding. Jungkook’s face flushed red and he was on the brink of really losing it. Yoongi swooped in with a Peanuts-themed bandaid and a kiss.

Jungkook bounced for a second, his breaths coming in hard huffs. He threw his whole weight into Yoongi’s arms with a grunt, demanding a tight hug. Yoongi circled his arms around him and buried his nose into his hair.

“Daddy,” Tae said. “Jimin’s doing that thing where his arm goes wiggle-wormy.”

Yoongi turned to Jimin – tomato red in the face from tears and laying on his back on the floor – his arm spasming. Ice blasted through his veins and anxiety gripped his chest and he scooted across the rug to get to him. He was still conscious, however, his eyes and head looking for him. That undid the knots in his stomach a little.

“Ouch.” He whimpered, the side of his face twitching too. “Ouch.”

“I know, baby.” Yoongi said, Jungkook’s grip around his neck so tight that his words came out strangled. Yoongi shifted Jungkook over and got Jimin lifted up into his arms, his little arm spasming hard and tears leaking out his eyes.

Yoongi wrapped his arms around both boys and pressed his face into their heads that were touching in the middle of his chest. He glanced at the door, feeling the anxiety in his chest tighten as Jungkook’s cries turned up in volume and Jimin kept repeating ”ouch.” Please come home. He
thought as he stared at the door, waiting for Namjoon to come through it. I can't do this alone.

Namjoon walked into dinner half-cooked on the stove, Yoongi on the floor with both Jungkook and Jimin crying on his lap and the two eldest watching like it was a car crash that he couldn’t tear their eyes from.

“Hey,” Yoongi greeted calmly, but his eyes were flashing hard with panic. “Could use your help here.” He said as he rubbed up and down Jungkook’s back and his other arm was supporting most of Jimin’s weight.

“Who?” Was all he signed to his husband.

“Take Jimin.” Yoongi said. “Be careful, he’s seizing.”

Namjoon squatted and picked up Jimin. He was seizing, his arm spasming and his neck muscles grimacing. Tears leaked out his eyes and his face was red. Worry flashed through Namjoon, but he knew that these little seizures usually passed in a couple of moments. So, he shoved that concern aside and did his best to comfort their newest.

Yoongi gripped Jungkook, who looked like he was on the brink of going full nuclear. “I’m going to take him into his bedroom.” Yoongi said and got to his feet, taking Kookie with him. “And get him calmed down.”

Namjoon glanced at the kitchen. “What were you making?” He asked, thinking he could probably finish dinner while Yoongi was in the back room.

Yoongi glanced at the kitchen too, Jungkook hanging off of him like a monkey. He shrugged, his eyes flashing intensely and his nostrils flaring. Namjoon realized dinner was low-priority and bringing it up just knocked another block from the Jenga puzzle that was Yoongi’s current calm demeanor. “It doesn’t matter.” Yoongi said. “It’s cold now anyway. We’ll just get pizza or something.”

That’s…that’s not what I… Namjoon thought as he watched his husband stomp off with their youngest. He sighed as he bounced Jimin. His intentions were good, but the road to hell was paved with them and all of that, he surmised. “Shhh,” He hushed Jimin, whose round, angelic face was twisted in painful grimace. He rubbed his cheek and his back. “You’re okay. Shh. Kiss? Hmm? Kiss?”

Namjoon watched Jimin’s arm calm down and then his face. Namjoon realized that watching his children go through pain was the hardest thing he had to ever do. And it was doubled with Jimin, since his eyes filled with this palpable confusion and there was no way of really telling him in terms he understood what was happening to him. All he knew was that his hips hurt and his legs hurt and his arm was spasming for no reason and whatever else went along with his seizures. And the people that he trusted to protect him from the hurting couldn’t because everything was happening inside of him.

And it shattered Namjoon’s heart into a million pieces every single time.


Namjoon glanced at the hallway. He felt horrible too. He tried desperately to get out on time that evening – since it was the last day of midterms - but the Dean of the sociology and language
department had intercepted him about expanding the class to a satellite location via web conference and all Namjoon wanted to do was get home to his husband and his children, not giving a shit if the West campus got ASL classes or not.

Namjoon ordered food on his cell phone app while he bounced Jimin in his arms, his face finally going peaceful. His fingers played with Namjoon’s necklace and he blew a spit bubble – his way of letting his worried daddy know that he was okay now. Namjoon sighed and then started towards the hallway so he could apologize to his husband.

“Hey,” Namjoon said as he found Yoongi cradling Jungkook on his bed, Kookie’s face pressed into a big teddy bear that smelled like laundry detergent. “Jimin’s better.”

“That’s good.” Yoongi signed, not really meeting his eyes.

“I’m sorry I wasn’t home on time.” Namjoon signed as he held up Jimin with one arm.

“It’s okay.” Yoongi signed and then rubbed Jungkook’s back. “It wasn’t your fault.”

“Midterms are over now, so I won’t be late anymore.” He tried. “And I already talked about rearranging the schedule for next semester so I can be home more and I ordered Jimmy John’s for dinner and-,”

Yoongi suddenly broke down, a sob coursing through his whole body. He pressed his hand to his face.

“Baby, oh God.” Namjoon said out loud as worry coursed through him. He sat down on the bed, trying to get as close as possible with Jimin and Jungkook sandwiched between them. “I’m so sorry.”

“It’s not your fault.” Yoongi said, his fist pressed to his forehead. “I just…” He sucked in a shuddering breath. “It’s just…”

“I’m so sorry.” Namjoon apologized, trying to think of something to make it better.

“I feel like I’m so…” He motioned. “Out of my depths. I don’t ever know what I’m doing. I almost yelled at Jungkook today and Jimin and…” He continued to blubber, but Namjoon’s couldn’t read his lips because he was speaking too fast and not enunciating.

“Okay, Yoongi. Shhh.” Namjoon rubbed his arm. He wanted to kiss him, but couldn’t reach his face. He wanted to make him feel better. He wanted to alleviate this weight of guilt. He wanted to fix this. He needed to fix this.

Yoongi sniffed and pressed his palm to his face. “I’m okay.” He sniffed as he calmed down and wiped tears from his eyes. “I’m okay. I just…” He sniffed again as he regained his normal, calm composure. “Moment of weakness.”

“Baby,” Namjoon leaned forward and then was reminded that he was cradling Jimin. “You don’t have to be Super Dad all the time. You deserve a break.”

Yoongi shook his head. “Jimin doesn’t get breaks. Neither does Jungkook. Or Tae or Hoseok.”

“Okay,” Namjoon rolled his eyes. “You can at least always ask for help. We have Hazel and your mom-,”
“Who lives in Vista four hours away.” Yoongi rubbed his face of stray tears and rolled his eyes as well. “I’m fine, I swear. Everything just happened at once. I just felt kind of overwhelmed for a second. It’ll be fine now, okay? You’re home and midterms are over and we’re going to have a good Halloween without everything scary and Halloween-like for Hoseok’s sake.” He smiled at his own joke.

Namjoon studied Yoongi’s face – round with his angular eyes and lips that he loved – looking for deception. He didn’t find any. “Okay,” He nodded and rubbed his thigh. “Just…let me know if your anxiety spikes.”

Yoongi bristled. “I’m fine.” He insisted. “I’m Super Dad, after all.”

Namjoon angled Jimin so he could kiss his husband. “Yes, you are.” He murmured against his husband’s lips, two out of their four kids sandwiched between them.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!
Chapter Notes

Chapter warnings: panic attack

So, I'm going to be be completely real with y'all. I have ABSOLUTELY, POSITIVELY no idea how long this fic will be. But, I'm honestly a little scared because I feel like I'm not even half-finished and I'm at like 75K words already. I have so much I want to touch on, so many conflicts to go through.

So, I hope y'all are ready (but, um, tell me if I get like boring or something in the comments? Deal?)

Enjoy!

“’You have to go to the nice neighborhoods.” Namjoon explained to his husband as he drove, one hand on the wheel and the other signing in front of him. The overhead cabin light was on so he could see Yoongi respond. “You get better candy. Everyone knows that.”

Yoongi rolled his eyes and made a face from the passenger seat. “The kids don’t know the difference.” He signed. “All you’re doing is giving them better sugar. That’s all.”

Namjoon beamed as he glanced at the whole family in the rearview mirror. It was their first Halloween and he was so excited.

Tae was swinging his plastic pumpkin container on his arm, looking adorable in his Ash Ketchum costume with his ball cap backwards on his head. Hoseok was bouncing in his own pirate costume, an eyeliner-drawn mustache and beard on his face. Kookie was half-dressed as Mario. He didn’t like the hat or the gloves or the mustache, but the overalls were fine. Jimin was in an Eeyore onesie, sucking on his middle and third finger as he sat calmly in his car seat.

Halloween was always his favorite holiday growing up since Christmases could be hit or miss being a foster kid. Halloween though was constant – the costumes, the fun of trick-or-treating, the haunted houses, the candy. No matter what house he was at, he always had a blast on Halloween.

And he wanted to pass that onto his kids. God, he dreamed of going trick-or-treating with his kids.

He had a second mission too. One that Yoongi didn’t know…yet. He had found this nice subdivision on his drive home from work. It had two parks and a community pool and a clubhouse. It was closer to Tae and Hoseok’s school – enough that they could walk by themselves once they’re a little older. The elementary school down the street was good for Jimin and Jungkook. It was really new and all the houses were built to spec. And while he knew they couldn’t afford to build a house, there were a couple of one-stories that were already on the market being resold. It was perfect and he wanted to show Yoongi.
He parked at the clubhouse parking lot and got the wheelchair set up and Jimin into it while Yoongi got the others out of their car seats.

“No eating anything until we get home.” Yoongi said and signed to the others. “So, I can go through it first.”

“Baby,” Namjoon said. “Nobody is slipping drugs in Halloween candy.”

“I’m not worried about that.” Yoongi shook his head. “I want all the Twix bars.” He smiled teasingly at Hoseok, who had told Tae that he was going to collect all the Twix bars in the neighborhood.

“Hey, no!” Hoseok argued, his fingers going fast. “I want the Twix bars!”

“Okay, then all the gummy worms.”

“No!” Tae said. “Those are mine!”

“Well, then.” Yoongi made a big show of fake-sniffing. “Kookie will share his candy with Daddy. Huh, Kookie?”

Kookie had a spinning light up toy in his hand and he jammed it under his chin and nodded, his smile wide over his face, scrunching up his nose. “Yeah.” He signed, stimming happily. He jammed his face into Yoongi’s hip.

They got the show on the road, using the wheelchair as the mothership. They made a rule that if you weren’t at a house getting candy, you had to keep your hand on the wheelchair to make sure nobody stepped out into the street.

Namjoon was tasked of escorting the kids to the doors while Yoongi waited with Jimin on the sidewalk and Hoseok, being the eldest, had the important job of ringing to the doorbell.

“Trick or treat!” Tae sang and Hoseok signed “trick” and “candy” so fast it was a blur as he beamed. Kookie was more interested in his toy than meeting new people. But, that was okay. Because watching their eyes sparkle every time candy was placed into their pumpkin buckets completely illuminated Namjoon from the inside out. It was like he was full of fireflies. Like fireworks were going on in his chest.

“Wow!” A lady said as she dug into her bowl. “What a big family.”

“Um, um,” Tae started, he was so excited he was dancing. “Can I have a second candy for my brother?” His eyebrows furrowed and he pointed at Jimin behind him. “His wheelchair doesn’t fit down the pathway.”

“Sure, honey.” She said, giving him a little smile.

“You guys get good stuff?” Yoongi asked as he leaned on the handlebar of Jimin’s wheelchair, flipping through pictures of them in their costumes from earlier, uploading good ones to Facebook.

“Yeah!” They both cheered and Tae slipped Jimin’s candy into his bucket that was tied to his diaper bag.

“What about you, Daddio?” Yoongi looked up at Namjoon.
“I’m having a blast.” Namjoon signed as they walked to the next house. “Watching them get candy and having fun.” He sighed. “There’s nothing better.”

Yoongi smiled wide, revealing all his cute teeth and gums. His eyes flashed and he giggled.

“What?” Namjoon asked as he held Jungkook’s hand.

“Christmas is absolutely going to to destroy you.” He teased.

“Oh, God.” Namjoon pressed his hands to his face. “I know. I will probably die of cuteness overload.”

“Imagine them in matching pajama onesies.”

“Are you CPR certified?” Namjoon laced his free hand with his husband’s. “Because you’re giving me heart palpitations.” He kissed him on the lips.

“In fact,” Yoongi glanced around at Jimin, checking on him. “I just got my certification renewed last week.”

“Oh, good.” Namjoon said and they both giggled. He paid attention to the neighborhood – to the trees that were still pretty new but will get big along with his family and the nice porches and the other kids that were milling around in costumes with their parents. “What do you think about the neighborhood?” He asked.

Yoongi looked around like he was seeing it for the first time. “It’s nice.” He said and shrugged. “Kind of cookie cutter.”

“But, the houses are well-built.” Namjoon said. “And they’re in our price range.”

Yoongi rolled his eyes. “I thought this was the ‘nice’ neighborhood?”

“It is and usually the houses are built to spec, but there are a couple in this neighborhood that are already built and are for sale and they’re…” He shrugged. “Kind of discounted?”

“Like…day old bread?” Yoongi joked.

“Well,” Namjoon said. “No. More like…Saks Fifth but the outlet.”

Yoongi sucked in a breath as he glanced down at the wheelchair he was pushing. “You know, two years ago, my dream house included a beach somewhere.” He dropped Namjoon’s hand so he could sign. “And a multi-car garage. Now,” He looked around. “I would be happy if I got a front door that fit wheelchairs and a mortgage payment that still lets us save for college funds.” He smiled up him.

“My dream house,” Namjoon looked at the fading light of the sky. “Includes one happy husband. A lovable, cuddly Taehyung. A Hoseok that still thinks it’s cool to climb in bed with his dads on Sunday morning for cuddles. A Jungkookie covered in fresh laundry and so happy he does that thing where he taps his toes on the floor like he’s drumming. And,” He glanced at Jimin, who was starting to fall asleep in his chair, nestled in his Eeyore onesie. “A happy and healthy Jimin.”

“You’re a sap.” Yoongi rolled his eyes. “And I love it.” He kissed him on the lips, smiling the whole time.
Yoongi checked his clock on his phone cell phone, his finger so shaky that he had to input his passcode four times. 2:28.

Jimin’s first major seizure happened on a Sunday afternoon.

At 2:12. And Yoongi only knew that because he had glanced at the cable box clock underneath the television as he was attempting to pick up the living room one-handed, since Jimin had woken up not his usual, smiley self. And Yoongi thought that maybe he was coming down with a cold or something, as he was acting a bit listless and spaced out.

If he only had known. Yoongi would have laughed at himself if he didn’t feel like the walls were actually moving in on him, threatening to stick to him like microwaved cling wrap. Because he should’ve known, just based on the way Jimin was acting – that it wasn’t a cold. It wasn’t a goddamn cold.

And he should’ve known when Jimin’s eyes glazed over. He should’ve known when Jimin made a half-cry, half-grunt sound that was completely abnormal. He should’ve known when his head snapped to the side in a jerk.

But, he didn’t. Yoongi didn’t. He didn’t realize what was happening until Jimin’s little fist clocked him in the chin. And then his brain screamed SEIZURE at him like a war siren. He didn’t realize his worst nightmare was coming to life until it literally was happening right in his arms.

He dropped to his knees and got Jimin on the floor of the rug. His little body was jerking and writhing, his limbs flying and his eyes rolled up into his head.

He glanced at the clock. 2:13. “Tae!” He yelled. “Jungkook!”

He tried to recall Hazel’s training over the roaring in his ears. She had used Hoseok as the test subject and he giggled his volatile laugh the whole time as Hazel taught Namjoon and him how to handle a seizure. She explained calmly that they were scary. They were unexpected. They would catch them off guard.

And Yoongi tried recalling this. He knew head and side. Head and side. Head and side.

That managed to pierce the wall of sound that was filling up his whole being and his yells in his ears. He cupped Jimin’s head and rolled him on his side. He watched him flail and felt completely helpless just…watching.

“Daddy?” Tae asked, his eyes wide as he took everything in.

“Get Dad.” Yoongi ordered. “He’s in the garage. Hurry Tae.”

Tae moved passed him into the garage so fast he turned into a blur. Or maybe that was just Yoongi. He couldn’t tell. He glanced at the clock. 2:14. Hurry Namjoon. He thought. Hurry.
“Baby,” Namjoon’s large form dropped to his knees next to Jimin. “Oh, hey baby boy.” He started talking as he helped cup Jimin’s head. “You’re okay. You’re okay. What a strong boy.” He talked slow and gentle. Hazel said something about people being able to hear you during seizures. Or was that comas and he just heard that on a documentary? Yoongi didn’t know. He glanced at the clock. It was still 2:14.

“I’m so sorry, baby boy.” Namjoon petted his face. “You’re okay. You’ll be okay.”

Namjoon’s calm words grounded Yoongi a little. Just a little. Just enough to remind himself that he needed to breathe. He inhaled and forced it out.

And then Jimin’s movements ceased, his arms falling limply next to his head and his face relaxing. Namjoon rubbed his shoulder and his leg, continuing to speak calm words to him. How did he make it look so simple? He was always better at that than Yoongi was.

He glanced at the clock. 2:15. Three minutes. Maybe two and half. But they felt like an eternity.

And it was another eternity until Jimin’s eyelashes fluttered as he regained consciousness. His hands balled into fists and his leg moved a little bit. He opened his eyes and blinked.

And then he started to cry, wail like babies did when they were upset. Disoriented. That’s what Hazel said. Disoriented and confused and in need of a lot of love and comfort. He needed his daddies to hold him and love him and tell him what a good boy he was. But, Yoongi was felt frozen, rock solid and ready to collapse like an iceberg in the ocean.

Namjoon jammed both of his hands under Jimin’s body and lifted him up. “Alright, alright.” He spoke gently as he cradled him like an infant. “You’re okay. Look at you being so strong.” He pecked his nose and wiped his tears. “You did so well. I’m so proud of you.”

“Is Jimin okay?” Tae asked and Yoongi glanced over to the other three boys standing in the doorway, Hoseok had terrified tears streaming down his face and kept one hand on Jungkook, who looked like he was ready to bolt into the living room.

Yoongi looked back at Jimin, feeling hot under their gazes. He had to be strong. He was the parent, for Chrissakes. But, listening to Jimin cry and to the adrenaline still pumping loud and hard through his body and Tae’s worried question brought the walls in further. His hands were shaking. His whole body was shaking.

His feet took a mind of their own as he stood up and moved. He glanced at the clock one more time. 2:18.

“Yoongi-,” Namjoon said, but he just kept moving. He moved into the bedroom and into his walk-in closet, where he shut the door and slid to the floor, pressing his hand over his mouth. He should’ve known. He should’ve done better. But, he didn’t. And he felt like a complete failure.

And for the first time in almost five years he had a panic attack.
Namjoon watched Yoongi get up and stumble to the back room looking green and literally not breathing, worry crashing through him like a tsunami. He wanted to follow him. He felt compelled to follow to make sure he was okay.

But, he glanced down at Jimin -at his little details like the tears that jeweled his long eyelashes and the flushed tops of his cheeks and the pink of a scar that started at the top of his forehead and faded into his hairline. He picked up his fist and kissed it. And felt the maelstrom calm down. He forced his worry of Yoongi to the side, making sure that Jimin remained front and center. His first priority was comforting him. His little soldier. His strong boy. Yoongi was not a helpless child who was coming out a seizure. He could wait for now.

“Hey, buddy.” Namjoon said, watching Jimin’s eyes look around with that confusion that stabbed at him. He pushed that pain to the side. Jimin was front and center. “I love you.” He cupped his face. “I know it’s so hard and confusing. You’re doing amazing. I’m so proud of you.”

“Daddy?” Tae asked, his voice small and scared. His bare toes gripped the carpet fibers. “Is Jimin okay?”

Tae was the one that got him as he cleaned out the SUV of trash – a chore that Yoongi had been bugging him to do all week – tears streaming down his face as he garbled out that something was wrong with Jimin, his fingers unsteady as he signed.

Namjoon shifted as he cradled Jimin and held out a hand to all the boys. “He’s okay.” He motioned. “Come here.”

Hoseok held Jungkook’s wrist as they all came forward and stopped a couple of feet away like they were afraid that if they got too close they would break their brother.

“Remember when Jimin first got here that we told you his brain was hurt and can’t do stuff for him anymore?” Namjoon signed and spoke with one hand.

The elder boys nodded and Jungkook curled into Hoseok, burying his face into his t-shirt. Hoseok wrapped his arm around Jungkook’s shoulders, gripping him tightly as shocked tears rolled down his face.

“Well,” Namjoon said. “Sometimes his brain glitches.” He said. “Like…when the Nintendo freezes and you have to restart it to get it to work?”

The boys nodded and Hoseok wiped his face.

“Like that. And they’re called ‘seizures.’”

“That’s when he goes wiggly-wormy.” Tae breathed with a little nod.

“But, there’s no need to be scared.” Namjoon explained calmly, glancing at the hallway. “They’re normal for Jimin. It’s just his brain being extra special.”

“So, Jimin is okay?” Hoseok asked, his signs small and scared.

“Yes, he’s okay.” Namjoon said as he watched Jimin sniffled and grip his shirt. “If you see that he’s having one and one of us are not around, you have to get Dad or me, okay? Because he needs attention during them to make sure he doesn’t hurt himself.”

The boys nodded and Namjoon leaned forward and wiped Hoseok’s face real quick of tears. He was being such a good big brother, even though Namjoon knew he was on the brink of
“Give him a kiss.” Namjoon said. “He needs lots of love.”

Hoseok pulled up Jungkook with him and he kissed Jimin’s head. Namjoon rubbed Hoseok’s back, feeling his heart pound under his hand. “I’m glad you’re okay.” He said. “You scared me.”

Jungkook kissed him too, pecking him on the forehead and giving him a little head pat before turning back into Hoseok’s shirt.

Tae shuffled forward and gripped Jimin’s face with both of his hands. Jimin’s eyes focused on him and he smiled a little. “Tae.” Jimin said or…at least that’s what Namjoon thought he said.

“Did he just say your name?” Namjoon asked, surprised.

“Yeah,” Tae smiled. “I taught it to him last week.” He planted a big kiss on his forehead. “I love you, Chim.”


Namjoon knocked on the door with one knuckle as he held Yoongi’s Xanax and a bottle of water with one hand and the baby monitor with the other. “Yoon,” He called. “Baby, can I come in?”

The door opened and Namjoon entered the small walk-in closet. The jeans on the lower rung had been pushed all the way over and Yoongi was sitting on the floor, one arm wrapped around his legs and the other rubbing his own neck. His face was turned towards his lap but Namjoon could see how red and puffy it was from crying.

Namjoon knew that Yoongi didn’t like to be touched during panic attacks. That contact made them worse. That Yoongi decided when he was ready to be held. So, instead he pushed the other side of pants to the side and sat down, moving one of Yoongi’s sneakers out from under his butt.

“He’s alright.” Namjoon said, offering the baby monitor. “I gave him some meds and he’s sleeping now.”

Yoongi didn’t respond.

“I brought you some xan.” Namjoon shook the pills. “And some water.”

“Thank you.” He signed off of his chin.

“Um,” Namjoon stammered, trying to get Yoongi to come out of his shell. “Taehyung taught Jimin his name. He said ‘Tae.’” He smiled gently. “Jimin learned his brother’s name.”

That elicited some movement. Yoongi looked up and gulped. “He did?”

Namjoon nodded. “He was so happy when he saw him. Jimin loves Tae so much.”

“They took a nap together yesterday.” Yoongi signed, his fingers shaking. Namjoon felt his heart clench. “And Jimin wouldn’t stop squirming until Tae wrapped his arm around him. And then
he just fell asleep.” Yoongi sighed. “Like Tae was his comfort blanket he was missing.” He dropped his hands and watched them tremble on his lap.

“Baby,” Namjoon whispered and opened his arms.

Yoongi breached the short distance between them and scrambled into Namjoon’s embrace. He started to cry and mumble things into Namjoon’s neck. When they first got together and Yoongi felt comfortable enough to share this side of himself, Namjoon would always try to get him to face him so that Yoongi could talk to him. But, Yoongi explained that he didn’t need him to be heard to be listened to. He just needed to get it out to feel better.

Namjoon wrapped Yoongi up against him, letting him cry it out. In a couple of moments, he would be done, feeling spent, but better. He would take some meds, probably get in a nap and be okay. It wasn’t the best. He hated that Yoongi had anxiety attacks to begin with. But, he had a routine and they were manageable because of that routine.

Yoongi pulled away and Namjoon reached for the meds and the water bottle. But, Yoongi shook his head. “I understand.” He whispered and Namjoon almost missed it.

“Understand what?”

“Why…” His face contorted and Namjoon was unable to read his lips.

“Baby, I can’t read your lips. I’m sorry.”

He sucked in a breath to center himself. “Why Jimin has so many homes.” He choked and then broke down again. “I’m horrible. I’m so fucking horrible.”

“Oh. Oh, oh.” Namjoon tightened his arm around. “You were caught off guard and overwhelmed. It’s nothing to feel bad about. And he’s okay. He is. And it’s because of you. All you.”

“I don’t know how you do it.” Yoongi signed. “How you act so calm.”

Namjoon smiles just a little. “I’ve had practice being in bad situations.”

“I’ve been thinking about that.” Yoongi said after a couple of moments breathing. “How… overwhelmed I felt. How…” New tears leaked from the corners of his eyes. “How easy it would be just to give him back to Seokjin for him to be re-placed in a different home. A new home that could take better care of him. Who wouldn’t…fail him.”

“But, there isn’t a better home.” Namjoon argued, not believing his ears. He rubbed Yoongi’s shoulder. “You haven’t failed him. He’s cared for. He loves us and we love him. He knows his brother’s name now.” Namjoon said. “And we’re doing ten times better than he’s ever had before because we won’t give up on him.”

“No.” Yoongi shook his head. “I won’t give up on him. I can’t. I felt so overwhelmed that I felt like I was drowning. But, I tried to imagine him not with us and I couldn’t. He’s ours.”

“I know.” Namjoon nodded his eyes dropping as those words bounced in his head. He’s ours. “I’m sorry I wasn’t in the house. I’m sorry I wasn’t there sooner.”

Yoongi shook his head. “You need to stop apologizing. It’s not anyone’s fault.” He sucked in another shaky breath and Namjoon could feel it.
Namjoon smiled just a little and Yoongi glued his narrow eyes on his face, tears still leaking out of the corner. One of Yoongi’s pale fingers pressed into his dimple. He’s ours. And yeah, he was monstrous, enormous, Atlas-levels of responsibility. Yeah, they would lose the state insurance and the state allowance. And yeah, Namjoon had no idea, really, what he was doing raising a special needs child.

But, he was theirs.

“We should…adopt him.” Namjoon finally said.

“What?” Yoongi signed.

“He’s a challenge.” Namjoon said. “And he’ll be work for the rest of our lives. But, you’re right – he’s ours. He will always be ours. He was always ours.” He nodded. “We should adopt Jimin.”

They sat with their hands clasped, nothing but breathing between them as they stared into each other’s eyes, realizing the absolute magnitude of their decision. Adoption of any child was a huge decision. But, it was even bigger with Jimin. A million times bigger.

Yoongi broke the silence first. “We should…wait. Just a little bit.” He said slowly.

“Adoption can affect our chances of getting a mortgage for a new house. We should wait until we get into the new house first.”

Namjoon nodded quickly, his heart picking speed as realization seeped into his bones.

“That’s a good idea. But, as soon as we sign the mortgage papers…”

“We’ll file for adoption.” Yoongi finished for him. “Of Jimin.” He wrapped his palms around Namjoon’s neck, his eyes shining as realization seeped into him as well. The feeling was heavy – he couldn’t bend his fingers to sign. Jimin was special needs. He was. But, that was okay. Because Namjoon loved him and Yoongi loved him and he had his three brothers that loved him as well. And it’ll be okay because he had them and they had him and…

They weren’t ever going to give up on him.

“Yay!” Hoseok signed as Namjoon lowered a bowl of popcorn onto Hoseok’s lap. “Popcorn.” He reached his little fist into the bowl and stuffed some popcorn in his mouth. Yoongi was glad that they didn’t really mind that it was unbuttered and unsalted – having to pop kernels on the stovetop so they wouldn’t smell and trigger Jungkook’s hypersensitivities as microwave popcorn was a no-go.

Namjoon sat down on the loung. Kookie immediately crawled up into his lap and flopped on his belly, gathering Joon’s sweatshirt into his fist and sighed. Namjoon rubbed his back and turned. “What are we watching?”

“Fantasia.” Yoongi answered as he cuddled Jimin in the corner of the couch. He was apologizing and making up for running out on him when he was coming out of a seizure. Even though Jimin was incapable of holding a grudge. It wasn’t in his DNA that was laced with fairy dust and starlight. But, Yoongi wanted to apologize anyway and promise that it’ll never happen again. He would be prepared for the next one and the next one and the one after that too. He would be right
there next to his side for the rest of his life because Jimin was theirs.

Jimin hummed against his towel on Yoongi’s shoulder as he curled tight against his chest. Yoongi had wrapped him in a little blanket and was rubbing his cheek. Hoseok was sitting on Yoongi’s shins, his knees pulled to his chest. Every once in a while, Hoseok’s long, tan toes would grip Yoongi’s leg hair and pull. Taehyung was using the other arm of the couch as a pillow.

All the plans he had that Sunday were tossed out the window. He was going to pick up the house and maybe go grocery shopping. Weed the flower bed outside that was in desperate need of some attention.

But, he was exhausted and so was Jimin, whose eyes were slid half-shut as he sucked on his fingers and drooled. So, Sunday turned into family movie night.

Yoongi glanced around at his full living room. At the piles of toys and art supplies that literal basically every horizontal surface. At the crayon line on the wall from when Taehyung got a little too artistic. At Jimin’s bunny that was still on the floor. And at his children’s happy faces. His children.

And he smiled.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment! <3
Their Loss

Chapter Notes

Thank you everyone for your kind words on the last chapter! Really, I expect this fic to be LONG long.

Also, for reference, this is what I have in mind when describing Jimin's medical equipment:

- **His Wheelchair**
- **Gait Trainer**
- **Floor Sitter**

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“We have located Jungkook’s mother.” Seokjin said on the phone. “It took this long because she had changed her name twice. She was seventeen when she had Jungkook. She left shortly after he was born and got married. Divorced and then married again. She lives in Vegas now.”

Yoongi felt his knuckles go numb. “W-what does this mean…for us?”

“Well,” Seokjin sighed. “She is Jungkook’s biological mother. And she never actually signed over rights to Jungkook to his grandmother. So, the child is technically hers. She’s traveling today to L.A.”

Yoongi closed his eyes and gripped the counter. This couldn’t be happening. It had been what? Four, almost five months? *This couldn't be happening.*

“The agency will call to arrange for visitation sometime this week.” Seokjin sighed. “The whole process of slowly reintroducing Jungkook will take a couple of weeks at least and we’ll submit her to a blood test to confirm relationship.” He sighed. “I’m sorry I don’t have better news.” He said apologetically.

“It’s not your fault.” Yoongi said and opened his eyes. “And besides,” He tried to sound optimistic, but it sounded hollow in his own ears. “It’s his mom. That’s a good thing, right?”

“Absolutely. Reuniting families is what we’re all about.”

“Thanks, Jin.” Yoongi hung up his phone and let it drop on the counter. He stared at the speckles in his granite countertop, trying to wrap his head around the possibility that Jungkook might be taken away from them.

She didn’t know him. She didn’t know that he liked fun light-up toys or teddies that smelled like Snuggle or playing on the piano for hours. She didn’t know that he liked to zoom around the house or watch the Top 100 music videos on television or that he loved his brothers so much, that he cried when they cried or laughed when they laughed.

But, they did. They knew him and loved him. And now he was going to ripped away from
them. And it was completely, entirely unfair.

Yoongi picked his phone back up to dial Namjoon’s number, since he had already left for work. But, a little pat on his hip stole his attention and looked down to Hoseok’s apple cheeks. “Hey, Seokie.” Yoongi greeted. “What’s up?”

“I can’t find my other shoe.” He frowned.

Yoongi glanced at the stove clock. They had five minutes before they all had to be in the car to drop off Tae and Seok at school. He glanced into the living room, where he had parked Jimin in his floor sitter and he happily sang made-up tune to himself while playing with a stuffed bunny he had taken to. “Did you check under your bed?” He signed.

“Yes.” Hoseok shook his fist up and down.

“Behind your door?” Yoongi suggested.

Hoseok’s eye widen and he turned around and dashed back down the hallway. Yoongi gripped his phone. They were down to four minutes to get out the door and Hoseok and Tae had already been late three times this semester. He put his phone in his back pocket and got to work wrangling everyone into the car, a routine he had down to a science now.

He started with Jimin’s wheelchair. Tae had started calling it Wally the Wheelchair. Namjoon called the SS Jimin. Yoongi’s name for it usually involved an expletive as he always pinched his fingers trying to collapse it down and shove it into the trunk.

Once he was done, he opened the electrical box on the garage wall, flicking the lights to the kids’ bedrooms on and off to let them know it was time to go. He grabbed Jimin from the floor and got him into his car seat. Flicked the lights again. Found Jungkook and got him in with a toy so he didn’t go stir crazy and then at that point, the elder boys were usually hurrying down the hallway with their backpacks. Yoongi grabbed lunchboxes from the fridge, Jimin’s diaper bag, and it was time to leave.

“A minute ahead of schedule.” He fist-pumped as he backed himself out of the open garage door. “You boys have everything?” He signed.

They nodded from the third row as they ate out of tupperware containers of grapes. Tae like the purple ones and Hoseok liked the green ones. Jimin was chatting with himself as a shiny bead of drool dripped off of his chin and hit shirt and Jungkook was stimming hard by rocking.

Yoongi dropped the boys off at school – Hoseok now able to get all the way to his classroom without having to be escorted. However, he still asked about three times what time Yoongi was going to come pick them up. It was the same answer every time, but Yoongi knew that hearing it over and over just helped ease Hoseok’s anxiety.

Jungkook was rocking so hard that the whole car vibrated a tiny bit and his seat squeaked. Yoongi listened to that and Jimin’s happy noises and the Baby Shark song that was playing from the speaker as he texted Namjoon from the school parking lot.

**Yoongi: got a call from Seokjin. Jungkook’s mom has been found.**

Namjoon texted back a moment later.

**Namjoon: what does that mean?**
Yoongi didn’t know what it meant, really. Would she come and take him away? She abandoned him before. Would he be at risk of being abandoned again? Heat flared underneath his skin, lighting him aflame for a second. It was painful, thinking about Jungkook being ripped from their house and them not knowing what that meant. Would he go to stable, nurturing home? Would he be supported? Would his needs be met? Would he thrive?

Would he be loved?

Yoongi couldn’t answer that and it both angered and terrified him.

Yoongi: We’ll see, I guess.

Yoongi watched Jimin bounce on his toes of his right leg, strapped into a blue metal contraption that Paul called a ‘gait trainer.’ But to Yoongi, looked like a cross between a baby bouncer and a walker. It circled him all the way around and held up most of his weight by a sling that went between his legs and there were handlebars he could grip to propel himself forward. He was wearing special braces on his calves to help support him as well.

“Okay,” Paul said as he squatted next to Jimin, trying to keep his legs from scissoring together. “You gotta stop dancing, Chim.” He smiled as he watched Jimin bounce, his fingers patting the side of the gait trainer.

Yoongi watched Jimin too and kept his eye on Jungkook, who always had a blast playing with the exercise balls and the mini-trampolines in the corner of Jimin’s PT’s office.

“Chim!” Jimin repeated, his head tilted slightly back so he could see. He made a happy “sksksk,” noise that Yoongi had never heard before and patted the handlebars. His smile was so wide and his chin was covered in drool.

“He’s so excited.” Yoongi squatted on his other side, rubbing his back.

“He loves being on his feet.” Paul said with a chuckle. “He’s a dancer, you know.”

Yoongi watch Jimin bounce and smiled. “I see.”

“Let’s get moving a little. That sound good, Chim?” Paul said, pulling the contraption from the front just a little, his other hand around a strap that was wrapped around Jimin’s waist to keep his posture straight. Yoongi watched Jimin’s right foot hesitantly step forward and then his left follow. His eyebrows furrowed in concentration, his lips blowing into a purse like these small steps were taking every ounce of effort he could muster.

“You’re doing so great, Chim!” Paul said excitedly, waving a bright toy in his view to get him to try and follow it. “Look at you!”

Paul very, very slowly led Jimin to the left, letting him take steps at his own pace. Yoongi stayed behind and glanced over his shoulder at Jungkook. He was holding an exercise ball in his little arms and purposefully bouncing off the wall to knock himself onto the padded floor, only to get back up and do it again, his smile wide over his face and bubbly giggles popping out of him. Yoongi sighed and smiled as he watched him. At least nap time later will be no issues.

“Daddy.”
Yoongi’s head whipped around. Paul had stopped about six feet off from where Yoongi was sitting on the floor, fixing Jimin’s posture and legs again.

“Daddy.” A tiny voice said – soft, but distraught. And it took Yoongi a full ten seconds to compute that it was Jimin who said that. *It was Jimin who said ‘daddy.’*

“Dad,” Paul said and glanced at him. “Someone’s not happy that he can’t see you.”

Yoongi scrambled to his feet and hurried over to where Jimin was, getting on one knee to get to his level. Jimin’s head was turning as he scanned around with his limited field of vision, trying to find Yoongi with an upset frown on his face.

“Hey, baby.” Yoongi said and touched his shoulder. His head whipped around and then tilted back. “It’s okay. I’m right here.”

“Daddy.” Jimin said again, his smile returning so wide his eyes squinted into little crescents. He patted his gait trainer and then lifted a hand towards Yoongi. Yoongi grabbed it and kissed his palm.

They had Jimin now since the end of August. Almost three months. And in that time Jimin was learning about Namjoon and Yoongi. Learning about the people who cared for him. The people that he could seek out when he was lonely or scared. He was learning these people would give him comfort when he wasn’t feeling good. Jimin was learning that he had people he could rely on, that would always be there for him, that he could trust.

The boy who only knew temporary houses and pain was learning that he would forever be loved. That he finally had a place in someone’s heart.

And he learned that that person’s name was ‘Daddy.’

Yoongi choked up, unable to hold it back. “Yes, baby boy.” He kissed his head, being careful of the medical device he was strapped into. “I’m Daddy.” He nodded, his chest feeling so full it could burst. Yoongi always wondered if there was a limit to love. But, he realized that there wasn’t. It was as infinite and cosmic as the universe.

Jimin beamed and continued to pat his hands and bounce. Yoongi wiped his face as he realized he was cutting in on Paul’s time. “Sorry.” He mumbled and wiped his tears on his jeans. “We’ve been trying to teach him ‘daddy’ for awhile and it’s the first time he’s said it and...” Yoongi let his lame excuse trail off as he ducked his head.

Paul reached up and pulled a box of tissues off of one of the many tables that were scattered around office. “Never be sorry about celebrating your child.” He said and thrust the box out towards him.

Namjoon curled his leg underneath him as he sat with Hoseok at the dining room table, helping him finish his math worksheet. Subtraction, he was figuring out, was hard work to a seven-year-old.

“So, if it’s smaller on top.” Namjoon pointed to the four above the eight. “What do we do?”
Hoseok frowned, his dimples popping out as he studied his worksheet hard. “We have to make it bigger?” He signed.

“Yes, good job.” Namjoon praised. “How do we do that? Go through the steps.”

“I have to…” He signed, his pointer finger curled down in front of him as he paused mid-sentence to think.

“…borrow.” Namjoon prompted.

“I have to borrow ten from the number next to the four.” Hoseok crossed out the two next to the four and turned it into a one. He crossed out the four and turned it into a fourteen.

“Okay, so what’s fourteen minus eight?”

Hoseok stared at his fingers, making the sign for eight. He counted to nine, ten, eleven…all the way to fourteen. “Six.” He said, smiling with understanding.

Namjoon looked up to Yoongi as he half-walked, half-waddled into the kitchen in very Yoongi-esque fashion. He was changed into pajamas, his shorts showing off his pale, thin legs. Namjoon watched him enter the kitchen and pull down a sippy cup and a Camelbak. He got some milk ready for Jungkook and Jimin and fished Jimin’s night meds out of their bottles.

“Everything okay?” Namjoon signed. He had helped bathe Jimin and Jungkook, but then Hoseok had a math worksheet that had thirty problems that he needed to get done before tomorrow and Yoongi was left to finish getting everyone tucked in for the night.

Yoongi nodded. “Everyone’s in bed except for Hoseok.”

“We have two more problems.” Namjoon signed back. “And we’re doing good.”

“Great.” Yoongi tipped his head, his narrow eyes flashing. Namjoon knew that meant that he needed to talk to Namjoon about something without little ears around. It was probably about Jungkook and how they were going to deal with the discovery of his birth mother.

Namjoon gave a little nod to let Yoongi know he saw that and rubbed Hoseok’s back as he helped him with the next problem, his thoughts consumed with the fact that they might have to give up Jungkook.

His forehead crumpled. He couldn’t fathom giving up Jungkook, because Jungkook was theirs. His bunny boy with the wide scrunch-smile and the little giggle and the happy hands was theirs.

Hoseok erased the original answer and wrote the correct one down on the last problem, finishing his worksheet. Namjoon opened his folder and checked his other assignments. Some he did okay on – 7/10, 8/10. And then others he didn’t do well at all. Mostly spelling tests and sentence worksheets. He found a picture he drew of the family. “Seokie,” He signed. “Did you draw us?”

Hoseok nodded. “There’s Tae and me.” He pointed to the two smaller figures in the center. “Jungkook.” He signed Kookie’s name sign, which was literally ‘cookie’ but with a ‘K.’ Tae was the one that came up with it. “And Chim.” He pointed to Jimin who was drawn in his wheelchair. “And then Dad and you.” He pointed to Yoongi, whose hair was bright red for some reason even though he had dyed it a natural brown a couple of months ago and him.

“This is nice, Seokie.”
Hoseok beamed. “We put them on a board. Tae and I are the only kids with two daddies.” Hoseok said. “Tae’s picture was better.” He said. “But, I like mine too.”

“It’s great.” Namjoon signed enthusiastically. “Time for bed, okay? Did you brush your teeth?”

Hoseok nodded and Namjoon helped him get his backpack ready for the next day. Namjoon demanded a goodnight kiss and Hoseok pecked him before dancing off down the hallway.

Namjoon sighed and closed up shop for the evening, making sure the doors were locked and the air conditioner was on and the lights were off. He checked in on Jungkook, adjusting his blankets back over his body. And then Jimin, making sure he was in a comfortable position.

He checked in on Tae, finding him asleep. And Hoseok squirming his way under his own covers. “Good night, Seokie.”

“Wait.” Hoseok signed back and then pointed at the closet. “No monsters?”

Namjoon walked in and glanced into his closets. “I see shoes, jeans, jackets.” He signed and turned back to Hoseok. “But, no monsters.”

Hoseok smiled a little and snuggled into his bed. “Thank you, Dad.” He signed. “Goodnight. Love you.”

“I love you too.”

Namjoon found Yoongi curled up at the head of their bed, his reading glasses hanging low on his nose as he stared at his iPad. Namjoon flicked the lights on and off to announce his presence and Yoongi looked up to him. “Hey,” He signed and crossed his ankles.

Namjoon crawled up from the end of the bed to the head, nestling his head on Yoongi’s shoulder and pressing his nose into his throat. “Hey.” He greeted back with a sigh, smelling the light oaky body wash that Yoongi used and the slight smell of mint from his mouthwash. “How was your day?”

Yoongi’s pale fingers that were knobbled like an old tree raked themselves through Namjoon’s hair and he pressed his lips to his forehead. “It was fine.” He signed with his other hand. “Until we got that call from Seokjin.”

“Until we got that call from Seokjin.”

Namjoon sighed and shifted around so that they could talk. “I think…” He started. “I was thinking about it a lot and I don’t want to give up Jungkook-,”

“Oh, neither do I.” Yoongi signed quickly.

“But, I think it’ll be okay,” Namjoon said, feeling a familiar swirl of fierce protectiveness in his chest. “In the end.”

“What do you mean?” Yoongi peered at him over his glasses.

Namjoon pursed his lips. “I’ve been thinking about it all day. And it made me so mad how unfair it was that I punched my filing cabinet.” He signed and flexed his knuckles.
Yoongi grabbed his hand to inspect the bruise. “Namjoon.” He rolled his eyes, his lips flattening in a displeased line.

“I know. I know.” He signed. “Once I got ahold of myself, I went and talked to Tom – you met him at last year’s Christmas party – in the law department and he said that the court doesn’t always rule in favor of the bio family. That we could…potentially fight for rights of Jungkook if it comes down to it.”

“You want to take Jungkook’s birth mom to court?” His eyebrows furrowed in question.

“If we have to,” Namjoon shrugged. “I’ll do anything to make sure Jungkook stays with us.”

Yoongi dropped his hands and stared at his lap. “Me too.” He finally signed. “I would too.”

Namjoon shifted and rubbed Yoongi’s shoulder. “That’s if we have to.” He signed. “His mother is still really young, right? Like, twenty-one, twenty-two now? And Jungkook’s autistic. She might…” He winced as he thought about it, but it was a possibility that was entirely too real. “She might return him or even refuse to take him.”

“Jungkook’s not a pair of jeans with a broken zipper.” Yoongi signed. “You can’t just return him for a refund.”

“I’m not saying he is.” Namjoon signed. “But, you know, he’s autistic. And it can be overwhelming if you don’t…know him.” He signed. “And he’s already been abandoned once by her.”

“How shitty of a person do you have to be to do that to your own child?” Yoongi signed mostly to himself.

“Well,” Namjoon motioned around in a circle and then to himself. “Shitty people is how we ended up with a houseful of love, right?”

Yoongi smiled a little and pressed his forehead against Namjoon’s shoulder. He sighed. “Their loss.”

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!<3
Chapter Notes

Chapter Warnings: r-word

So, this is kind of an odd chapter. Some really, really big scenes. More conflict (sorry Seokie :( ) I do promise it'll get better!

Enjoy!

Visitation was scheduled during school hours, so Yoongi and Jimin were the ones that escorted Jungkook to the agency office where they had neutral visitation room. A room where Jungkook was going to meet the stranger that gave birth to him and then abandoned him.

Jungkook wasn’t having a very good day to begin with. One of their neighbors was running their fireplace and the smoke smell made it into their house. It was faint. Not enough to make Jungkook go into a meltdown. But, enough that it set him on edge all morning. He kept his arm around his bear that smelled like laundry while the other one stimmed next to his face. He avoided the living room where the smell was the strongest, instead isolating himself between Hoseok’s bed and the wall on the opposite side of the house, playing with his Bop-It.

He calmed down once they separated him from the smell, but Yoongi could tell it was leaving him anxious and drained, just by his upset frown and the way he was stimming so hard. He wanted to take him somewhere fun, somewhere where it smelled like fresh air. Somewhere where he could get out his wiggles and get his mind off of what was bothering him. Yoongi tried calling to reschedule the visit, but apparently they couldn’t do that.

So, they went to the agency office and Yoongi just felt irritated that he had to be here with his son to begin with. His son. Namjoon’s son. Not anyone else’s. He felt irritated that he had to put Jungkook through this, that he had to explain to him that he was going to meet someone, that he had to disrupt Jungkook’s routine that kept him happy and calm.

“You want a goldfish?” Yoongi offered him a cheese cracker from a baggy he kept in Jimin’s diaper bag. He shook his head as he paced in front of Yoongi’s knees while they waited, his hand flapping hard in front of his face.

The most irritating part was that Yoongi couldn’t follow him back. He had to wait out here. He couldn’t meet the person that thought it was okay to abandon their kid. He couldn’t look her in the eye, and tell her exactly what he thought of her. He couldn’t hold Jungkook’s hand as he traversed this confusion.

Seokjin emerged from a back hallway carrying a folder. “Hey, there.” He greeted politely, but apologetically. His full lips pulled into a gentle smile. “We are all ready for him. It’s only going to take an hour.”

Yoongi grabbed Jungkook’s shoulders and spun him around to face him. “I love you.” He said firmly before planting a kiss on his forehead.
Jungkook’s wide, dark eyes just filled with confusion as Seokjin tried to take his hand and then flashed upset when he yanked it out of the social worker’s grip. He stimmed hard and leaned into Yoongi’s knee. “Home.” He signed to Yoongi. “Home. Home.”

“It’s okay, Kookie.” Yoongi encouraged, the words feeling fake on his tongue. “You’re going to have some fun, okay?”

Jungkook made a noise and shook his head, his eyes turning to the floor. He continued to shake his head even as Seokjin gently grabbed his upper arm and started to guide him away. He cast a glance behind his shoulder, his eyes confused as he shuffled unwillingly down the hallway.

Yoongi pulled out his phone and texted Namjoon to let him know that visitation was happening and that he wished Jungkook’s mom could take a long leap off of a short bridge for upsetting him. For ruining all of their plans. For existing.

And then it was the waiting game. Yoongi flipped to a home search app on his phone, but with Jungkook potentially being taken away from him the whole new house thing was low priority. He turned his attention to Jimin, combing his hair to the side as he started to nod off in his wheelchair for a midmorning nap, his middle and third fingers in his mouth and his forehead leaning against the side of the padded headrest.

He sighed and looked around the bare agency office. There were a couple of parenting magazines on the coffee table that were old and worn. A plant that was in an early state of decay. He picked off dried leaves with his fingertips and dropped them in the waste basket, trying to fight the anxiety that was building in his chest, making him feel like a shaken soda can ready to burst at the slightest touch.

He opened his phone again. Namjoon was in class, so he wasn’t expecting a response back for awhile. He navigated to his mother’s contact and hit dial.

“Annyeong.” She answered, her voice thick with her native accent.

“Hi, eomma. Are you busy?”

“Oh, Yoongi-yah. No, of course not. I was just talking with my new neighbor.” She said. “How are you?”

He sucked in a short breath. “I’m okay. Just,” He rubbed his thigh. “I…” He made a noise, feeling silly for calling her. “Just wanted to see if you would be interested in a visit? Soon? You haven’t met Jimin yet and I know the others would be happy to see their Nini.”

“Oh, of course. Of course.” She said. “I’ve been meaning to call you for awhile about that but then I got busy with the…you know what, it’s not important. When’s a good time?”

“Anytime.” He said. “Really.”

“You don’t sound well, Yoongi-yah. Is everything okay?”

He sighed. “You know how I told that they were looking for Jungkook’s mother?” He picked at a rip in his jeans. His mother made a noise in affirmation. “Well, they found her and…” Suddenly he felt his throat swell with tears that he had to fight to keep at bay. “They trying to reunite them.” His voice went incredibly low as he tried to keep it from cracking.

“Oh, I can’t imagine how hard this is for you.” She said just above a whisper.
He continued to play with the rip in his jeans. “If you have any parental wisdom to imbue,” he joked and swallowed. “I wouldn’t mind.”

She chuckled. “Well, as a mother of two boys, my only advice is to keep the liquor cabinet well-stocked.” Yoongi chuckled at her joke. His mother was always very gentle, but her sense of humor was wicked. Yoongi knew he had to have learned it from somewhere. “But, really, Yoongi-yeah.” She said. “Being a parent is hard, but being a foster parent I imagine would be ten times harder because you have to have a skill that no other parent has to have.”

“What’s that?”

“The ability to let go.”

Yoongi swallowed again, trying to imagine Jungkook out of his life. Trying to imagine not waking up to two gigantic brown irises staring at the floor asking him to turn on VH1 at six in the morning. At his aggressive rocking in his car seat that caused the whole SUV to bounce on its shocks. To his playful grin that literally lit up rooms. He couldn’t. He couldn’t imagine it because if he did he felt himself wilt like the potted plant on the table. “I don’t know if I can do that.” He confessed.

“You’re stronger than you think. You know, I-,”

There was a scream from down the hallway that Yoongi knew was Jungkook in the midst of a meltdown. Panic seized his chest. “I-I gotta go. It’s one of the kids.” He hit the ‘end’ button and rose to his feet just in time to catch a sprinting Jungkook in his arms, falling to his knees so Jungkook could press his face into Yoongi’s shoulder. He was grunting and crying, stimming and writhing. Yoongi wrapped his arms around their youngest. “Shhh. You’re okay. Shh.” He comforted.

Seokjin emerged from the hallway behind him and Yoongi put his eyes on their social worker, feeling resentment churn inside of him as he held his upset boy against him.

“What happened?” Yoongi demanded.

Seokjin fiddled, his face apologetic. “I don’t think she was warned of his hypersensitivities and wore a perfume and-,”

“So it was her fault.” Yoongi bit, tightening his arms. Anger consumed him and he had to blink away the red halo forming around his vision and remind himself to take long breaths.

“Well, really, I’m to blame.” Seokjin said. “I forgot to warn her about wearing anything too strong. I’m sorry.”

Yoongi gritted his teeth as he ran his fingers through Jungkook’s hair. Sorry. Sorry wasn’t going to fix this. Sorry wasn’t going relieve the overstimulated downward spiral that Jungkook was in. It wasn’t going to take away the pain he was in.

She would’ve known if she was present. If she knew him. But, she didn’t. She was a stranger. Just a fucking stranger.

He bit his tongue. Seokjin did his home-studies and filed his paperwork to keep them certified as foster parents. Lashing out would just be counterintuitive. Instead he pressed his nose into Jungkook’s temple and hushed him, holding him tight like he liked. Jungkook buried his face into Yoongi’s t-shirt and was inhaling deep breaths as his little fingers writhed next to his head and he choked on his tears.
Yoongi opened his eyes to find Seokjin, to ask how the visit was going before his mother triggered Jungkook. But, Seokjin had disappeared – probably to get tissues or a toy or something.

He scanned around, looking for him, but instead locked eyes with a young woman that was coming down the hallway. Incredibly young, probably twenty or twenty-one. She had long hair and large doe eyes. The same doe eyes that Jungkook had. She looked pale and uncomfortable, but as Yoongi stared at her, heat rose into her face from embarrassment.

This was Jungkook’s mother.

And a million thoughts flew through Yoongi’s head at once. Don’t you realize what you done? Don’t you realize that you hurt your son? Why did you abandon him? What kind of a selfish, horrible human do you have to be to abandon your own child? Don’t you realize what you’re doing coming back? How you’re screwing everything up? Don’t you realize that he’s better off with us? That he’s happy with us?

Don’t you realize that he’s ours now?

She ducked her head and hurried past to the front door of the agency office and it took every ounce of control that Yoongi had to sit there still as he held Jungkook’s upset little body against him and not chase that bitch down to give her a piece of his mind.

And tell her that Jungkook was his. And will always be his.

“Big bite.” Yoongi said as he spooned some mashed potatoes into Jimin’s mouth, catching whatever leaked out and tried to get that in too.

Jimin smacked his lips as he ate that and then tipped his head and pointed with his outstretched hand, babbling. His other held his silky cloth and he waved it around like a flag. Yoongi fed him another bite and he quieted down as he swallowed.

Jungkook was sitting on Namjoon’s knee – silently demanding an abandonment of routine for comfort, clinging hard to his daddies all day after his meltdown. Namjoon didn’t seem to mind at all and fed him chicken nuggets from his plate that sat next to Namjoon’s. He pressed his head into Namjoon’s chest and nibbled on a chicken nugget in his fist.

“We’re growing butterflies.” Tae signed excitedly as he jammed a chicken nugget into his mouth. “And one of my eggs hatched first! He’s a little teeny tiny caterpillar.” Tae held up his thumb and forefinger to show how small. “Just a tiny baby.” He beamed.

Hoseok was sulking over his dinner, mindlessly spearing broccoli into his mouth. He had been sullen all afternoon, his steps heavy as he walked down the entrance of the school when Yoongi had come to pick them up.

“Oh everything alright, Hoseok?” Yoongi asked as he speared a cut up piece of chicken nugget into Jimin’s mouth and then picked one up for himself.

“My caterpillars died.” Hoseok signed. “I had four of them and they all died before they
hatched out of their eggs.”

Tae nodded somberly, his mop of hair shaking. “We’re sharing a cup now.”

Yoongi sighed as he watched Hoseok’s chin quiver and his eyes glass over. “Baby, it’s okay.” He signed to him. “They’re just caterpillars.”

Hoseok aggressively wiped his face. “I can’t do anything right.” He signed. “I’m bad at math and monkey bars and word searches and kickball and…and my caterpillars died.” He broke down and Namjoon and him shared a worried glance. Yoongi put his towel and Jimin’s special spoon on the surface and got up, moving around the table to kneel in front of Hoseok.

“Seokie,” Yoongi spun him around in the chair. “You’re amazing at a number of things. You are an absolute machine at checkers. And you always remember to do your chores, even the hard ones. You’re good at handstands and hugs.”

Namjoon tapped on the table to get his attention. “You’re getting so good at subtraction, you’re better than me.”

“And you’re an amazing brother.” Yoongi nodded.

“You always beat me in MarioKart.” Tae added. “And you’re good at making me laugh when I’m sad.”

Yoongi rubbed his shoulders and then wiped his cheeks. “There’s nothing to be upset over. People can be good at different things. Okay?”

Hoseok sniffled and wiped his face. His face flushed and he slid off of his chair onto his feet, forcing Yoongi to stand back up. “I’m not good at anything.” He signed back and stomped off down the hallway. Yoongi cringed when he heard the door slam shut.

Namjoon and him shared another glanced and then in tandem they both snapped their attentions of Taehyung, who was staring at his fingers not meeting anyone’s gaze. Namjoon knocked on the table, forcing him to look up. “What’s going on, Tae?”

“Um,” Tae said, purposefully keeping his mouth low. “I don’t know.”

“Taehyung,” Yoongi scolded as he gripped the back of Hoseok’s chair. “Chin up.”

Tae forced his face up and he pursed out his full lips, squirming uncomfortably in his chair. “Hoseok didn’t want me to tell anyone.”

“Tell anyone what?”

“About…Melody.”

“Melody?” Yoongi went back to his chair and sat down. “Who is Melody?”

“This mean girl in our class that always picks on Hoseok when the teacher isn’t looking.” He confessed. “She was my friend,” He started to sign fast. “In the beginning but she didn’t like Hoseok and wouldn’t let him do anything with us. And I got mad at her one day on the playground in the space tubes and told her,” His little chest puffed. “That Hoseok was my brother and that I couldn’t be her friend if she was going to be mean to Hoseok.” He sighed and deflated. “She said that Hoseok was retarded and that’s why he was bad at math and older than everyone in the class and she got all the girls in the class to call him that too.”
Yoongi had subconsciously brought his hands to his face and was pressing on his cheeks as Tae told his story, unable to comprehend one of his children being bullied in school? Being called names? Shouldering all of this silently for God knows how long?

“Did you tell the teacher?” Namjoon signed. “That this is happening?”

“No.” Tae exploded. “I wanted to, but Hoseok wouldn’t let me. He said that we’d all get in trouble if I did. He said that it wasn’t that big of a deal. But, he cries everyday during lunch and sometimes in the bathroom. And he asks for nurse passes because he says his stomach hurts all the time.” Tae pouted. “He’s going to be mad at me for tattling.”

Namjoon and Yoongi shared another glance, worry reflecting in each other’s eyes. “I’ll take Hoseok.” Yoongi signed and started to get back up.

“No,” Namjoon signed. “I know what it’s like to be bullied. I got Hoseok.” He glanced at Tae. “Finish with Jimin.” He got out of his chair and set Jungkook down on his seat, handing him his fork. Jungkook made a noise of protest and slid out of his chair, toddling off after Namjoon. Yoongi let him go. Forcing Jungkook to keep in his seat was a battle not worth fighting right now.

Yoongi went back to feeding Jimin, giving him some chicken nugget. “Tae,” He started to Tae who was starting to tear up himself. “Seokie won’t be mad at you. You did the right thing for telling us.”

He nodded. “I know.” He sighed and speared at his dinner. “Will you guys get Melody in trouble?”

“Well,” Yoongi said as he ate some broccoli himself. “We’re going to have a discussion with your guys’ teacher.”

“Does ‘retarded’ mean dumb?”

Yoongi bristled at that word. “No,” He signed. “It was an old word that people now use incorrectly to describe people who learn things at their own pace or people who need assistance doing things.”

Tae nodded, his eyes wide. “Like Chim.”

“Chim!” Jimin said happily, turning his head towards his name. “Tae.” He said and Tae got to his feet to tickle underneath Jimin’s neck.

“Yes, but it isn’t a nice word.” Yoongi signed. “Stupid, retarded, dumb. They’re not nice words. If you see people using them, you have my permission to tell them they aren’t being nice.”

Taehyung nodded and smiled at Jimin, who was absolutely beaming at his brother, mash potatoes making a mess of his chin. “I don’t get why people are mean,” He said and pecked Jimin’s head. “When it’s so much more fun to be nice.”

Namjoon opened the door to Hoseok’s room and flashed his lights to let him know that he
was there. Hoseok was laying on his side on his bed, his back to Namjoon. He curled tighter when the lights went off and on.

Namjoon arced around his bed, bringing the desk chair with him. Hoseok’s hearing aids had been ripped off and thrown on his bedside table. All of Hoseok’s Care Bears had been knocked off of his bed. As well as his Mickey Mouse doll and his Build-a-Bear. Instead he clutched his pillow and sniffled, purposefully not looking Namjoon in the eyes.

Namjoon sighed and sat down on the desk chair in front of Hoseok. Jungkook had followed him in and crawled onto Taehyung’s bed, reaching for Tae’s stuffed llama. He pressed his face into and then flopped on his back.

“I don’t want to talk.” Hoseok finally signed.

“Okay.” Namjoon signed back. “We don’t have to talk.”

New tears welled into Hoseok’s eyes and his face screwed up and Namjoon felt his chest clench painfully. He hated watching his kids suffer. And he knew this pain well. The pain of being an outsider. The pain of being picked on. The pain of being bullied.

“Is it okay?” Namjoon started. “If I talk? You don’t have to listen if you don’t want to.”

Hoseok just shrugged noncommittally.

“Oh okay,” Namjoon started. “When I was growing up, I had this horrible bully named Kevin. He was big and obnoxious and always smelled like Cheetos.”

Hoseok’s eyes flicked up, letting Namjoon know he was listening.

“And he picked on me the most because…” Namjoon signed and rubbed the back of his hand. “Because I deaf and small and I didn’t really like sports and I struggled a lot in school.” His eyes dropped. “He would write me notes saying I was dumb and would startle me and even kicked me on the playground.”

“What did you do?” Hoseok asked.


Hoseok nodded knowingly. He sat up. “I tried to fight back too.” Hoseok said. “I told Melody that she was being rude and that I would tell the teacher on her.” He looked down at his hands. “I even pushed her.”

“It made it worse, didn’t it?” Namjoon asked.

Hoseok nodded, tears filling his eyes. “That’s when she told the whole class to call me retarded.” He wiped his face of tears.

Namjoon dropped his knees in front of Hoseok. “Remember when I told you to be kind to everyone and friends will find you? It was a long time ago, it’s okay if you don’t remember.”

“I remember.” Hoseok signed, gripping Namjoon’s button down with his long toes.

Namjoon gripped his son’s shoulders before signing. “I want you to be extra nice to Melody.”

Hoseok’s face screwed with confusion. “What?” He signed, shocked and angry. “But-,”
“I know.” Namjoon signed. “I know. But, Melody is probably a bully because she’s mad or sad about something, okay? And she doesn’t know how to talk about it so she’s taking it out on you. And if you’re extra nice to her, she’ll see that her actions are wrong.” Namjoon signed. “It’s gonna be super hard because I know being treated unkindly makes you sad and mad too. But, if you have to be the better person, Hoseok. You have to be the change, otherwise the cycle will just continue and people will just continue getting hurt.”

“She’s mad or sad?” Hoseok signed. “Really?”

“That’s how Kevin was.” Namjoon signed. “He was sad because his brother was really sick.” Namjoon shrugged. “It was hard for him and he didn’t know how to handle it, so he took it out on me.”

“Oh.” Hoseok signed and then stared at his fingers. He sighed, tears making lines down his face. “I just want friends.” He signed after awhile. “But, all I have is Tae and the rest of the class hates me.”

“They don’t.” Namjoon cupped his son’s face. “Really. They just have to get to know you, okay?”

Hoseok nodded and rubbed his face. “Okay.”

“If anyone hurts you,” Namjoon signed. “Physically – punch or kick or whatever – you are allowed to hit them back, understand? That’s called self-defense. But, only if someone hurts you first.” Namjoon signed pointedly, making sure Hoseok understood the difference. “And then you need to get a teacher immediately.”

Hoseok nodded, his eyes wide. “Okay.”

“And, baby. Seokie.” Namjoon kissed his cheek and the rose to sit next to him on the bed. “Dad and I will help you with any issues you have. Please don’t keep things from us, okay? You won’t get in trouble. We just want to make sure you’re safe,” He tickled Hoseok’s ribs, coaxing his big, megawatt smile out of him. “And happy. That’s our jobs as daddies – we have to protect our babies.”

Hoseok crawled into Namjoon’s lap and Namjoon made a big deal of pretending to groan and struggle as he flipped Hoseok onto his back and cradled him like an infant. Hoseok giggled the whole time and then sighed with his face pressed into Namjoon’s chest.

“And you know what?” Namjoon signed with one hand.

“What?” Hoseok signed back.

“If anyone can’t see how absolutely amazing and talented and special you are,” Namjoon said with his whole heart, love blasting heat through his veins, raising goosebumps on his skin as he stared into his son’s eyes that were black and iridescent as the night sky. “Then they don’t deserve you as a friend.”
Or

Chapter Notes

chapter warnings: r-word and smut

I interrupt your regularly scheduled programming of soft namgi dads taking care of their soft kiddos for some soft namgi dad smut. If you're not a fan of smut, you can just read the first scene until the line break and then stop. But, it's a nice look into their relationship and I assure you, it's nothing horribly graphic or gross.

This fic is just ticking alot of boxes for me writing-wise and namgi smut was a box that needed to be ticked.

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Namjoon, fortunately, had a late class the next day.

That meant he and Yoongi could go into Hoseok’s class together and confront their teacher, Miss Candace - he checked for her name on the school supply list they were given at the beginning of the year that now made its home with a pile of other notices on Yoongi’s desk – about Hoseok’s bully problem.

“Now,” Namjoon signed to Yoongi, whose face was getting redder and redder with his internalized anger with every step they took towards Hoseok’s classroom. Hoseok was holding his hand, beaming that his whole family was dropping him off at school today. “We don’t need to go in ready to start war. That’ll just put her on the defense.”

Yoongi’s his cheeks puffed out in challenge. “I’m not going to start war.” He signed with one hand, the other pushing Jimin's wheelchair.

“No,” Namjoon conceded. “You’re going to go in, look at her with that piercing gaze of yours that makes literal souls detach from their bodies, make her rethink her all of her life choices, and she will be a puddle on the floor before we’d come to a proactive solution to the issue.” Namjoon signed.

Yoongi shifted his head down to make sure that Jungkook was keeping up, Yoongi’s iPad in his hands. He toddled along silently. Apparently, Yoongi got him shoes that squeaked on purpose in case he decided to run off in a store or something. Namjoon teased him for it. What am I going to do with shoes that squeak?

They entered the class together and Namjoon realized just how…massive his family had gotten by the way the teacher’s eyes widened when she watched them all enter – Jimin first since his wheelchair was just wide enough that had to be angled to fit, but not angled too hard otherwise it would bump his knees if his chair wasn’t tilted up. It was like Namjoon has recruited his own little army, Trojan Horse included.

“Good morning,” She greeted in sign, watching Hoseok and Tae dutifully drop their things in
their cubbies. “You guys are early today.”

They were. They were the first in the class. They did that on purpose. “Good morning,” Namjoon signed back. “We had some…concerns brought to our attention last night and we were hoping that we could discuss them with you.” He said and signed diplomatically.

“Sure,” She motioned to the chairs in front of her desk. “Take a seat.”

Namjoon sat and Yoongi sat down, angling Jimin’s wheelchair so that he could quickly wipe Jimin’s face of drool with his towel and hand him his silky cloth. Namjoon pulled Jungkook so that he was caged between his knees. Kookie propped himself on Namjoon’s thigh, his eyes glued to the iPad.

“What’s going on?”

“Are you aware that Hoseok is being bullied by a girl named Melody?”

Miss Candace’s face rolled into an ‘o.’ “I have been made aware of arguing by the playground monitors between Taehyung, Hoseok and Melody, yes. But, according to them, that’s all it was – arguing.”

“Melody has been calling my son retarded.” Yoongi signed calmly, his anger making him seem way bigger than his wispy, 5’9 frame. “And apparently got the whole class to call him that too.” His gaze turned menacing, his narrow eyes dark in that look that he had. “I would really like an explanation for the gross negligence that seems to be happening in your classroom.”

Namjoon rubbed his husband’s thigh to get him to calm down. “We really would just like to work this out.” He signed a little bit more diplomatically, trying to smooth out any tension. “Hoseok was crying at the dinner table because of it. You can imagine how hard that is for us to hear that one of our kids is being bullied.”

The teacher looked between the both of them. “I apologize that this is the first time I’m hearing about this.” Her eyes narrowed. “But…Melody? Are you sure it’s Melody that’s bullying him?”

“That’s what he and Taehyung said.” Yoongi signed. She sighed. “Okay.” She nodded. “I will have the playground monitors keep extra attention on those two and I’ll promise to be vigilant myself.”

That was not good enough to Yoongi, apparently. “Excuse me? No. This Melody girl needs to be punished.”

“I can’t…” The teacher looked uncomfortable. “I can’t do that without proof.”

“Hoseok literally said-,” Yoongi flushed red.

“I know.” The teacher said. “And I will talk to Melody about name-calling and Hoseok too to hear his side as well. But,” She was firm and Namjoon felt his respect for this teacher increase. Yoongi was not a force to be reckoned with and she was doing great. “Everyone is innocent until proven otherwise.”

Yoongi huffed and stood up. “I guess we’re done then.” He unlocked the brakes of Jimin’s wheelchair.
“Yoongi,” Namjoon said out loud as he stood up too, ready to chase him out. “Wait.”

“What?” Yoongi said as he was three-point-turning Jimin so he faced the door. “Obviously, that’s the best answer we’re going to get, right?”

“Try and be a little cooperative.” Namjoon chastised. He was mad that Hoseok was being bullied too, but Yoongi didn’t have to cause a scene. It was embarrassing.

“She didn’t even listen.” Yoongi signed back, his hands flying wide and big. “She just… gaslighted us and then told us something that we just want to hear. This Melody girl needs to be punished. I want to talk to her parents.” Yoongi turned to the teacher. “I need her parents’ number.”

“I can’t do that.” The teacher signed back. “I promise that it’ll be handled. And I wasn’t trying to gaslight you. I just ask because at the beginning of the year, they seemed to all be friends. Hoseok shared his My Little Pony stickers because she came in crying one day and they all seemed to hit it off.”

That deflated Yoongi a little. Namjoon was surprised too. Surprised and incredibly proud that Hoseok would do that. Incredibly proud that his shy Hoseok would put himself out there like that.

“He did?” Yoongi signed.

She nodded. “Now, she has gotten a bit closer to Taehyung than Hoseok, but I didn’t realize that she had started bullying Hoseok. I’ll make sure to look into, okay? I just have to see all sides before I can write a referral and serve punishment.”

Yoongi fingered the handbrake of Jimin’s wheelchair. He sighed. “Okay. Sorry.” He signed small, his pride wounded.

“I am not as oblivious as most think.” She joked, smiling a little. “There’s just steps I have to take.”

Namjoon leaned in for a quick handshake. “Thank you.” He signed as well, using both hands. “We appreciate it.” He shot a look at Yoongi, who rolled his eyes. “Both of us.”

“Hoseok’s a good boy.” The teacher signed and stood up too. “He’s gentle and kind. But, he’s also really sensitive. Words cut him deep.” She said. “I’ll make sure that Melody knows how much damage she can do with her words.”

Namjoon glanced over his shoulder at Hoseok, who had a comic open in front of him. Tae was on his knees on his chair, peering at the comic book too as he leaned over his desk. Other kids had started to file in and were stripping off coats and backpacks. Gentle. Kind. Sensitive. No three words described him better. “Yeah,” He said as he watched him, feeling warmth flood his chest and all of his limbs. “He is.”

Namjoon felt a jam into his ribs, rousing him out of unconsciousness. He rubbed his face and squinted his eyes in the low light. Yoongi’s form suddenly took shape and so did the hazy figure of Jimin on the screen of the baby monitor that was thrusted into his face.
“Your turn.” Yoongi signed as he dropped the baby monitor on the bed between them.

Namjoon knew what that meant. He sat up and rubbed his face before he got out of bed and stumbled across the hallway into Jungkook and Jimin’s room. He accidentally stepped on a toy and hissed out a curse word, glancing at Jungkook to make sure he didn’t hear that. Jungkook slept hard, though and it wasn’t any different that evening as he was starfished out in every direction on his bed.

Jimin on the other hand, was not a hard sleeper. In fact, nights were incredibly difficult for their newest as his hips hurt to be in any one position for too long, he had to be changed at least once a night, and sometimes he had seizures.

Jimin’s eyes were open, a pillow jammed under his left side to keep him from rolling onto his back and his sheets balled around his knees. “Daddy,” He said, his little fingers gripping into fists. “Daddy.”

“I’m here, baby.” Namjoon lowered the roll guard and picked up Jimin, checking his diaper first before rearranging the pillows and laying him back down. Hazel had shown them a couple of different positions that he could be laid in, the most important was to keep him slightly on his side so he wouldn’t aspirate drool and to keep pressure off of his pelvis. Namjoon put him on his belly this time and then covered him in his blankets. “I love you, my little boy.”

“Daddy,” Jimin said. “Kiss.” He blew a kiss, his eyes already sliding shut but with a little smile on his face now. At least he was comfortable enough to get another couple of hours of sleep.

Namjoon kissed him back and then clicked off his lights as he moved back to his bedroom. Yoongi had his bedside lamp on and was sliding on his glasses and cracking his neck. “Hey,” Namjoon signed. “What’s up?”

“I can’t get back to sleep.” Yoongi signed. “I’m just gonna work in my studio and take round three.” He waved the baby monitor and got to his feet.

Namjoon watched him shuffle sleepily towards the door, walking like he was sore. And Namjoon bet he was, because he was sore himself in his shoulders and arms and thighs. Jimin was petite for his age – fitting more in the four-year-old range for height and weight. But, he was still 38 pounds and had to be carried if he wasn’t being transported in his wheelchair or sitting in one of his special chairs. Who needed a gym when you could have almost forty pounds of pure love to carry?

But, Namjoon noticed other things too – Yoongi’s small frame, and his round cheeks that he thought was the cutest, and his little thoughtful pout – the man that he loved. The man that he married.

Namjoon grabbed his hand before he made it out. “Or.” He signed.

“Or?” Yoongi signed back, his eyebrows furrowing.

Namjoon closed the door and wrapped his arms around Yoongi’s waist, kissing him deeply. He cupped his face with one hand and ran his fingertips of the other down his chest, down the front of his stomach to the waistband of his shorts. He pulled away. “Or.”

Yoongi’s eyes widened slightly in realization. “Or.” He signed back. “I like or.”

Namjoon smiled and took that as an invitation, guiding Yoongi back until he hit the bed and fell on his back, their lips still locked. He felt Yoongi gasped a tiny breath out underneath his palm and a flush of arousal traveled from his head to his groin and he grew hard. With four kids, sex had grown…infrequent. Either they didn’t have the opportunity or when they did, they were so exhausted
they used it to sleep.

Namjoon took advantage of every beautiful second now to cherish the man that was his husband, his fingers roaming freely as he slid them up underneath his shirt to play with his sensitive nipples. Yoongi let his head fall back, his glasses tilting on his face as he sighed out little breaths.

Namjoon peeled off his own white Fruit of the Loom t-shirt before helping Yoongi out of his. He fell on top of him, propping his weight on his forearms that caged Yoongi’s head. They were nose to nose and Namjoon could see gold glitter in Yoongi’s dark brown irises. “Can I make you feel good?” Namjoon asked.

Yoongi picked up his head just a little and bit Namjoon’s lower lip, pulling it gently. His arms wrapped around Namjoon’s shoulders. “Of course.” He breathed, his breath fanning over Namjoon’s face.

They kissed again, both flushed and aroused now. Namjoon pushed down his own boxers, letting himself spring loose and then pushed down Yoongi’s basketball shorts.

In tandem, they crawled to the head of the bed. Namjoon leaned over to fish out the lube and condoms from the bedside table while Yoongi’s hand slid down his front and wrapped around his cock, stroking up and down gently.

“Careful.” Namjoon said as he pulled out the lube, humming as Yoongi’s hand started to rotate as he stroked up, knowing exactly how Namjoon liked it. “It’s been awhile for both of us.”

Yoongi smiled a wide smile as he widened his legs to let Namjoon get between them. “Are you officially a DILF?” He fingerspelled the last part.

“A what?” Namjoon asked as he sat back on his heels, rubbing Yoongi’s thighs as he let his eyes drink in Yoongi’s pale body – from his chest to cute cock that was flushed pink at the head, to his soft balls that were already drawn against his body, to his hole that was tight and clenched.

“A dad I like to fuck?” Yoongi said and giggled, pressing his hand over his mouth to keep himself from being loud.

Namjoon lubed up his fingers and then pressed his pointer finger in without any warning. Yoongi’s giggles cut off with a surprised gasp and he squirmed. “Cold.” He signed as he gripped the headboard behind him.

“I know.” Namjoon smiled teasingly, using his other hand to gently pull at his balls. “That was the point.”

“Why?” Yoongi asked as he breathed heavy as Namjoon started to move in and out of his tight hole. “I like that you’re a DILF. You’re hot and-,” He sucked in another breath as Namjoon introduced as second finger. “Fuck, I’m gonna cum so fast.”

So, was Namjoon – who was already leaking, ready for anything. He let go of Yoongi’s balls to stroke himself a little, just enough to relieve the pressure in his lower abdomen. “Does being a DILF mean cumming in, like, thirty seconds?”

“No,” Yoongi shook his head. “That just means we’re undersexed.” He gasped a line of expletives when Namjoon curled his fingers, finding his prostate. “Fuck, Joon.” He said and Namjoon really hoped that he was whispering. “Please go fast. I need you.”

Namjoon felt a growl in his chest as heat washed through him. He introduced a third finger
and then picked up speed, leaning forward to get into Yoongi’s face. “Need me to fuck you?” He said lowly.

“So fucking bad.” Yoongi answered, his eyes flashing with lust and challenge.

Namjoon pulled his fingers out, rolled on a condom and stroked on some lube. He quickly got situated between Yoongi’s lilly white thighs and pushed in, feeling himself actually tear up a little with how good it felt. *It’s been a long time. Too long.* He thought as he finally entered and then paused, having to calm himself down a little before he literally orgasmed on the spot.

Yoongi wasn’t a fan of that, though. His face contorted and he started to move his hips. “Please.” He begged. “Joon. Please.”

Namjoon thrusted up, not even bothering with foreplay. He knew that they wouldn’t make it. He knew he got the spot when Yoongi’s face screwed up and his chest contracted hard with his breaths, a line of pink heating his cheeks. His fingertips dug into Namjoon’s shoulder and his other hand clamped over his mouth.

Namjoon pulled out and then pushed back in, thrusting up again. Yoongi’s eyes rolled back up into his head and he dropped his hand from Namjoon’s shoulder to jerk himself, the tip leaking hard.

Namjoon got another couple of thrusts in before he had to stop again, heat swirling and pooling in his belly, ready to spill over.

Yoongi removed his hand. “Joon.” He said.

“I know. I know.” Namjoon said. “I’m trying to last, you know, a little longer than thirty seconds.”

“It’s okay.” Yoongi smiled a little. “I’m close too.”

“You are?”

Yoongi squeezed his eyes shut and nodded. “So close.”

Namjoon took that as an invitation. He lifted Yoongi’s legs holding them up so he could get in as deep as possible and then pistoned hard in and out of his husband, watching with delight as Yoongi’s face screwed with rapture, his hand moving up and down on himself. Namjoon felt himself burn like he was on fire on the inside, but he held himself back. He didn’t want to cum before Yoongi. But, boy, was he close. So fucking close.

Yoongi stiffened and stopped breathing for a second. And then his hand stopped stroking. And then he was cumming and writhing and coating himself in ribbons of white. And Namjoon was cumming – so hard that he literally saw stars. So hard his mouth tasted metallic a little. And then it was over.

He dropped Yoongi’s legs and slumped to the side, pressing his forehead against Yoongi’s knee. Yoongi let his hands fall next to his head, palm-up. They both panted like they had just ran windsprints, blinking themselves down from the momentary euphoria.

“Is it just me?” Yoongi started slowly. “Or was that the best sex we’ve ever had?”

“Well, for all forty-five seconds of it,” Namjoon gripped the base of the condom and pulled out, watching Yoongi’s hole flutter. “That was pretty damn good.”
Yoongi giggled, his smile wide on his face. “DILF.” He chuckled.

Namjoon laughed too, pressing his forehead against his husband’s leg again. “DILF.” He repeated.

“It’s not funny.” Yoongi said as he laughed. “It’s really not. I’m just exhausted and a little delirious.”

“I know.” Namjoon said. “Me too.”

Namjoon got up to discard the condom and get a washcloth. He cleaned himself and Yoongi up and then got back into bed. Yoongi crawled onto him into his favorite position for post-coital cuddles – his head resting on Namjoon’s collarbone, his fingers tracing patterns on his skin, his thighs on either side of his pelvis. Yoongi closed his eyes and Namjoon raked his dark brown bangs off of his forehead.

Yoongi coughed, almost dropping his chopsticks into his bowl of pho. His eyes watered and he reached for his tumbler of water, sucking on the straw. “Fostering?” He repeated in sign.

Namjoon watched him get ahold of himself, waiting until he was finished choking on his dinner before pitching his idea to his husband. “As a foster kid myself, it’s something I’ve dreamed about doing for a long time.” He signed. “You have steady income with royalties and I do too. We’ve been married almost three years and…” Yoongi’s expression was shock like Namjoon had started reciting an incantation to the Dark Lord while sacrificing a pigeon in front of his half-eaten banh mi sandwich. His sentence fizzled out and he switch gears. “I mean, I don’t want to force you to do anything you don’t want to do and the certification for fostering takes, like, a million years. So, you have plenty of time to really think about it.” He dropped his eyes.

Yoongi’s pale hand came into his view and tapped his wrist and Namjoon looked up. “It’s not that I don’t want to do it.” He signed. “I just…have never seen myself as a parent.” He shrugged. “Like the red-mailbox-white-picket-fence,” He constructed the scene in sign. “Just was never in the cards.” His hands fell.

“You never thought you’d marry a deaf guy.” Namjoon pointed out. “And pick up sign.”

“No,” Yoongi signed back. “I, rapper and producer,” He motioned to himself. “Did not think I would fall in love with someone who has never heard music before and learn his language.”

“And yet…” Namjoon started for him.

“And yet here I am.” Yoongi’s eyes dropped to his soup. “I wouldn’t know what I was doing as a parent.”

“You’d be an amazing dad.” Namjoon signed quickly, seeing Yoongi’s face screw with light anxiety. “Look,” He ticked off his fingers. “You’re level-headed, you’re mature, you have a wicked sense of humor, your morals are rock solid.” He signed. “You’d be the best dad ever to kids who really need it.”

“You forgot one.” Yoongi said, a teasing smile formed over his face.

“What’s that?”

His hand came out and squeezed Namjoon’s, his all-teeth and gums smile lighting up his face and his eyes softening. “I would do anything for those I love.”
Yoongi shifted on his chest, reaching over for the baby monitor that had been thrown onto the bed. He looked at the screen and frowned. “Everything okay?” Namjoon signed.

He rolled off and onto his feet. “Jimin’s up again. His hips must be really bothering him tonight.” He signed as he slid on his t-shirt and found his discard shorts.

Namjoon sat up. “I can get him.”

“No,” Yoongi signed. “It’s okay. I’ll take him.”

Namjoon grabbed Yoongi’s hand, pulling him back for a kiss. “You’re an amazing father.” He said and looked into his eyes that were rimmed with dark circles. “I’m so happy I have you. I love you.”

Yoongi kissed him back, pressing their foreheads together. “I love you too.” He said and while Namjoon couldn’t hear him, he knew Yoongi’s love because it was reflected in every breath he exhaled and in the glitter that shown in his dark irises and the way he looked at his family like they held the universe in their tiny palms.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment! <33
Welcome back to soft Namgi dads. Christmas is coming. I'm so excited!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Hello, is this Mr. Kim?”

“This is Mr. Min-Kim.” Yoongi corrected as he stopped in the middle of the seasonal grocery aisle, pulling canned sweet potatoes and marshmallows off the shelf and tossing them into his cart he was pulling behind himself.

“I apologize,” He said. “I was left with a number for Mr. Kim.”

“Well, that’s my husband’s name. But, he’s deaf so you have to either video call or call his TTY phone.” Yoongi explained as he examined a packet of gravy starter for sodium content. “Or you can email him.”

“Ah, my name is Will Campbell, I’m a real estate agent with Crown Realty. A referral was put in regarding some of the properties that I have listed in the Underwood neighborhood. I was wondering if you guys-,”

“Jungkook,” Yoongi pulled the phone away and called after his youngest as he made a mad dash down the aisle. “No running in the store, please.” He said as he watched Jungkook hit the brakes and double back around. He then got back on the phone. “Underwood neighborhood?”

“Off of fifth?”

“Oh,” Yoongi said, recalling the neighborhood they went trick-or-treating in for Halloween. That was a nice neighborhood. A little American-Dream-cookie-cutter to Yoongi with the fences and the porches and whatnot. But, Namjoon seemed excited about it. He was always a romantic when it came to stuff like that.

“I’d be happy to schedule a showing so you guys can see the inside?” He asked it like a question, his voice hesitant now.

Yoongi sighed as he tossed the gravy starter in the cart. “I don’t know.”

“Well,” Will started in a very sales-y pitch. “We have one property that has recently been reduced in price by ten thousand. It’s extremely competitive and it comes with a pool and I think-,”

“How big are the doors?”

“What…what do you mean?”

“I need the doors to be at least thirty-two inches wide.” Yoongi said as he pushed Jimin down the aisle and pulled the cart at the same time, squishing his phone between his ear and his shoulder so he could free up his hands. “Oh, and is it one-story?”
“It is one-story. Revival California ranch-style.”

“How many bedrooms?”

“It’s a four bed, three bath.” Will said. “And it comes with a three-car garage. Extra storage space in a finished basement. Two living areas. Kitchen has been recently renovated.”

“That’s nice.” Yoongi sighed longingly, thinking about all the extra space and a nice big kitchen.

A new house would be nice. But, priorities were shifting. And Yoongi’s family was potentially going to be smaller. And he didn’t want to think about that. He didn’t want to think about Jungkook being taken away from him, even though he had visited twice now with his birth mother. He didn’t want to think about having to potentially fight for rights of a little soul that had embedded himself so deep in Yoongi’s heart that he knew it would shatter if they try to separate him from them. And while that completely consumed them, things like house hunting had jumped down the totem pole in terms of importance.

But, would it hurt to look?

“Let me…” Yoongi started as he stopped again, pulling two cans of cranberry sauce off the shelf. He usually made thanksgiving dinner from scratch, but he was cutting corners for the sake of his sanity this year. Besides, he was pretty sure Namjoon preferred the jello, cylindrical stuff. “Let me get ahold of my husband to see when a good time would be for him.”

“Great,” The agent sounded chipper. “I’ll definitely get those door measurements for you as well.”

Yoongi said his goodbyes and then hit FaceTime, fixing his hair in the camera as he waited for it to connect. “Hello?” Namjoon greeted, his full lips and dimples taking up the whole screen. “Yoongi?”

“Hey,” Yoongi signed. “You busy?”

“Nope,” Namjoon said. Yoongi tell that he was outside in the college courtyard, probably walking from his office to the classroom. “What’s up?”

“A realtor called me about one of those houses in the neighborhood you showed me.” Yoongi signed. “He wanted to know if we wanted to set up a showing?”

Namjoon’s forehead wrinkled. “Do you want to set up a showing?”

“I mean…” Yoongi shrugged. “I guess there’s no harm in looking at it.”

“As soon as tomorrow’s class ends at noon, then I’m free for the rest of the weekend.” Namjoon said. “And we can take a look?”

“Yeah,” Yoongi looked around, realizing he couldn’t hold his phone, push Jimin’s wheelchair and pull the shopping cart at the same time. “Hold on, I have to get to turkeys.” He signed and put his phone in the basket baby seat before pulling both to the back of the store where the meat department was. Jungkook followed along in his shoes that made a noise like a dog toy being squeaked every time he took a step. He was skipping like a happy deer behind them, his bangs bouncing in his eyes.

Yoongi picked back up his phone. “It seems like a nice house.” He signed as he looked at

“If we buy a house now,” Namjoon said. “We could be out of escrow just in time for Christmas.” He smiled. “How would that be as a Christmas present for the kids?”

“That’s very optimistic even for you, Namjoon.”

Namjoon shrugged. “‘Tis the season for miracles.”

Yoongi sighed and glanced down at Jungkook, who was still bouncing in a circle next to him, completely lost in his own world, a wide smile on his face.

There was only one miracle he wanted this season.

After finding out about Hoseok’s bully, Yoongi made it a point that whole week to get to the school early so that he and the babies could pick up Hoseok at his classroom door. Yoongi just wanted Hoseok to know that he was there for him, that he didn’t have to keep things from him, as he felt guilty for not realizing that Hoseok was being mistreated in the first place. He felt guilty for being distracted and not being more observant of his eldest’s issues.

Yoongi leaned on the handlebar of Jimin’s wheelchair off to the side and held Jungkook’s hand. He watched all the lights flash in the hallway, signifying the end of school.

Hoseok’s big smile greeted him as he ran out of his classroom. Taehyung followed on his heels, his backpack slapping against his butt.

“Hi, babies.” Yoongi dropped to one knee and opened his arms. Both of his son ran into his chest, giving him big hugs. He relished their hugs because he knew that he would blink and they would be teenagers who’d think that hugging their dad was uncool. He had to get them in now while he still could.

“Daddy,” Hoseok pulled away. “I got to be a pilgrim and we made pilgrim hats out of paper!”

“Me too! Me too!” Tae said excitedly.

“Tomorrow, we are going to make turkeys,” Hoseok added, holding up hand and splaying out his long fingers. “With our hands!”

“That’s great.” Yoongi smiled at the both of them, smoothing down hair and hitching back up hoodie sleeves.

“Hi, Chim!” Tae pulled away to greet his brother, standing on his left side so he could see him. Taehyung wiped his face before giving him a kiss. “I missed you.”

“Hi!” Jimin greeted with a big smile, waving his little, chubby hand. “Tae.” He sighed, his head hitting the side of his headrest as he twisted slightly to see him better.

“I made you something.” Tae opened his backpack and rummaged around, pulling out a purple construction paper heart covered in glitter glue. He leaned on the handle bar of Jimin’s wheelchair to show him. “I writed your name and my name in this heart all by myself.”
Jimin wiggled and waved his arms, making that happy “sksksk” noise. “Tae!” He almost sang at the top of his lungs. “Kiss!” He said and blew him a kiss.

“I think he likes it.” Yoongi said as he straightened.

Taehyung beamed and kissed his forehead. “We can hang it on your wall in your room.”

“Daddy.” Hoseok said. Hoseok was using a lot of new words now, being a couple of months deep in speech therapy. They always surprised Yoongi and then completely warmed him up and pricked his skin, like stepping into the sun. He had come so far, being a child that came to them only knowing the signs for ‘milk’ and ‘please.’

“Yes, baby?”

Hoseok dutifully grabbed Jungkook’s wrist. Jungkook’s nose scrunched and he chewed on his fingers. “Miss Candace had me and Melody talk today and Melody said sorry for being mean to me.” He signed.

“Did she?” Yoongi asked as he started down the hallway, pushing Jimin’s wheelchair.

“Yeah.” Hoseok nodded. “She promised that she was going to be nicer.”

“Has she been?” Yoongi asked.

Hoseok beamed and nodded. “Yeah, she gave me an eraser in the shape of a pineapple and sat with me at lunch.” He skipped. “That means we’re friends now, right?”

Yoongi sighed. He had no idea. I guess in first grade world, where things were simpler, where behavior could be corrected and things can be forgiven with a simple “I’m sorry,” and a pineapple-shaped eraser, it was fine. For now. “Sure does.” He answered. “If she starts being mean again, you have to tell the teacher right away, okay?”

Hoseok nodded. “I will. I promise.”

“Good boy.” Yoongi said and then look around at his brood. “Let’s get home so we can get dinner started.”

“Can we put up a Christmas tree this year?” Tae asked as he held Jimin’s hand as they walked down the hallway together.

Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed. “Of course we can put up a tree.”

“And can I help with decorations?” His voice went small and his eyes went wide.

“Baby,” Yoongi reached down and combed his fingers through Tae’s silky black mop. They all need haircuts again. “Of course. We all will help.”

Taehyung beamed and then jumped, his light-up shoes flashing with his steps. “Last year, I forgot my chores and I wasn’t allowed to help.” He babbled. “A-and I thought Santa wasn’t going to give me any presents because Cassie said that Santa doesn’t care about fosters, but I got a present from Santa. He gave me a kite.”

Yoongi felt his heart clench. It was Hoseok’s second Christmas with them and the other kids’ first. He knew – just based on the Amazon order history – that Namjoon was pulling out the stops to make sure that the kids had the best Christmas ever. That they had the best Christmas ever.
“Santa knows where I live now, right?” Taehyung asked.

Before Yoongi could answer, Hoseok interrupted. “Of course he knows where you live, he’s Santa.” He rolled his eyes.

“Okay, good.” Tae sighed, but then his face twisted again with momentary panic. “And he’s going to bring Chim presents, too. Right?”

“He brings all the good kids presents.” Hoseok answered. “You, Chim, Kookie, and me.”

“But, does Santa know that Chim can only play with little kid toys so he doesn’t choke?” Taehyung’s grip tightened on Jimin’s hand and he looked liked he was about to start crying. “Does he know that he’s special?”

Yoongi hit the brakes before Tae had an unnecessary flip-out. “I actually had a long conversation with…” He started. “Mrs. Claus, because she’s Santa’s secretary, right?” That was absurd enough to make sense to his two first graders.

Both older boys’ eyes snapped to Yoongi, wide with mystified wonder. “You did?” Hoseok signed.

“Of course,” Yoongi signed. “I had to put in a change of address for Kookie and Tae and Chim to make sure he knew where to come to drop off your guys’ presents.” He signed like they should already know this information. “All parents have to do that.”

“Oh,” Tae said. “And you told him about Chim?”

“He already knew.” Yoongi said, petting down Tae’s hair. “He knew that you boys were both deaf, so you weren’t going to like anything musical. He knew that Kookie doesn’t like smelly stuff, but loves things that light up. And,” He sighed and smiled a little. “He knew Chim was extra special and can only play with toys that don’t have little parts.”

Tae and Hoseok both sighed. “Good.” Tae said. “I want to make sure Chim has a good Christmas too.”

“Chim.” Jimin repeated from his seat.

“We’re going to have a great Christmas.” Yoongi signed as he started pushing Jimin down the hallway again. “I promise.”

Yoongi stared at the light yellow California ranch style house that stretched wide behind a neatly trimmed lawn and a half-moon driveway. He turned and glanced at the FOR SALE sign that stuck out near the street and then back at the house.

“What do you think?” Namjoon asked as he bent down to wipe Jimin’s face. Jimin smiled at him. “Daddy.” He said and Namjoon pulled a face to make him giggle.

Yoongi shrugged as he held Kookie under his butt with both arms, keeping himself nonchalant. But, honestly, it was pretty perfect. It sat at the end of a cul-de-sac and he could see
across the street that there were kids that lived on this block already. A big magnolia tree in the front lawn. It was close to a Trader Joe’s, the post office, and the kids’ school.

But, he didn’t want to get overexcited. It was just the first house. They were just taking a look. That was it.

A black Lexus pulled into the driveway and a WASP-y man dressed in a button-down and skinny tie stepped out. “Hello,” He greeted. “You must be the Kims.”

“Min-Kim.” Yoongi corrected as he shook his hand, using the other to prop up Jungkook.

“Nice to meet you.” Namjoon said out loud. “This is half of the family. Jimin,” He grabbed Jimin’s hand. “and the little one is Jungkook.”

Will’s eyes widened – in what Yoongi hoped wasn’t blatant amazement – as he looked at Jimin in his wheelchair. “I just want to let you know that every doorway in the house is thirty-four inches wide.” Will smiled as he handed a flyer to each of them. “I measured them myself.”

They got into – which smelled faintly like fresh paint and caused Jungkook to grunt and bury his nose into Yoongi’s shoulder – and into the main room. Namjoon had to tip Jimin back to get him over the bump of the threshold, but otherwise his wheelchair fit fine through the doorway. That definitely earned the house some points.

“Open floor plan, as you can see.” Will started showing off the house. “The kitchen is brand new with quartz countertops. New appliances.”

Yoongi stepped and looked around. He found a fireplace which…wasn’t ideal with little kids. But, he assumed it would remain unused anyway. The back wall was almost all windows that let you see out into the backyard.

“Yoongi,” Namjoon said excited as he crossed the house to the backdoor, his long frame almost bouncing. Jimin was left parked in the middle of the living room. “Look at this pool!”

He crossed with Jungkook outside into the backyard, finding a nice pool. He wanted a pool. Somewhere he could teach the kids how to swim. Where they could have fun and tire themselves out during the summer. A place where Jimin could get in exercise that didn’t put stress on his joints, even when he got too big for his parents to carry.

Jungkook turned his head curiously to look at the pool, an intense line forming between his eyebrows. “Water.” He signed at Yoongi and pointed.

“That’s a pool, Jungkookie.” Yoongi said. “Would you swim in a pool?”

He shrugged in response. “A lot of water.” He just signed, his eyes flashing like he was calculating something.

Yoongi headed back inside to check out the rest of the house. The rooms were nice and big. The bathrooms were too – the guest bath even having dual sinks. Yoongi added extra points to the house. He figured he could put his studio in the downstairs basement. Namjoon teased him for that. “Look, Yoongi, you could have what you always wanted – a dark cave just for music.”

It wasn’t until he found the second living area – and what occupied the corner of the second living area – that Yoongi actually gasped in surprise.

A baby grand piano that looked basically brand new save a fine layer of dust on top. Yoongi
approached it, pushing Jimin’s wheelchair next to it. He lifted up the cover and hit a C key. Jungkook snapped to attention immediately.

“Yeah,” Will said. “The previous owners didn’t want to have to move it out, so it’s included with the house.”

Yoongi sat down at the bench. He had never owned a baby grand before. Only ever electronic keyboards and a really old upright when he was a kid. He fingered the Steinway logo emblazoned the front. A Steinway? He almost stopped breathing. This was a Steinway. “Did you know this is a thirty-thousand-dollar piano?”

The realtor’s eyes widened and he choked a little. “I-it is?”

Yoongi put Jungkook next to him, positioned his fingers over the keys and started to play some Debussy. The sound was amazing – crystal clear, beautiful. No weird tinkling sound that his upright had. Perfect.

He glanced at Jungkook as he played, his eyes focused intensely on Yoongi’s hands and his own fingers going like he was playing an invisible piano himself. He glanced at Jimin, who was listening too, his head cocked to the side.

Yoongi switched gears for Jimin’s sake and started playing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star – the children’s song never sounding so good.

“Twinkle, twinkle.” Jimin’s voice sang – tiny, angelic, and high like wind chimes.

Yoongi stopped, surprised - eliciting an unhappy groan from Jungkook. He didn’t know Jimin sang. He leaned over and tickled Jimin’s belly. “I didn’t know you liked to sing, Chim.” He said as he watched Jimin’s wide smile push his cheeks up and hide his eyes.

“Twinkle, twinkle.” He sang again. Yoongi wondered briefly if he could teach him the whole song. He already had the first two words down. The rest of the song wouldn’t be terribly hard.

“Wow, that’s a big piano.” Namjoon said behind Yoongi and Yoongi whipped around to face his husband.

“Did you know Jimin sang?”

Namjoon narrowed his eyes. “Is this a trick question?”

Yoongi got out of the bench, almost vibrating a little as he approached his husband. “This piano comes with the house.” He signed. “This is a Steinway. That’s like a thirty to forty-thousand dollar piano. And it comes with the house.”

“Only you would get excited over the piano in the house and not the house itself.” Namjoon joked, his dimples peaking with his smile. “Do you like it?”

Yoongi shook his head. “I’d buy the house just for the piano.” He smiled at the two babies – Jungkook taking his place and playing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star and Jimin singing the first two words next to him. “They love it.”

“It comes with a pool and studio space. The older boys can have their own bathroom.” Namjoon said.

A thought occurred to Yoongi and his excitement fizzled out a little. He felt himself deflate
and his shoulders drop. “But, do we need so much space if Jungkook is going to be taken away from us?”

Namjoon sucked in a breath and his narrow eyes flashed with challenge. “He’s not going to be taken away. And if he is, then we’ll fight to get him back.” He rubbed the tops of Yoongi’s arms. “Jungkook will be ours.”

Yoongi nodded. “I can’t live without him.” He whispered, feeling all of his guts tie into knots.

“We’re not going to. He’s our baby boy.” Namjoon said firmly. “Now, do you think this house checks all the boxes?”

Yoongi sighed. It was just a look, but it really did check all the boxes. It was perfect. And really, why keep looking if this one was perfect? “Yeah.” He signed. “It does.”

“Are we…buying a house?” He grinned.

“Well,” Yoongi signed back. “It depends on the price, now, doesn’t it?”

Namjoon pulled the flyer out of his back pocket and they both found the price together, printed with the loud disclaimer that it had been reduced.

And then Yoongi choked on his own saliva, giving himself a massive coughing fit. He doubled over and grabbed his knees. Namjoon got him to straighten and then forced his arms over his head. “That was six zeros, I counted?” He asked as he got ahold of himself, his hands in a surrender position.

Namjoon was studying the paper. “Well, yeah.”

“Namjoon,” Yoongi groaned and rolled his eyes. “We can’t afford this house.”

He studied the flyer. “We…could.”

“Yeah,” Yoongi signed. “If we want to eat Top Ramen every night for dinner.”

“No,” Namjoon said. “What if we put down a big down payment? That’ll bring down the price.”

Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed. “How? I haven’t done any big projects in months.”

“But, you…could.”

“On top of taking care of the babies?” Yoongi scowled. “It took an hour and half to feed Jimin breakfast this morning.”

“No, no.” Namjoon grabbed his hands. “I can take a week or two off to help out at home.” He said. “Get Liz to sub for me. I’ve worked at the college for six years and have taken one vacation for our honeymoon. They owe me.”

Yoongi let his lips quirk out into a thin line as he thought about it. That could work. Namjoon could take over while Yoongi banged out an album or something. “We still have a problem.” He said.

“What’s that?”
“I haven’t had any major offers.” Yoongi dropped his hands. “I mean, a song here or there. And I’ve submitted lyrics for Sia. But, I haven’t mastered a whole album in, like, two years.”

“Well,” Namjoon smiled easily. “‘Tis the season for miracles.”

“See, you keep saying that,” Yoongi said. “And while I’ve always loved your unadulterated optimism, it doesn’t always work out like that.” He said as he listened to his phone ring Marimba in his pocket. He pulled it out as he kept talking. “A studio isn’t just going to call me up with a big-,” His sentence cut off as he read the contact name, his eyes bugging out of his skull. There would be really only one reason why she would be calling him now.

“Who is that?”

“Um,” Yoongi said, not even believing his eyes. He was actually annoyed a little. Annoyed at his intelligent, big, beautiful, dumb husband for always being right. Always. It was a blessing and a curse. “A miracle.” He sighed.

“What?” Namjoon’s eyebrows furrowed.

But, Yoongi was already sliding to answer his phone. “Hey, Ashley. How’s it going?”

Chapter End Notes

Please comment! <33
Found

Chapter Notes

Basicly this chapter is Jimin being the most adorable bean in existence that needs to be protected at all costs.

And also Seokjin and Halsey :)

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“You really didn’t have to drive all the way to Altadena.” Yoongi said as he followed his old friend from the entryway to the living room. “Like, we could’ve just talked on the phone.”

“But, I wanted to meet the family, Yoon.” A slightly raspy, light voice said in front of him. “It’s gotten so big.”

Yoongi’s eyeballs assumed the position of rolled up into his skull. Ashley Frangipane – or that’s how he knew her as; everyone else called her ‘Halsey’ – was the most frustratingly enigmatic person he’s ever met. She had also been his closest friends when they were both scraping by in New York, chasing impossible dreams in music. Yoongi loved her, but he knew when she was involved in something, that his life suddenly turned ten times more complicated.

Jungkook’s eyes widened at her and he pointed at the television from where he stood two feet in front of it and then her, putting the two of them together. “Same.” He signed and got to his feet, toddling into her knees.

“That’s Jungkook, he’s our youngest.” Yoongi introduced.

“Hi, buddy.” Ashley squatted in her ripped up jeans and combat boots. “Do you like music?”

Jungkook’s eyes immediately pitched down and he flapped his hands, knotted them up and jammed them under his chin. He smiled and nodded, his nose scrunching.

“That’s so cool.” She said. “I do too.”

His little hand came out and raked through her mint hair. He brought it up to his face and sniffed it carefully before walking forward and sniffing her shoulder. Once he determined that she was okay, he melted against her.

“He’s cuddly.” Ashley laughed as she hugged him back.

“Not even the cuddliest.” Yoongi said as he stepped in the way of Tae and Hoseok, who were tearing through the living room from the backyard. “Boys,” He signed. “I want you to say hi to my friend Ashley.”

Tae was the first to turn. “Hi, Ashley.” He greeted. “My name is Taehyung.” He held out his hand to shake.
She shook it with Jungkook still hanging around neck like a necklace, her smile wide over her face. “Nice to meet you, Taehyung.”

“And this is Hoseok.” He pointed to Hoseok, who was holding Yoongi’s hand and hiding behind him slightly. “He’s shy. I really like your hair.” Taę said and then his eyes widened. “Oh, and your shoes.” He squatted and pointed at her boots. “There are flowers on them. Wow.”

“Oh my god, Yoon.” She said and looked up at him. “Did you adopt children or fairies?”

Yoongi smiled. “More like little monkeys.” He pushed Hoseok. “Boys play nice, okay? Ashley and I are going to be in my studio talking about adult stuff.”

“Ooh,” She pulled a face. “Adult stuff. That sounds scary.” She tried to separate from Jungkook, but he grunted and velcroed himself to her tighter. “I think I made a new friend.”

“Kookie,” Yoongi squatted and rubbed his back. “You have to let go, okay?”

He shook his head and played with her hair, his eyes fixated on the mint. Yoongi resorted to prying and Jungkook made an angry noise and pulled his arm from Yoongi’s grip. Yoongi opened his mouth to admonish him, but Ashley interrupted. “It’s okay.” She nodded. “I can take him with.”

Yoongi grabbed the baby monitor, and they moved down the hall. Yoongi checked on Jimin – who was taking a nap on his bed. And then turned into his studio.

Ashley sat down in the office chair and pulled one knee to her chest, the other holding Jungkook. “So, I’m almost done with my new album.” She started right away. “And I want you in on it.”

“If it’s almost done,” Yoongi took a seat on the loveseat across from her. “Then why are you asking me now?”

“Because,” She groaned. “Capitol literally would not listen to anything I had to say,” She played with Jungkook’s hair. “Hired their own goddamn-,”

“Ash, language.” Yoongi whispered and then motioned with his chin at Jungkook.

She winced. “Sorry.” She said. “And then they hired their own people. The album sounds like sh…garbage. Ricky was like, ‘we need to redo this,’” She mimicked. “And I’m like ‘please just let me bring Yoongi in on this, he knows what he’s doing, he’ll make it sound awesome.’” She threw her head back and pouted. Jungkook reached for her hoop earring. “Please save me.”

Yoongi smiled and crossed his legs. “So, what you’re telling me…is this is the two-thousand-eight Waffle House incident all over again.”

Ashley’s face rolled into an offended ‘o.’ “No!” She said. “This is nothing like the two-thousand-eight Waffle House incident.”

“I’m bailing you out after you make horrible decisions,” Yoongi rolled his eyes. “That’s very Waffle House-y.”

“If there wasn’t a child in here, I would curse you out Yoongi Min.”

“It’s Min-Kim, now. Thanks.” Yoongi teased.

Ashley picked up a sticky note, crumpled it and then threw it at Yoongi. Yoongi batted it
away before it hit his chin. They both laughed at each other. Ashley swiveled in the chair a little and
rubbed Jungkook’s knee. “You know, I-,”

There was a small whimper and Yoongi picked up the baby monitor. “Hold on.” He said and
stood up. “I need to grab Jimin.”

“There’s another child?”

“Yeah, hold on.” Yoongi said.

He crossed the hallway into the babies’ room, finding Jimin awake. His lips were pursed out
and his fingers were flexing around his head, looking for his silky.

“Hi, baby boy.” Yoongi rubbed his tummy and handed him his silky. “Did you have a good
nap?”

Jimin responded with a little “hi,” and some spit bubbles. Yoongi picked him up, caught a
whiff that signified that it was time for changing and Yoongi got him on his table. Jimin smiled, put
his silky over his face and ripped it back. “Boo!”

“You know; this is a weird image.” Ashley said from the doorway, Jungkook on her hip. “I
feel like I’m having a fever dream or something.”

“What do you mean?” Yoongi asked as he rubbed special cream on Jimin’s diaper rash, his
heart clenching as he watched him wince.

“You’re so domestic.” She said and came in, sitting down on Jungkook’s bed. Jungkook
crawled off of her lap and went to his toy box. “You remember when we got stoned-,”

“Shhhh.” Yoongi hushed. “The kids don’t need to know those details. It can be used against
me as blackmail.”

“Well, do you remember when we…” She pulled another face. “…tossed our salads with the
devil’s lettuce and promised each other that we chase our dreams to the ends of the earth.”

Yoongi gently picked up Jimin and settled him against his shoulder. He made a little noise as
he sighed with contentment, his jaw falling slack. “This is my dream now.” He said as he sat down
with Jimin, rubbing his cheek and smiling a little. “I love being a father.”

“I’m not saying that dreams can’t change.” She fell on her elbow. “I’m just saying I never
thought yours would take this direction.” She motioned to Jimin.

“I didn’t either.” Yoongi said. “But, honestly, we didn’t find these kids. They found us.”

“That’s sweet.” She smiled. “I’m happy for you.”

“Thanks.” He blushed and rubbed Jimin’s back. “This is Jimin, by the way. He’s our angel.”

“Hi, Jimin.” Ashley smiled and rubbed his back. “What a sweetie.” She tipped her head back
and sighed. “So, can you save my album?”

Yoongi grinned at his old friend. “Like I saved you so many times before?”
Namjoon sat on his knees in the living room, the Thanksgiving Day parade playing on the television behind him as he had three out of his four kids laying on their backs in a line - Tae and Hoseok on either side of Jimin. Jungkook had laid with them for about two minutes before he decided that he was bored and toddled into the backyard to sit on the patio and play with his Bop-It.

Namjoon started with tickles, coaxing big giggles out of Jimin as he moved his fingers over his body, getting him to wiggle and writhe. The big laughs were good for his core muscles and the wiggling was good for his legs.

But, then he had to move on to the uncomfortable part of stretches and Namjoon recruited the other two to distract as he carefully performed the stretches that Paul had taught him and Yoongi. The more distraction there was the less tears that Jimin produced from having his tight muscles flexed out.

“Look, Chim.” Tae said as they all had they foot in the air. “We’re so silly.”

Jimin’s face was flushed red and he was doing a great job of holding back the tears that rimmed his eyes. So strong. He was so strong, even when he didn’t have to be. He gave Tae a wan smile. “Tae.” He said, his voice thick.

“I’m almost done, baby.” Namjoon said as gently rolled Jimin’s ankle. “Almost done.”

The boys rolled their ankles too and Jimin giggled a little as he turned his head between his two brother. Hoseok was sitting on his left side and Jimin reach out and touched his head. “Ho.” He managed before his face screwed with pain and he choked out a sob.

Namjoon stopped immediately and dropped his leg. “You’re okay. Shhh. You’re okay.” He rubbed his belly.

Jemin stopped crying, but his lower lip was jutted out and trembling. “Ouch.” He managed and sniffed.

Tae rolled to his side and so did Hoseok. They petted his head and held his hand. “Chim,” Tae said. “It’s okay.”

“Good job.” Hoseok said with his voice.

Jemin smiled again as tears leaked out of the corners of his eyes and Namjoon just kept rubbing out his hip and thigh, where he knew it hurt the most. He turned towards Hoseok since that’s who he could see. “Tae.” He said.

“Tae?” Hoseok signed and giggled. “No, I’m Hoseok.”

“Can you say it for him, Seokie?” Namjoon signed to him.

“Hoseok.” He said out loud.

Jemin brr’d his lips in response and turned to find his best friend, angling his head oddly to get Tae in his field of vision. “Tae.” He smiled wide and reached for him.

Tae rolled onto his stomach and propped himself up on his elbows. “Chim,” He said. “Say Ho…seok.” He said really slow and Jimin stuck his fingers in his mouth as he studied him. “Ho…seok.”
“Ho.” Jimin managed. “Ball?”

“No, you silly baby.” Tae smiled. “Ho…se…ok.”

Jimin smiled. “Hobi.” He said. Or at least, that’s what Namjoon thought he said.

“Hobi?” Tae signed ‘what’ at him and giggled, falling onto his stomach. “You’re so silly, Chim.” He petted his head. “I love you.”

“Chim.” Jimin grinned back, pressing his forehead against Tae’s and running moist fingers over his shoulder, tears and pain forgotten. “Tae.”

Namjoon got to his feet to check on Yoongi and grab Jimin’s floor sitter. Yoongi was reading the instructions for the gravy while he leaned against the counter, both of their floor fans going to blow food smells out of the open window. “Everything okay?”

“You better get out of my kitchen before I start throwing potatoes at your head.” Yoongi answered with one hand, his eyes still on the gravy packet. He was wearing a pair of skinny jeans and one of Namjoon’s t-shirts making him look way smaller than he actually was. It was cute. He was cute.

“I’m just checking on you.” Namjoon signed back defensive.

“No, you are typhoon Namjoon on Thanksgiving and we can’t have one of your famous fires this year because the smoke will set Jungkook off.” Yoongi said. “So, you are banned. Go play with the babies far away from the kitchen.”

“I swear,” Namjoon signed as he pulled Jimin’s floor sitter out of its place in front of the breakfast bar. “It is true – the romance dies after marriage and kids.” He joked with a small smile.

Suddenly, the lights flickered with the doorbell. Namjoon glanced at Yoongi, whose eyebrows furrowed with confusion. “Did you invite anyone over?” Yoongi asked.

Namjoon wracked his brain for a second. He didn’t remember inviting anyone. Maybe it was Amazon? Would they deliver on Thanksgiving? He moved to the door and opened it.

Seokjin stood on the other side, his lips pulled in a sheepish smile. He wasn’t wearing his usual agency polo and chinos. Instead he was wearing a pink sweatshirt and jeans. He was holding what looked to be a side dish of some sort and a pie. “Hi,” He greeted.

And in the same second, Namjoon remembered the email he sent to Seokjin. If you don’t have anywhere to go on Thanksgiving, we would love to have you! Yoongi always makes enough to feed the whole San Fernando valley. And really, Namjoon extended the invitation as a courtesy. If it wasn’t for him, his heart wouldn’t be so full. He wouldn’t have so many little souls in his life.

What he didn’t expect was that Seokjin would actually show up.


“Am I really early?” Seokjin stepped into their entryway and turned to face him. “I’m sorry. I reread the email, but it didn’t specify a time.”

“No, no.” Namjoon said. “Thanksgiving is open door. Come and go when you please.” He led him into the kitchen area. “Seokjin got my invitation email, Yoon.”
Yoongi greeted him. “Hey, Jin.” He signed and waved and the subconsciously pushed the knife holder back against the wall. Seokjin did their home-studies and inspections. Having him in their house unannounced was a little nerve-wracking.

But, he looked equally as nervous. “I made green bean casserole.” He said. “And pecan pie.”

“You didn’t have to bring anything.” Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed as he accepted the containers of food. “Really.”

He smiled. “Well, usually I just go see a movie and get takeout on Thanksgiving. So,” He shrugged. “I guess this is a thank you for having me?”

“The other families you manage don’t invite you over?” Namjoon blurted, surprised.

Seokjin shook his head. “I don’t really make friends as a case manager. I’m either the bearer of children or bad news.” He said. “And half my family lives in Korea the other lives in Connecticut.” He shrugged again, his eyes turning down. “Holidays are…lonely.”

“Well,” Namjoon said. “You can come hang out with us. We’re watching the parade and doing stretches with Jimin.”

“Stretches?” Jin asked a big smile over his face. “I love stretches.”

Namjoon and Yoongi figured out quick that Seokjin was absolute monster in the kitchen. The man could cook. Like, better than Yoongi. Even though Namjoon would never actually admit that out loud. Once, Namjoon said that Yoongi’s pizza crust was ‘okay’ and his nipple was twisted so hard it turned purple.

Once everything was practically made – in half-time thanks to Jin - save for the turkey that still had a bit to go in the roaster, they played a game of charades in the living room with the kids. The rules being no signs or words allowed and the grown-ups had to be the ones to guess.

“Uh,” Namjoon signed as he cradled Jimin on his lap from the lounger. “A duck?”

Hoseok shook his head from where he stood in front of the television. He moved his arms like he was doing the chicken dance but then walked like he was a penguin. Taehyung was laughing so hard at him that he was pounding on the floor with tears in his eyes. And Jimin was laughing because everyone else was laughing.

“A dodo bird?” Seokjin guessed, his eyebrows furrowed.

Hoseok laughed his big laugh and shook his head. “No!”

“Oh,” Yoongi signed. “A turkey!”

“Yes!” Hoseok jumped. Jungkook giggled from where he was standing between Yoongi and Seokjin’s knees and jumped too, mimicking his brother. His nose scrunched up and he glanced up at Seokjin, his eyebrows furrowed and his eyes dropping again. His smile faded off of his face.

“Kookie,” Namjoon said and held his hand out. “Are you okay?”
Jungkook answered by stimming hard with his hands and he walked around Seokjin and the coffee table to get to Namjoon. He climbed into Namjoon’s lap on the opposite knee from where Jimin was sitting. Namjoon angled him slightly so he wouldn’t accidentally clock Jimin in the face.

“You’re okay.” Namjoon said and pushed his hair out of his eyes.

Jungkook nodded and tangled his hands up and jammed them under his chin. He pointed to Seokjin, his eyes turned down to his lap. “Bad man.” He signed.

“No, no, no.” Namjoon said. “Seokjin is a good guy. He helps us with a lot of things. He’s not a bad man.”

Jungkook’s eyebrows furrowed, but he didn’t say anything more. Namjoon glanced at Seokjin. The last two interactions Jungkook had with him included being separated from Yoongi and led into a room with essentially a complete stranger. The time before that it was when he was picked up from daycare and never saw his grandma or his house ever again. Namjoon guessed in Jungkook’s four-year-old mind, he correlated all that confusion to Seokjin.

“Kookie, do you want to play charades?” Namjoon said. “Jimin and I will help you?”

Jungkook didn’t answer at first. Instead he stimmed. But, he did nod and slip off of his lap. Namjoon got up with Jimin and then sat down on the floor cross-legged, resettling Jimin in his arms. “Okay, Kookie. What are you acting as?”

Jungkook smiled, glancing at Namjoon. He stimmed by flapping, a blush growing over his cheeks as everyone watched him. He pointed to Yoongi.

“You’re going to act like Daddy?”

Jungkook nodded and then stopped. He dropped to his knees and then sat down on the floor cross-legged position. He cocked his head to the side, pursed out his lips and pretended to play the piano.

“Oh my god.” Yoongi giggled, his hand covering his face as blush turned it red.

Jungkook stopped and giggled, hiding his face in his palms.

“Good job, baby.” Namjoon said.

Yoongi glanced at the timer he was holding in his lap. “Turkey’s done.” He signed and said. “Table. Everyone to the table.”

Namjoon looked down at Jimin, who was craning his head – probably in search of Taehyung, his mouth open and a bead of drool hitting his shirt with a ducky decal on it. “You ready for Thanksgiving?” He asked and patted his belly. “You ready to eat?” He looked up to the two eldest. “Wash your hands before you sit down.” He signed to them.

“Okay.” Tae nodded and skipped down the hallway, Hoseok on his heels.

Namjoon looked back down at Jimin. “On this day of thanks,” He watched Jimin’s smile creep over his face. “I’m thankful for my family.” He kissed him on the cheek.
Jungkook only liked the green bean casserole.

Which normally, would make Yoongi kind of jealous. But, he was afraid with all the food smells, that Jungkook wasn’t going to eat anything at all. Or sit at the table. He had the fans going to pull food smells out of their dining room and out of an open window and left the front door and the back door open to encourage a cross-breeze.

Jungkook did sit at the table in his booster seat and Yoongi gave him a bit of everything. He sniffed the turkey and nibbled on that. Wasn’t a fan of the gravy. Only ate a spoonful of mashed potatoes. Sweet potatoes were a hard pass even with marshmallows on top. But, Seokjin’s green bean casserole he devoured.

Yoongi was thankful. And he was thankful that Namjoon volunteered to take over feeding Jimin that evening so that he could eat his food while it was still hot. He was thankful that Hoseok and Tae both seemed to enjoy his cooking. He was thankful for Seokjin joining them – and helping them – at the dining room table.

He watched as he propped up his chin on the table as Namjoon tried to wipe sticky sweet potatoes from Jimin’s fingers. He glanced at Hoseok for a second as he pointed to the butter dish and signed “please.” Yoongi was halfway through passing it when he heard a familiar noise – a half cry, half grunt sound that blasted icy panic through Yoongi’s veins. He dropped the butter as he watched in horror as Jimin’s head jerk and his eyes roll back as a seizure took him.

But, the shock only lasted a second now. After three major seizures so far, Yoongi was prepared now. He knew what he had to do – the checklist automatically flashing in his mind. Protect his head. Roll him on his side. Watch for aspiration. Time. Love. It was his promise to him. His promise that he would always be there for him.

Yoongi launched himself out of his chair, but Namjoon was already there, unhooking the straps from around Jimin’s chest and getting him out of his seat. Yoongi glanced at the clock on the wall so that they could start timing Jimin’s seizure. “Three thirty-eight.” He said out loud to no one. Himself. He wasn’t sure.

“You’re doing great, baby.” Namjoon cooed gently as he held him, getting a foot to the chin. “You’re okay. You’re alright.”

They got him on the rug away from furniture and waited, Namjoon and Yoongi’s hands clasped together under his head and Namjoon’s other hand keeping him from rolling off of his side. Namjoon watched him flail and vomit up orange potatoes and green beans, murmuring that he loved him, that he was doing great. And Yoongi stared at the clock, watching the seconds tick by at incredibly slow speeds. If it lasted longer than five minutes, he had to be taken to the hospital.

It last two minutes. Two incredibly long minutes, but finally Jimin’s body slumped in relaxation. And Yoongi was thankful that it was a short one. An easy one. Namjoon immediately scooped him up in preparation for the tears and Yoongi let out the inhale that he didn’t realize he was holding, his nerves a little fried and his hands shaking.

Yoongi got to his feet to grab him a sippy cup of water and his meds from the kitchen when noticed all the pairs of eyes staring at him from the dining room table. Taehyung already slipping out of his chair to come and comfort his brother. “He’s okay.” Yoongi said and signed with a reassuring smile. “Seizures happen.”

Seokjin recovered from his shock quickly and smile, picking up his napkin so he could help. “I know what I’m thankful for this year.” He said and got to his feet. “That you guys found Jimin.”
Yoongi heard Jimin cry and hiccup and turned to see Namjoon cradling him, looking at him with such tender love his face shone with it as he talked Jimin down. “He found us.” He whispered, tears prickling his eyes, never feeling more thankful in his life. “They all did.”

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!<33
Chapter Notes

I felt like we needed some sweet Jikook :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Namjoon took his vacation the first two weeks of December – which worked out perfect because the third week was finals, so he would be back right before he’d have to do tests and input final grades.

“Are you sure you’ll be okay?” Yoongi asked and glanced at the stove clock as he sipped his coffee. They had gotten up before the kids to enjoy a brief moment together before their Monday started. “I can help with breakfast if you want?”

“No, no.” Namjoon said and started pushing him towards his studio. “I go it. Go save Ashley’s ass or whatever.”

“Okay,” Yoongi gave him a look. “Everyone has to be the car by seven-forty.” He signed. “Otherwise you’ll be late.”

“I got it. I got it.” He assured.

He did not have it.

He made the mistake of getting Jimin up first, as he forgot the checklist of things that needed to happen before Jimin could even leave his own room – including a diaper change, his rash cream, new clothes. By the time he was getting socks onto Jimin’s feet, he was already running behind a little.

Jungkook had gotten up on his own from Namjoon moving around in his room, sitting in his pajamas on the floor, pulling out his toys and all of his left shoes and lining them up – toy, shoe, toy, shoe. He laid on his belly when he was done and fingered each toy.

“Hey, Kookie.” Namjoon said as he settled Jimin on his hip. “Good morning.”

“Good morning.” Kookie signed back without looking up.

“Do you want some breakfast?”

Kookie’s eyes flicked up and then back to his line of things. He pounded his toes on the floor and then grabbed one of the toys and hit a button to make it light up.

“Alright,” Namjoon said. “I’ll get back with you on that one.” He moved next door and jostled each boy. “Wake up. Wake up.” He signed and opened the blinds. “We have school. Let’s get dressed.”

“Daddy,” Jimin said, holding out his hand. His eyes were turned up, but his head was angled so that he could see Namjoon out of his left eye. “Ball?”
“No, baby boy.” Namjoon said and combed his bedhead down with his finger as he made it to the kitchen. “Breakfast. Can you say break…fast?”

Breakfast was easy. Kix cereal and milk. He got Jimin set up in his seat, placing some Kix on his little table that was attached his chair. Jimin rested his head on his headrest and his fingers scrounged around the surface, finding cereal and when he found one and he popped it into his mouth.

Namjoon went back down the hallway and picked up Jungkook, who made an angry face and held out his hand towards his line of toys. He brought him out to the kitchen and placed him in his booster seat that had a bowl set up for him. Jimin’s hands were still hunting for cereal and he managed to knock his sippy cup off of his table. “Uh-oh.” He said when it hit the floor.

“Uh-oh.” Namjoon repeated and picked up his sippy cup for him. The older boys were…sort of dressed for school as they came down the hallway with sleepies still in their eyes and their hair still a mess and their hearing aids not in yet.

Namjoon felt his phone buzz in his pocket and pulled it out to a text from Yoongi.

Yoongi: MEDS

Namjoon sighed and shook his head as he pulled out a container of applesauce from the snack drawer of the fridge. “No faith.” He murmured to himself as he fished out Jimin’s morning meds using the chart that Yoongi stuck to the cabinet, crushed them and then mixed them into the apple sauce.

“Here comes an airplane.” Namjoon sang to Jimin as he spooned in anti-seizure medication-laced applesauce into Jimin’s mouth. He made a face every time he took a bite, but dutifully swallowed like he knew that this applesauce had pills in it that helped him. “You’re such a good boy.” Namjoon wiped stray apple sauce off of Jimin’s lips and Jimin smiled at him. “My sweet boy.”

The boys finished their own breakfasts and hopped off their chairs.

“Brush your teeth.” Namjoon signed to the elder boys as he made sure that Jungkook was actually eating. He was…sort of. Namjoon took his spoon for him and made him take a couple of big bites.

“We know.” Hoseok signed back.

“And comb your hair.”

“We know.” They both signed in tandem that time as they walked down the hall.

Namjoon pulled Jimin out of chair and set him up in his floor sitter while he got Jungkook dressed – which was a bit of a challenge – because as soon as Jungkook was down to his undies, he took off in a mad dash out of his room and into the living room.

“Kookie,” Namjoon groaned. “You got to get ready.”

Jungkook smiled as he squatted in his Spongebob undies next to Jimin’s floor sitter, giggling with his scrunched up smile at his brother.

“You guys.” Namjoon squatted and tickled Jungkook’s little belly that was slightly distended from Kix cereal and milk. “What are you doing, sillies?”
Jimin’s hand came out and stroked Jungkook’s hair, running his saliva-moist fingers through it. Jungkook giggled loud and his hand slapped – a little too excitedly – against Jimin’s cheek. Namjoon snatched Jungkook’s hand off of his brother. “Nice touches, Jungkook.” He said. “Jimin doesn’t see very well. You can scare him.”

“Nice touch.” Jungkook signed back and then petted Jimin’s head. “Play.” He signed and grinned up at him.

“Jimin,” Namjoon said. “Can you say Jungkook?”

Jimin didn’t answer. Instead his slotted his middle and third finger between his full lips and started to suck. Namjoon tucked his little stuffed bunny he liked in his hand and Jimin brought it up to his face and rubbed his cheek with it.

Namjoon brought Jungkook back to his room and got him changed and then checked on the older boys. Taehyung was messing with his hearing aid on his bed and Hoseok was stuffing his workbook in his backpack.

“Daddy,” Taehyung signed and handed him his aid. “My battery’s dead and I can’t get the new one in.”

Namjoon fiddled with the delicate device – Taehyung’s hearing aids thinner and more streamlined than his own large, clunky ones. He managed to get the battery half in, but then his thumb accidentally hit the little tab and it popped back out.

“Dad usually does it for me.” Taehyung said as he put his glasses on, the band fixed around his head like swim goggles.

Namjoon sighed and glanced at his watch. He was a whole fifty minutes into his two weeks of taking over Yoongi’s responsibilities. He didn’t want run to Yoongi without even lasting an hour. It was embarrassing.

Instead Namjoon kept at it until he got it – handing it back to Taehyung who hopped off his bed. He glanced at the clock and realized he was running ten minutes behind now.

He rushed around, getting himself showered and changed in record time. Making sure the boys had their things for school. Getting Jimin’s shoes on and accidentally tweaking his hip which Jimin responded to with a small “ouch,” and Namjoon responded with a million kisses and I’m sorrys.

He got the babies’ teeth brushed. And then it was a rush to get everyone into the SUV.

“Dad,” Hoseok signed at him from the third row. Everyone was in the car. Jimin was in his car seat, dressed in a little baseball cap and overalls. Jungkook was rocking so hard that Namjoon could feel the car vibrate on its axles, content with his Bop-It in his hands. Namjoon was on time. It was 7:38. He was doing good. Everything was fine. He had it.

“What?” Namjoon asked as he hit the button for the garage door and started to back out.

“What about Jimin’s wheelchair?”

“Oh, sh-,” Namjoon almost said aloud and reparked the car. He hopped out and grabbed Jimin’s wheelchair, accidentally dinging Yoongi’s SUV with it. “Shit.” He said and licked his thumb and ran it over the scratch. I’ll hear about that later. Namjoon thought as he got Jimin’s chair loaded into the trunk.

He hopped back in the car. Jungkook waved his hand to get his deaf dad’s attention and then
signed “music.” Namjoon put on whatever CD was loaded into the dock and hoped that it was kid-friendly and sighed at the clock. He was five minutes late now.

He turned around to back out again and took in his family – Tae and Hoseok reading a comic together and Jungkook rocking and playing with his toy and Jimin’s fingers smudging up his window as he drooled – and smiled. He hit the brake and pulled out his cell phone and composed a text message to his husband.

**Namjoon: you really are Super Dad.**

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After the elder boys were dropped off, Namjoon had to take Jungkook and Jimin to get booster shots at the pediatrician’s office. Unfortunately, their state insurance severely limited the number of doctors they could see and it meant a trip into the city to a larger office instead of the boys’ regular pediatrician in their town.

“Stay with me.” Namjoon said as Jungkook started to toddle off as he tried to get Jimin out of the car and into his chair. “This is parking lot; you have to stay with me.” He kept one eye on Jungkook as he straightened Jimin and snapped his lapstrap and then tipped the seat and locked it so it was at a 45-degree angle.

Namjoon got them checked in at the front desk and Jungkook beelined for the play area in the corner of the brightly lit waiting room, ripping books and *Highlights* magazines out of their holder. There was one other parent with a child that looked about Jungkook’s age, so Namjoon let Jungkook play as he filled out some forms for Jimin.

“Jimin,” He said as he scanned the paperwork. “You don’t have allergies, huh?” He asked him and rubbed Jimin’s tummy. Jimin had his mouth open as his eyes traced the lights, his head cocked like he was trying to see them better.

Namjoon looked up to check on Jungkook and saw the girl pointing at Jimin. Her mom shoved her arm down and admonished her for pointing. Namjoon offered a smile. “It’s okay.” He said. “You want to meet Jimin?” He asked the girl. “He’s really friendly.”

The girl looked at her mom, who nodded and stood up with her. She slid off the chair and approached Jimin. Namjoon directed her where to stand so Jimin could see her. Jimin offered her a big smile and a wave. “Hi.”

“Hi.” She said back. “My name is Haley. I’m eight.”

Jimin giggled in response and blew some spit and the little girl looked at Namjoon for interpretation.

“Jimin doesn’t use very many words.” Namjoon said. “But, he’s really happy to be your friend.”

She smiled at that. “Why does he sit in a wheelchair?” She asked and looked back at Namjoon.

“He has cerebral palsy. It makes his legs really tight so he can’t walk.” Namjoon explained. “The wheelchair helps him get around.”
“Ohhh.” She nodded in understanding. “And why are his eyes like that?”

“Haley that’s enough.” Her mother said. “I’m sorry-,”

“It’s okay.” Namjoon said. “She’s just curious. Jimin’s blind. Do you know what that means?”

“He can’t see?” She asked, her eyes widening and she gripped on his armrest and stood on her tip-toes to get a better look. Jimin beamed at her again. “He’s nice and I like his smile.” She said finally with a nod. “I’m glad we are friends.”

Suddenly, there was a nurse in bright pink scrubs in front of them calling them back. Namjoon stood up and quickly jammed all the books and magazines back in their holder. Jungkook scowled and shook his head and Namjoon picked him up to his feet. “It’s time to go, okay? We can play later.”

Namjoon unclicked the brakes of Jimin’s chair and pushed him towards the back.

“Bye, Jimin.” Haley said.

“Bye, bye.” He answered, his little hand waving.

Yoongi picked up his phone from the desk when it buzzed.

**Namjoon: you really are Super Dad.**

Yoongi smiled at the text message, glad that he was home alone to hide his blush. He was a very…unmoving person. He wasn’t quick to anger. It took a lot to upset him. He kept his emotions in check. But, Namjoon had a way to get to him, making him blush and filling his chest with butterflies. Yoongi still had a stupid schoolgirl crush on his big, intelligent, clutzy husband, even after almost five years of marriage and two years of dating.

He removed his headphones and cracked his neck. His project was…a project. Most of the time he was given at least two weeks to master a song. With Ashley’s album, he had two weeks to redo 13 songs. Honestly, he was a little in over his head.

But, it wasn’t the hardest thing he’s ever done. Not by a long shot. No, holding and comforting Hoseok after telling him his mother died. Overcoming the incredulity in Tae’s eyes. Figuring out all of Jungkook’s quirks. Listening to the story of Jimin’s traumatic past. That was the hardest things he ever had to do. And he did them all.

Mastering 13 songs in two weeks? A cakewalk.

After more coffee, of course.

Yoongi stepped out of his studio into a quiet out. Before, he enjoyed silence. He enjoyed being able to get lost into his own head. Or sleep. He enjoyed the solitude.

Now, having a house where there wasn’t a television blaring VH1 and children giggling and Hoseok’s vocalizations when he signed and Jimin’s happy babbles kind of depressed Yoongi. He
missed them. He frowned as he watched the Keurig make another cup of coffee for him, realizing that these were going to be two very, very long weeks.

But, it was for a good cause. He had been paid up front for being Capitol’s savior and they were able to put in an offer on the house. It was accepted and they could get into the house by Christmas. Namjoon could have his wish of giving the kids a whole house for Christmas.

Yoongi dropped some ice and water into his coffee, turning it into an iced americano before heading back to his studio. “Super dad.” He murmured to himself. “It’s growing on me.”

“It’s okay, bunny boy.” Namjoon said as he coaxed Jungkook’s arm out, Jungkook balancing on his knee. “Five seconds and it’ll be all over, okay?”

Jungkook watched as his arm was uncurled by the nurse practitioner, his head cocked and his eyes wide as he averted his eyes from her gaze. Namjoon couldn’t hear it, but he could see by the way his nostrils were flaring that he wasn’t enjoying having his arm held against his will by a stranger. Namjoon rubbed his tummy and murmured comforting things to him.

When the antiseptic wipe came out – the harsh alcohol smell biting and bitter – was when Jungkook flipped out. He jerked his arm from the nurse’s grip and stimmed hard, his fingers writhing and his face twisting up and heating red.

“I know, baby.” Namjoon kissed his cheek. “I know. You don’t like the smells.” Namjoon looked pleadingly at the nurse. “Can you use anything else?”

“I have betadine?” The nurse sniffed the antiseptic wipe. “You wanna try that?”

“Does it smell?” Namjoon asked as Jungkook twisted on his lap and pressed his face into Namjoon’s chest, gripping his t-shirt with his little fists.

“Well,” The nurse said. “Maybe a little.”

Namjoon quirked his lips out and rubbed Jungkook’s back. “Do we have to use an antiseptic wipe?”

The nurse looked at him like he grew a second head. “Sir, we’re going to give your son an inoculation. If he contracts anything because we didn’t properly sanitize the-,”


Jungkook’s face just continued to contort and he kicked his legs in discomfort.

“I can do the other little one first?” The nurse suggested.

Namjoon glanced at Jimin, who was sitting quietly in his wheelchair, his fingers in his mouth. He had to be weighed and measured, so he had to be lifted out of his wheelchair and laid on the table. He had rolled his full lips in an ‘o’ and made a big shiver when he was placed on the cold vinyl table with the crinkly paper. “Yeah,” Namjoon said and glanced back down at Jungkook. “We might as well.”

Namjoon placed Jungkook in the empty chair next to him and he began to rock hard, his hair
flying around his forehead. He then carefully pulled Jimin into his arms and cradled him in his lap.

The nurse produced another antiseptic wipe and examined the crook of Jimin’s arm. She rubbed it down with an antiseptic wipe and then quickly injected him. Jimin just reacted with a small “ouch,” and his head pressing into Namjoon’s sternum.

“Good job,” Then nursed praised. “What a good boy! He did so well.”

Namjoon’s thumb ran over a small scar on Jimin’s head. *He knows pain.* He thought and shuddered at what kind of pain Jimin knew. Namjoon couldn’t even imagine.

“Here’s a lollipop.” The nurse handed a Tootsie pop to Namjoon.

Namjoon rubbed Jimin’s arm and undid the wrapper with his teeth. “Jimin,” He said and spat out the paper. He pressed his lips against his son’s forehead. “You want a treat?”

He let Jimin taste the candy before getting his fingers around the stick and resettling him in his wheelchair. Jungkook patted Namjoon’s arm, a pleading look on his face. “Candy.” He signed and pointed to Jimin.

“You gotta get your vaccines.” Namjoon said. “Will you get your vaccines and we’ll give you some candy?”

Jungkook’s eyes dropped to his lap and he rocked for a moment before finally nodding and crawling back into Namjoon’s lap. “Hold your breath.” Namjoon instructed and pinched his nose for him as Jungkook filled his cheeks with air and held out his arm. The nurse moved insanely fast, but even so Jungkook’s face heated red and he looked like he was about to lose it at any second.

“All done. All done.” She assured and stepped back.

Namjoon ripped a paper advising to wash hands often to prevent the flu off the wall and fanned him, getting rid of the smell. “Okay, bunny boy.” He said. “You can breathe now.”

Jungkook gasped in a breath of air and immediately dissolved into tears. Namjoon twisted him and held him against his chest, rocking him, and telling him what a good boy he was. Jungkook’s fingers writhed. He wasn’t in complete meltdown mode, but if he went any longer he would be there.

“Koo.” Jimin said and angled his head to see his brother. “Koo.” He offered his lollipop, his lips now blue.

Jungkook sniffled and pulled away, wiping his face of tears and taking Jimin’s lollipop from him. He stuffed it in his mouth and flapped his hands. Namjoon sighed and kissed his son’s button nose. “You’re okay.” He patted his back.

Jungkook pointed at Jimin. “Nice.”

“Yeah, he is.” Namjoon said. “That’s because he loves you.”

Jungkook’s head cocked as he averted his eyes to the floor. “I love him.” Jungkook signed and then tangled his hands and stuffed them underneath his chin.

Namjoon just giggled and kissed his forehead. “Let’s get out of here.” He said.
Chapter End Notes

Please comment! <3
Santa

Chapter Notes

chapter warnings: panic attack

I was deathly afraid of Santa. In the second grade, my Jewish friend told me that Hanukkah didn't have a Santa, so I told my mom that I was switching to celebrating Hanukkah so I didn't have to talk to Santa. They broke it to me shortly after that that Santa was, in fact, fake. That was an interesting holiday season.

Anyway, enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Knock, knock.” Namjoon said as he entered Yoongi’s cave. His husband didn’t answer as he stared up at his three computer monitors and then looked down at a small synth that sat on top of his desk. He pressed on a key and then swiveled his head on his neck as he looked at his right-most screen.

Namjoon sighed. They were four days into Yoongi’s project and while he had expected Yoongi to go full-producer mode, he didn’t expect it to be this bad. He hadn’t really slept at all. Or changed his clothes. His hair was a mess on his head. Two plates from lunch and dinner were sitting next to his synth and three mugs of coffee were precariously at his elbow.

Namjoon flicked the lights on and off to get his attention. Yoongi snapped his head over and then removed his headphones. “Hey.” He greeted, one of his eyes bloodshot and deep half-moons of purple marring his cheeks right under his eyelids. “Everything okay with the babies?”

“Yeah,” Namjoon said and approached. “I almost got all of them down.”

“That’s good.” He signed back and started to slip his headphones back on his head. Namjoon waved to get his attention and he pulled his headphones off again.

“There is another baby I want to make sure gets some proper rest.” He signed gently. “You.”

Yoongi bristled, his fists clenching and anxiety radiating off of him in waves. “I don’t have time.” He just signed back and snapped his headphones back on.

“You have time to sleep?” Namjoon suggested. “Just for a couple of hours?”

Yoongi ripped his headphones off again. “No. Not really. I have ten out of thirteen songs to do before next Saturday. It’s Thursday. Time’s running out and I already had an email back from Ricky,” His fingertips dug into his forehead. “Asking me to redo part of a song. And three of the songs I’m going to have to start from scratch for and I’m still waiting on the rough cuts so I can do that. That’s going to set me back and--”

Namjoon sighed again as he watched Yoongi’s fingers on one hand rub a line of red into his forehead and the other sign quickly in front of him. Yoongi always placed the whole world ahead of himself. His children. Namjoon. Work. Everyone always came first. And Namjoon understood the urgency for this particular project but it didn’t mean throwing self-care to the wind. It didn’t mean
sacrificing himself.

He watched as Yoongi’s dark eyes lit with almost frantic panic as he spoke and an idea came to Namjoon. He about-faced mid-sentence and crossed the hallway into the babies’ room where Jungkook was…sort of falling asleep, his hand wrapped around a toy train that lit up. And Jimin was resting on his bed, his fingers in his mouth and his eyes at half-mast. He picked up Jimin and carried him back across the hall into Yoongi’s studio where he dropped the child into Yoongi’s arms.

“Daddy.” Jimin removed his fingers and smiled a big grin up at Yoongi, pressing his face into Yoongi’s shoulder.

Yoongi looked mildly shocked to have Jimin plopped into his lap, but he recovered quickly and returned a gentle smile, his anxiety evaporating and his shoulders relaxing. “Suddenly,” He said. “My problems seem very insignificant.”

Namjoon chuckled. “They have that power, don’t they?”

Yoongi grabbed Jimin's moist hand that was pointing at him and dotted kissed on his palm. His face twisted suddenly and he let out a small sob, his shoulders rolling forward and Jimin’s hand pressing over his mouth as he held it there.


“Yeah,” Yoongi said and sniffled, recovering and pressing the tears from his eyes. “I’ve just missed them so much.”

“Aw, baby.” Namjoon dropped to his knees in front of his husband. “Don’t kill yourself over this project, okay? You come first.” He rubbed his thighs.

“It’ll be alright.” Yoongi said and pressed his fingers to his cheeks to calm the red. He looked back down at Jimin, who had folded his arms on his chest and was blowing spit bubbles. “I’ll be alright.”

“Are you sure?”

Yoongi nodded and smiled down at Jimin and then looked at his computer. “I think you're right. I just need some rest.” He got up, hoisting Jimin up with him and then swaying. Namjoon wrapped his arms around Jimin’s waist and pulled him out of Yoongi’s arms in case he took a dive.

“Are you okay?” Namjoon asked as he propped Jimin up with one arm so he could grab Yoongi’s shoulder.

“Yeah,” Yoongi motioned. “Fine.” He started to shuffle out of his studio.

Namjoon followed him and watched as Yoongi slithered his small body onto the bed, not bothering to change into pajamas or brush his teeth. He turned and Namjoon gently laid Jimin down in his arms. Jimin cuddled up against Yoongi’s chest and Yoongi wrapped both of his arms around their angel, pressing his lips to his forehead.

Namjoon walked across the hallway to the boys’ room. He opened the door and found Hoseok shining a flashlight at a comic book. He jammed it under his duvet – the light still on so it shone through the blanket – and looked at Namjoon with wide eyes. Taehyung stirred in his own bed and sat up. “Daddy?” He signed and rubbed his eye.

“Hey,” Namjoon clicked on the lights. “You guys want to sleep in my bed tonight?”
The boys looked at him with confusion. Hoseok’s eyebrows furrowed. “Why?” He signed, his middle finger wiggling.

“Dad wants cuddles.”

Both boys hopped out of bed and ran across the hallway and Namjoon moved next door and grabbed Jungkook, who showed Namjoon his toy before clicking the lights on. “Very cool.” Namjoon said as he plopped Jungkook down onto his bed. “Go to sleep, okay?”

Namjoon stood at the end of the bed as he watched Hoseok curled up against Yoongi’s back, his nose pressed into the back of his neck and Taehyung snake his long limbs around Jimin. Jungkook squirmed around until he was on his back, one foot on Tae’s hip and his eyes open as he played with his toy. They all settled at the same time - his husband and all of their kids cuddling up together. He smiled.

He pulled the blanket over all over them and leaned down and kissed his husband on the cheek. “I love you.” He whispered into his temple and moved to stand back up to lock up the house when Yoongi’s hand stopped his head from lifting, his palm on Namjoon’s cheek.

“I love you too.” Yoongi murmured back, his eyes glassy again but a little smile over his face. “Thank you.”

Namjoon blinked at Seokjin, who was staring at him with an apologetic smile on his face. “What do you mean she’s not…here?” He asked, not even believing his ears.

Seokjin sighed and glanced at his clipboard, his shoulders sagging a little. “I’m not sure. As far as I know she’s not answering her cell phone. I tried calling the house of the relative she’s staying with and they’re not answering either.” His lips pursed. “Cooperation. Is it too much to ask for?” He grumbled.

Namjoon glanced at Jungkook, who was standing between his knees, rocking from side-to-side in an effort to entertain himself. “What does that mean?”

They had Jungkook’s scheduled visitation today – the third week in a row. After this week, they were going to start processing him out of Namjoon and Yoongi’s house and probably move him out. Yoongi said he bough boxes for Jungkook’s clothes, but he wasn’t sure if they ever actually made it into the house. Nobody wanted to address that Jungkook’s departure date was quickly approaching. Nobody wanted to think about it.

But, instead of Seokjin coming out to take Jungkook back, Seokjin came out to tell him that Jungkook’s mother hadn’t actually shown up.

“I’m not…” Seokjin hesitated, drumming his fingertips on his clipboard. “I’m not sure.”

“Should we…go home?”

The two men just stared at each other as they tried to figure out what this meant.

It made Namjoon feel like a villain, but he was hoping in a deep recess of his being that Jungkook’s mother bailed. Again. That she fell off the face of the planet and that Namjoon and
Yoongi could adopt Jungkook. That they could show him real, *permanent* love. That he could be theirs and they could be his. Forever.

Seokjin sighed. “I guess that would probably be the most logical thing to do.” He glanced at his clipboard. “As soon as I get ahold of her, I’ll reschedule. Sound good?”

Namjoon was already on his feet unclicking Jimin’s wheelchair, his chest filled with excited butterflies. “Yep,” He answered, trying to keep himself from cheering out loud. “Sounds good.”

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Yoongi was coaxed out of studio on Sunday by Namjoon who promised adorable children sitting on Santa’s lap. And honestly, Namjoon could’ve just ended the sentence at “adorable children,” because he was missing his. So bad. Them sitting on Santa’s lap was just a bonus.

And the project was doing well. He was ahead of schedule thanks to a song he convinced the record company to go acoustic on. He did the piano himself and honestly it sounded so much better than the half-assed piece of crap it came to Yoongi as. That bought him a couple of hours of freedom.

“Matching sweaters.” He breathed as he came out into the living room as Namjoon was squatting in front of Jimin to get his shoes on. Hoseok and Tae were sharing an iPad on the couch and Jungkook was standing in front of the television, watching music videos. They were all dressed in matching candy-striped sweaters.

“Hey,” Namjoon smiled at him and stood up. “What do you think? I got them at the Children’s Place the other day.”

“I feel like I live in a houseful of elves.” Yoongi smiled as he looked around. "They’re so cute.”

Luckily, the mall was pretty quiet on a Sunday afternoon and it was early enough in December that there wasn’t a crush for shopping yet. That made the line for Santa – all set up in a big throne with an elf helper – pretty short.

“Daddy,” Tae was chattering as fast as he could go as he held Yoongi’s hand in line. “When…when I sit on Santa’s lap I’m gonna ask for a game that everyone can play. And…a puzzle!” His lips pursed. “And Iron Man socks!”

Yoongi smiled down at him. “You can ask for bigger, Taehyung.” He said. “He’s Santa. He’ll get you anything you want.”

Tae glanced at Jimin and then looked up. “Can I ask Santa to take away Jimin’s seizures? ‘Cause they make him sad?”

Yoongi felt his eyes tighten around the edges and his heart stop in his chest. If he could ask Santa for anything, he would ask to be transported back in time so that he could kill the bastard that hurt Jimin. Or at least, he would ask to take Jimin’s pain away. He’d take it on himself if he had to. Watching any of his kids in pain was horrible, but it happened so often to Jimin – with Yoongi unable to really do anything about it – that it made it ten times worse. “I don’t know if he could do that, baby.” He answered and Taehyung frowned.
Yoongi felt a pat on his hip and he looked down to Hoseok’s anxious face. “Dad,” He signed. “Do I have to sit on Santa’s lap?” He frowned and chewed on his fingers.

“No.” Yoongi shook his head. “You don’t have to. But, don’t you want to tell him what you want for Christmas?”

He pressed up against Yoongi’s hip, both arms wrapping around his waist. “Yes.” His eyebrows furrowed. “But, I don’t want to sit on Santa’s lap.”

“Okay, baby.” Yoongi said and raked his hair down. “You don’t have to.”

Namjoon was pushing Jimin’s chair and managing Jungkook, who was very taken with the Christmas lights that ran the perimeter of Santa Claus’ area. He kept wanting to wander off to look at them and Namjoon had to hold him on his hip.

They got to the front of the line and Taehyung bolted up to Santa first. Yoongi followed in case he needed to interpret, leaving Hoseok with Namjoon. He knew from Namjoon that beards and mustaches made lip-reading impossible. “Hi,” He greeted as Santa pulled him on his lap. “My name is Taehyung. I live at two-three-two-five Playa-,”

“Tae,” Yoongi cut him off as he fished out his cellphone for photos. “He already knows your address.”

Tae’s face rolled into an ‘o’ and he turned back to Santa. “Are you really Santa?” He asked.

“I am.” Santa nodded.

Tae squinted and looked at Yoongi. “I can’t understand him.” He frowned, his eyebrows furrowed. He turned back to Santa. “I don’t hear good.” He shook his head and started playing with his hearing aid.

“He’s says he’s the real Santa, Tae.”

Tae smiled. “Okay, good.” He nodded and then got close to Santa’s ear and whispered what he wanted. Yoongi smiled as he watched, snapping pictures with his phone as he watched Tae excitedly tell Santa what he wanted for Christmas.

“Is there anything else you want?” Santa asked and Yoongi interpreted.

Tae looked down as he played with his fingers. “My brother, Jimin,” He pointed at him. “He needs special toys because he doesn’t know not to put things in his mouth because his brain was hurt. Can you make sure that he gets special toys? Like, bright toys because he doesn’t see good either.” Tae’s eyes tightened. “I wanna make sure he has a good Christmas too.”

“I think I can do that.”

“And um, my little brother, Jungkook – he doesn’t like smelly stuff. It makes him cry, so you gotta make sure you don’t give him anything that smells and Hoseok, my other brother, he likes-.”

“Tae,” Yoongi said. “Why don’t you let the others tell Santa what they want for Christmas?”

Tae nodded and slid off of Santa’s lap. “Merry Christmas, Santa.” He said and then turned around. “Oh, wait. What kind of cookies do you like?”
“Okay,” Yoongi pushed Tae off the little platform. “You can’t have all of Santa’s time.”

“It’s Hoseok’s turn.” Tae grabbed Hoseok’s hand and started to pull. Hoseok dug his heels in and fought Tae’s grip, pulling away from him.

“No, Tae.” He signed, but Tae wasn’t looking at him. “I don’t want to sit on Santa’s lap.”

“Taehyung, leave Hoseok alone.” Namjoon said, but Tae was too busy trying to get Hoseok to step up onto the platform.

“Stop!” Hoseok shrieked, his face red and his breathing erratic. That caused Tae to turn around, his eyes wide in shock. “I don’t want to.” He signed and then ran into Yoongi’s hip.

“Shhh,” Yoongi comforted as Hoseok wrapped his arms around Yoongi’s waist. “You’re okay. You don’t have to talk to Santa.”

“But, you gotta tell him what you want for Christmas.” Tae argued, his mouth squared-out in deep frown.

Namjoon swooped in and placed Jungkook on Santa’s lap. Jungkook was a little young to really grasp the concept of why he was there sitting on some random old guy’s lap. Instead he showed off his spinner toy that lit up when he hit the button and stimmed happily. Yoongi snapped a quick picture and Namjoon replaced Jungkook with Jimin.


“Hi.” Jimin greeted, his little hand waving.

“I heard you like bright toys.” Santa smiled at him. “Your brother made sure to let me know that.”

Jimin blew some spit and babbled a little. Santa nodded in understanding and Yoongi took his picture, smiling when Jimin smiled. “Chim,” Yoongi said, trying to get his head to turn. “Chimmy, can you look at Daddy?”

Yoongi heard a noise and looked down at Hoseok peaking his eye out as he watched Jimin smile at Santa. He looked up at Yoongi. “I want to to tell Santa what I want for Christmas.” He signed hesitantly. “Will you go up with me?”

Yoongi nodded. “Of course, baby.”

Hoseok stepped on the little platform with Yoongi, his fingers wrapped so tight in Yoongi’s shirt that they were turning white. Yoongi lifted underneath his armpits and placed him on Santa’s lap…

…and then Hoseok screamed.

Yoongi winced, Hoseok’s voice piercing and echo-y in the middle of a large mall. He scrambled off of the lap he was sitting on and into Yoongi’s waiting arms. “I don’t…” Hoseok signed, but his hands were shaking so bad that he couldn’t get his fingers to cooperate.

“Is he okay?” Namjoon asked as he squatted down next to Hoseok, one hand wrapped around Jungkook’s wrist so he wouldn’t wander off. “Seokie, are you okay?”

Yoongi recognized the stark, hot panic in Hoseok’s eyes and the way he was fighting for air
and his flinches at everything that moved or touched him. “Hoseok’s having a panic attack.” Yoongi signed and lifted his son up into his arms. He recognized the symptoms so well because they were the exact same symptoms he has when has a panic attack. “Stay here in the mall. I’m going to go outside with Hoseok.”

Namjoon’s narrow eyes flashed with concern but he nodded and started to push Jimin towards the food court. “Is Seokie okay?” Yoongi heard Tae asked worriedly.

Yoongi kept moving. He moved until he was exiting the whole mall out of one of the many entrances, getting Hoseok into some fresh air and lots of space. “You’re okay, baby.” Yoongi said as he set Hoseok down on his feet near a planter and dropped to his knees in front of him. “Baby,” He signed. “I need you to breathe, okay?”

He shook his head as tears leaked from his eyes and his face flushed with color. His little chest was popping erratically and Yoongi could almost see his pulse flying off the rails in his neck.

“I need you to try, okay?” Yoongi signed, maintaining a firm hold on Hoseok’s shoulder. Trying to ground him, give him something tangible to hang on to. “I know what you’re feeling, okay? I know you feel so scared that you’re going to die. But, you need to breathe.” Yoongi inhaled deep through his nose and then exhaled it out of his mouth. He did that a couple of times, watching Hoseok fist his own hair and pull at the neck of his sweater.

Finally, Hoseok inhaled a shaky breath and exhaled it out of his mouth. They continued to breathe until he stopped hyperventilating. They continued to breathe until Hoseok pitched himself into Yoongi’s arms and started to sob against his shoulder.


Hoseok pulled away after a couple of moments of crying. “I’m still a good boy, right?” He asked, his eyes leaking tears. “I’ll still get presents for Christmas, right?” He made a bunch of anxious noises.

“Yes, yes.” Yoongi signed. “Of course. You don’t have to sit on Santa’s lap for presents, Seokie. It’s okay.”

Hoseok breathed out a sigh of relief and rubbed his face. “I only like your and Dad’s lap.” He signed and pressed up against Yoongi’s chest. “Everyone else is scary.”

Yoongi held his eldest against him and kissed his forehead. He sighed and closed his eyes, his head swimming a little. Yoongi hoped this wasn’t a anxiety disorder, even though – just based on himself – that Hoseok had a lot of the same symptoms he did. He’ll have to talk to Namjoon later about getting him started with some counseling.

But, for now, he held his Hoseok against him outside the mall and dried his tears and murmured he loved him. Over and over. Until Hoseok’s little heartbeat in his palm matched his own.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment! <33
His Son

Chapter Notes

With this chapter I'm breaking 100k words! Woot! I've also broken 1200 kudos, which is amazing! I'm glad you guys are enjoying the ride.

And while you are on this ride, please note that there are speed bumps. Like the one in this chapter. :]

Enjoy!

Yoongi carried Hoseok back into the mall even though Hoseok was getting a little big to carry in Yoongi’s small 5’8 frame. Hoseok made noises as he wrapped his arm around Yoongi’s neck and buried his face into his shoulder. Yoongi just pressed small kisses to his head above his ear as they made their way to the food court, where he found the rest of his family sitting at a table.

Namjoon had a cinnamon roll from Cinnabon and was pulling off small pieces and feeding them to Jimin. Tae was popping bits into his mouth and Jungkook had his chin on the table and his eyes on his toy.

“Hey,” Namjoon said, his eyes widening slightly in concern. “Is Seokie okay?” He asked as he poked some sweet dessert into Jimin’s mouth. Jimin chewed on the cinnamon roll and then opened his mouth again, reminding Yoongi of a baby bird waiting to be fed.

“Yeah,” Yoongi sat down with Hoseok straddling his lap. Yoongi patted his back. “Just no more Santa.”

“Aw,” Namjoon leaned forward to rub his shoulder. “I’m sorry.” He said. “I promise he doesn’t want to hurt you.”

Hoseok just tucked his head under Yoongi’s chin and pressed his little fist to his lips. Yoongi rubbed up and down his thigh as he watched Namjoon feed Jimin, smearing sticky frosting over his lips and getting the brown cinnamon stuff stuck to his fingertips.

“Daddy,” Tae said and pointed to the little play area next to the food court. “Can I go play?”

Yoongi looked over at the play area and nodded. “Okay,” He said. “If I wave, you come back. Okay?”

Tae nodded dutifully and hopped out of his chair.

“Do you want to play, Seokie?” Yoongi asked in sign to his son, but he just shook his head and curled tighter against Yoongi’s chest. Yoongi glanced at Jungkook, but he had moved his head so that it was pressed to the table. He was very…inert. At least, for Jungkook, who seemed to always be moving and wiggling in some capacity. “Kookie,” Yoongi said. “Are you feeling okay?”

Jungkook didn’t answer. He just hit the button on his spinner toy and then clicked it off. That was really strange to Yoongi. He stood to his feet and placed Hoseok on the chair. Hoseok made a
noise. “No.” He signed and pouted. “Come back.”

“Hold on.” Yoongi signed back as he moved around the chair. “I’m just checking on Kookie.”

“Is everything okay?” Namjoon said.

“Kookie’s acting funny.” Yoongi pressed his hand to their youngest’s forehead. He didn’t feel feverish. He ran his fingers to the back of his neck – his mother’s way of determining if he was sick when he was a kid – and he felt a little clammy in his Christmas sweater. Yoongi squatted in front of Jungkook. “Jungkook,” He said watching Jungkook’s eyes avert from his gaze. “Are you feeling alright? Do you feel sick?”

Jungkook just turned his head to his toy and hit the button again. He turned it off and then sighed a big sigh. “Bed.” He signed.

“Are you tired?” That was also kind of strange. Jungkook was the Energizer bunny. Yoongi watched him nod and then turned to Namjoon. “I think Jungkook is coming down with something.”

Namjoon’s eyebrows furrowed. “Where would he catch something?” He asked. “He only goes to therapy and…” His eyes widened suddenly with realization. “The pediatrician’s office.”

Yoongi felt his eyes widen as well. “That was a week ago.” He looked back at their four-year-old and rubbed his back. “That’s enough time to incubate something gnarly.” He murmured to himself and then picked up Jungkook. Jungkook curled his fingers tight around the edge of Yoongi’s hoodie and grunted as he curled his face into Yoongi’s neck.

Hoseok slumped in his chair until his tailbone hit the edge of the seat, an unhappy look on his face as he realized that Yoongi wasn’t going to sit down again.

Yoongi turned his attention back to his husband. “Did you have them wash their hands after the appointment?”

Namjoon receded into his shoulders a little like a turtle hiding in his shell. “No.” He said.

Yoongi groaned. “Namjoon,” He gripped in sign. “Pediatrician offices are crawling with germs and new strains of the plague and God knows-,” His sentence fractured as he watched Jimin squeezed his fingers together and make a noise as he asked for more cinnamon roll. “Namjoon,” He groaned again. “If Jimin gets sick-,”

“He won’t get sick.” Namjoon signed quickly, his other hand wrapping around Jimin’s armrest. “I promise.” He signed.

“Namjoon,” Yoongi signed.

“He won’t.” He argued. “He didn’t touch anything. He just stayed in his chair the whole time.” He signed. “Jungkook was in the waiting area playing with toys and stuff.”

Yoongi sighed and looked at their youngest, pressing a kiss to his forehead. Jungkook shook his hair into his face and curled tighter. “He better not get sick. I have the project to finish and I can’t have two sick babies to care for on top of that.”

“Jimin won’t get sick.” Namjoon insisted. “I promise.”
Jimin got sick.

Namjoon felt so horrible for not having them wash their hands after the pediatrician’s office. Especially as he bounced Jimin around the living that Monday morning, still dressed in pajamas, a little blanket wrapped around his body.

“Ouch,” Jimin said, pressing his head to Namjoon’s collar bone. He was clammy and sweaty and Namjoon could feel by the rattily breaths Jimin took that he was also a bit congested. Namjoon assumed it was the flu, since it was flu season. But, he was hoping that it was something milder, like a small cold. He was praying that it was something mild.

Jungkook was oscillating between needing to move to self-stimulate and being too fatigued to do so. It caused him to have a burst of energy for about five minutes before he tired himself out and slumped on a random piece of furniture or the floor. Currently, he was on the couch – his feet on the ground, but his torso draped over the edge of the couch. He used the sleeve of his sweater to wipe his nose.

The door that led to the garage opened and closed and Yoongi stepped into the living room. “The boys are at school.” He signed as he dropped his keys in the little dish on the breakfast bar. “But, I wouldn’t be surprised if we got a call to pick them up. Hoseok said his head hurt.”

“I’m sorry.” Namjoon rubbed his fist over his chest as he bounced Jimin with the other arm. He meant it too. He really, truly did. “I didn’t mean for them to get sick.”

Yoongi shrugged. “I guess it really couldn’t be helped.” Although his face was displeased with his turn of events. “I can take Jimin if you want to try and get some Tylenol into Jungkook.” Yoongi offered.

“No,” Namjoon signed. “Go work on your project. I can handle the babies.”

“Are you sure?”

They both looked at Jungkook, who had inch-wormed his way onto the couch and had turned on his back and stuck his foot up in the air. He looked like he was struggling to breathe through his nose, his mouth wide open.

“Yeah,” Namjoon said and patted Jimin’s back. “I’m gonna put Jimin down and get some NyQuil into Jungkook. That’ll put him out at least so he can get some sleep.”

Yoongi sighed. “Okay,” He signed. “Let me know if you need help with anything.”

“We’ll be fine.” Namjoon said and looked at Jungkook sprawled on the couch. You know, eventually…

Namjoon put Jimin down and it was the first time in the four, almost five months they had Jimin that he looked genuinely angry. His eyebrows furrowed and his little cheeks puffed up. “Daddy,” He said, his little fists balling.

“I know.” Namjoon said and covered him with his blanket and then uncurled his fingers to tuck his silky in his hand. “I will be right back. Let me just take care of Kookie, okay?”
“Daddy.” He said again, his eyes misting over with tears. His face twisted and he coughed, causing tears to leak down his cheeks. It absolutely broke Namjoon’s heart, but he had to take care of his youngest first. The sooner he got Jungkook down to get some actual rest so he could combat whatever they had, the better.

He grabbed the children’s NyQuil from the medicine cabinet in the kids’ bathroom and then moved to the kitchen. Jungkook was back on his feet – one of the legs of his pajama pants hitched up around his calf – bouncing a little in front of the television. Namjoon mixed the Nyquil into some grape juice, hoping that was enough to mask the smell and flavor of the drug and screwed on the sippy cup lid.

“Kookie,” Namjoon found Jungkook laying supine on the rug in the living room, panting again as he struggled to breathe through his nose. A line of snot dribbled out of his nostril. “Can you drink this for me?” He handed him the sippy cup.

Jungkook took a sip, made a face and then ditched the sippy cup. Namjoon sighed as it rolled underneath the coffee table.

“Jungkook,” Namjoon squatted and then sat on the rug. “I know you don’t feel well, but this’ll help a lot.”

Jungkook got up and then threw his whole weight into Namjoon’s torso, grabbing Namjoon’s arm and circling around himself. Namjoon wrapped his arms real tight like Jungkook liked and he sighed and slumped his sweaty body against Namjoon’s chest.

“I have medicine for you.” Namjoon said as he rocked their youngest. “Can I give you some medicine?”

Jungkook shook his head.

“It’ll make you feel better?”

Namjoon pressed his cheek against Jungkook’s forehead. He was a little warm. Maybe Tylenol would be better. He stood to his feet with Jungkook in his arms and moved to the bathroom, where they kept all the kids’ meds. He rummaged around medicine cabinet until he found the liquid children’s Tylenol, loading it into a baby syringe and then filling a Dixie cup of water.

“Here,” Namjoon said and let him hold the syringe filled with red syrup, keeping his finger around the plunger. “I’m going to put this in your mouth, okay? It tastes like candy.”

Jungkook gave the end a careful sniff. He didn’t react negatively even though it smelled like fake cherries, so Namjoon thought that was a win. But, he was also pretty certain that Jungkook’s nose was stuffed up so maybe he couldn’t actually smell it. Jungkook let him insert the end into his mouth and Namjoon hit the plunger.

Jungkook made a face and for a second Namjoon thought he was going to spit it back out. But, then he swallowed and Namjoon handed him some water to wash it down.

“Okay, bunny boy.” Namjoon said and carried him across the hallway. “It’s naptime for you.”

Namjoon plopped him in his bed and he immediately slid off to go rummage around his toy box. Namjoon decided fighting him wasn’t worth it. In twenty minutes the Tylenol would kick in and he’d probably crash naturally. At least he was in his room.
Namjoon moved back to Jimin, who had two trails of clear snot leaking out of his nostrils and his eyes were red-rimmed with old tears.

“Okay,” Namjoon rubbed his face with his drool towel. “You’re okay. I know you don’t feel well.”

“Daddy,” He said. “Ouch.”

“I know, baby. I’m sorry.” Namjoon said. “I’m gonna give you some medicine, okay? And then you’ll feel a lot better.”

Namjoon grabbed the children’s Tylenol and started back for Jimin’s bedroom, but then stopped in the hallway and checked the packaging. Jimin was on a number of meds for pain and seizures. He wasn’t sure if mixing kid Tylenol would do anything. *Yoongi would know*. He thought and turned into his studio.

“Hey,” Yoongi greeted and pulled off his headphones. Namjoon didn’t even have to flick the lights to get his attention. That meant Yoongi was worrying over the kids instead of working.

“Everything okay?”

“Do you know if children’s Tylenol reacts with Dilantin?” Namjoon asked.

“Um,” Yoongi pulled up Google on his computer. “I’m not sure. And he’s not taking Dilantin anymore. His doctor put him on like this new multi-use drug that’s like gabapentin and one other thing…” He signed and then snapped his fingers.

Namjoon looked down to a hand pat on his hip and Jungkook pointed to the room. “Jimin.” He signed his name sign – ‘happy’ but with a ‘j,’ his eyebrows were furrowed and his face was pinched he flapped his hand. Something hard flipped in Namjoon’s stomach and he turned and jogged back across the hallway.

Jimin was seizing on his bed – his limbs flying and his head rolled back into an odd position. Namjoon immediately rolled him on his side and pulled his pillow out from under his head so he wouldn’t tweak his neck.

“Baby,” He murmured. “You’re okay.” He wasn’t sure why he talked to Jimin during his seizures. He assumed, on some level, it was to keep himself calm. He didn’t like to show it, but he panicked hard through them for a number of a reasons. They happened randomly. There were so many things that could go wrong during one of them. And watching his son writhe and jerk without being able to do anything about it just shattered Namjoon. After his first one, late that night, Namjoon snuck out of his room into Jimin’s and cried next to his bed, unable to fathom that one of his children had to be put through something like that without any relief. Without Namjoon being able to do anything about it but watch his head and wait for it to end. At least when he talked, he felt like he was contributing something more. At least, he was doing something when he was talking to him.

Namjoon felt Yoongi’s presence next to him. His lips were moving, probably calling time as that was Yoongi’s job during Jimin’s seizures. That’s what made him feel like he was doing something instead of just watching him. Namjoon kept his eyes on Jimin though, telling him how strong he was, what a brave boy he was.

After a couple of minutes, it ended and Jimin’s body relaxed on his mattress. Namjoon just rubbed his face and carded his hair off of his forehead and kept his mouth moving. He was a good boy. He was extremely strong. He was a little soldier. And Jimin needed to be reminded of these facts every moment of every day, but especially after seizures.
“Three minutes.” Yoongi said as he rubbed Jimin’s thigh. “I think. I wasn’t sure when it started.”

“That’s a long one.” He said to Jimin. “You’re so brave. My brave boy.”

And then Jimin’s head jerked. And he started to seize again.

Alarms went off in Namjoon and he looked to Yoongi – who had an equally horrified look on his face – for guidance. “He’s have another seizure.” He blurted, panic winding its way around Namjoon’s middle like a boa constrictor and squeezing the air from his lungs.

Yoongi glanced at the clock on the wall. He said something, but Namjoon didn’t catch it. “You’re okay. Shhh.” Namjoon said as he kept one hand on Jimin to keep him from rolling. "You're okay."

He stopped seizing and Namjoon almost let out a breath of relief. But, then he started again. Namjoon sucked in a breath, but it got stuck.

“Something’s wrong.” Namjoon said and picked up Jimin, dragging his duvet with him. “He’s never had back to back seizures like this before.” He said as he tried to hold onto him as he wriggled and jerked like slippery fish.

“I-I…” Yoongi’s face was a white sheet. Namjoon didn’t dwell on that. He pushed his panic aside. He pushed the pain of watching his son suffer aside. Jimin was front and center.

And he needed to go to the hospital. Right now.

“You’re okay, baby boy.” Namjoon cooed as he rushed through the house towards the garage. “You’re okay.” He looked over his shoulder to see that Yoongi had snapped out of his momentary panic and was gathering Jungkook, forcing his feet into some galoshes and grabbing his coat. “You’re okay. We’re going to the hospital. Okay? Don’t worry. We got this.” He pep-talked as he stuffed himself and Jimin and Jimin’s blanket into the passenger seat of the car, holding Jimin tight, watching his head and neck.

Yoongi got Jungkook into his own car seat and then slid into the driver’s seat, his hands shaking so bad he missed the push-to-start button on the dashboard. Namjoon struck out his own hand to grip his husband’s. “He’ll be okay.” He said as Jimin relaxed in his arms – his eyes intense on Yoongi’s. “We got this.” Jimin started to seize again.

Yoongi gulped, looking like he could throw up at anytime. “We got this.” He said back, his lips not really moving. He pushed the button and hit the door for the garage.

Jimin started with another seizure as they raced to their local hospital. Luckily, it was mid-morning and there was no traffic. And Namjoon prayed that there wouldn’t be any highway patrol as Yoongi literally floored it down the freeway.

“You’re okay. You’re okay.” Namjoon said as he held his son. “You’re okay. You’ll be okay.”

Yoongi pulled up to the driveway in front of the Children’s hospital emergency room that Namjoon was pretty sure was only for ambulances. But, he didn’t have time to think about that as he burst out of the car, clutching Jimin to his chest and jogging through the automatic doors, his duvet dragging behind him.

“What’s going on?” Some scrub-clad hospital worker approached him as he marched through
the ER. Where he was going, he wasn’t sure. But, it was for help. He needed to get Jimin help. Front and center. He was front and center. Namjoon looked around, trying not to let the reality sink into him that he was in the emergency room with his son.

“This is my son.” My son. He tried to explain. “He’s having back-to-back seizures. I don’t know what’s going on. He’s got a bit of a cold, we think.” He babbled as the panic started to mushroom cloud in his chest. He kept it together this far, but now that they were here? In the hospital? His son? Was? In? The hospital?

The hospital worker said something, but her chin was pointed down and it really took all of Namjoon’s self-control not to scream at her.

“I need you to repeat that.” Namjoon said. “I’m deaf.” And we don’t have time. Don’t you know that this is my son?

“Does he have a seizure disorder?” She asked as a gurney vaporized in front of Namjoon. Or maybe it had always been there? He placed the child on top of it with his blanket and then suddenly there were multiple pairs of hands on Jimin. His son. His son.

“He has epilepsy. His, um…” Get it together. But, Namjoon was panicking and his thoughts felt like they had been exploded into a million different directions. He couldn’t piece anything together. He couldn’t get anything to fit.

Yoongi appeared out of nowhere and Jimin had disappeared – whisked away behind the doors that separated the ER from the waiting area. And Namjoon couldn’t get anything to connect together. “…brain injury.” He caught Yoongi say. “At ten months.”

The hospital worker nodded. “Medications?”

“Gabapentin.” Yoongi said. “And some other thing. It’s one of those monotherapies for kids.”

“Anything else?”

“He’s six, but mentally handicapped. He’s not going to be able to answer questions. And he has CP. Be careful with him.” Yoongi pleaded, his face heating with tears. His hand held a death grip around Jungkook’s wrist. “Please be careful with him.”

“Okay,” She pointed. “Check in with admissions and as soon as we get him stabilized, I’ll come and grab you. Okay?”

Namjoon managed a nod and Yoongi waited until the doors had opened and closed and the scrub-clad hospital worker had disappeared before breaking down and turning so he could press his face into Namjoon’s chest. Namjoon just stared at the two gigantic doors as they slid shut on a slow hydraulics system, locking into place.

That was his son back there. There was something wrong with his son. His son.

His son.

Chapter End Notes
Hey folks, so I will be travelling the whole next week and will not be able to post an update during that time (my apologies). I didn't want to leave you all on a cliffhanger, so here you go! See you later!

They got called back quick. Faster than Yoongi had time to fill out the admissions forms. Faster than he had time to pull himself together. Faster than he had time to completely comprehend that Jimin, their son, was in the emergency room.

Jungkook couldn’t go back into the ER, so Yoongi volunteered to stay in the waiting room with him while Namjoon went back. Yoongi wanted to go back. He wanted to be there when Jimin woke up. But, he couldn’t get his legs to move. He felt like he had been ripped open and had concrete poured into him. It filled him up, strangled him, weighed him down.

“Stay here, Jungkook.” Yoongi murmured as Jungkook paced around, stimming hard. He was upset, even though he probably didn’t know why. Jungkook was so in-tune with everyone, even though he didn’t seem like it. Even though Jungkook didn’t have normal socially-acceptable conversation skills. He still empathized with his brothers. He still felt their pain, their happiness, their sadness.

Yoongi watched him pace, an upset line between his eyebrows and his hands flapping hard and then he turned back to the paperwork he had been tasked to fill out. He held the pen over the box for the last name.

And then a sob rippled through him, stinging his eyes and choking him out.

“Hello,” A voice said and Yoongi jumped at the sudden presence next to him. A nice-looking lady in a hospital polo with ‘volunteer’ emblazoned on the breast smiled at him. “My name is Mary. I’m a waiting room volunteer here. Do you need assistance with anything?” She asked and pulled the tissue box off the coffee table.

Yoongi pulled a tissue out of the box and glanced at the double doors that led to the ER. “My son, Jimin, he’s back there.” Yoongi said and dabbed his eyes. “Is he okay?”

“Would you like me to call back to the nurses’ station for you?”

“Will you?” He asked.

“Sure. Can I get your name?” She asked.

“Yoongi Min-Kim. His last name is Park.” Yoongi said. “He’s a foster, but we’re filing for adoption very soon.”

She got up and disappeared somewhere. Yoongi inhaled a shaky breath and turned back to the paperwork. He could do this simple thing. Write his name, dammit. Yoongi cursed at himself.
Yoongi wrote ‘Park’ and then ‘Jimin’ and then he broke down again, pressing his palm over his mouth. God, when he signed the paperwork to become a foster parent, he didn’t imagine that he would have to do this. He never expected that something as mundane as writing his child’s name would be so hard.

Jungkook pulled himself onto a chair and started to rock, making grunting noises as his fingers writhed next to his head. Yoongi dropped the clipboard and rubbed his back. “He’ll be okay, Kookie.” He said, wondering if he was comforting himself more than Jungkook.

Jungkook glanced up at him and then averted his eyes as he ferociously rocked, his back hitting the chair with a soft thwap, thwap, thwap. Yoongi rubbed his face and watched the doors. Please be okay. He prayed. Please be okay.

“Mr. Min-Kim?” Yoongi jumped again at the volunteer’s presence, his head whipping around. She was smiling and that lightened the heavy feeling in Yoongi’s middle a little.

“They got him stabilized and he’s waking up.” She said. “They’re moving him into a room for some monitoring.”

“He’s…” Yoongi swallowed thickly. “He’s okay?”

She nodded. “You can go back and see him.”

He’s okay. Yoongi pressed his hands to his face. Jimin’s okay. He sniffled and pressed his hand to his face to calm down the red. He got to his feet – grabbing the clipboard on the chair and helping Jungkook to his feet – and followed the volunteer through a doorway and down a hallway. There were Looney Toons characters painted on the walls and Yoongi pointed them out to Jungkook as they walked through the maze of rooms and nurses’ stations.

“Here you go.” She motioned and smiled. Yoongi thanked her and entered the hospital room. There were two beds. One bed that was empty with the white sheets pulled crispy tight. And the other with Jimin looking impossibly small, a star-patterned tubular pillow framing his head and a line of IVs in his chubby arm. He was sleeping with his fingers in his mouth.

“Yoongi,” Namjoon was on his feet from where he was sitting next to the bed. Yoongi ran into his husband’s arms. “He’s okay.” He breathed into his hair above his ear. Yoongi barely heard him over the own buzzing in his head. Instead he focused on Namjoon’s hands around him and the slight soap smell of his skin as Yoongi pressed his face into his husband’s neck.

Yoongi sucked in a breath and pulled away. “Do they know what happened?” He asked and turned his attention on Jimin, moving to the head of the bead to push his hair out of his eyes. It took Yoongi’s whole focus not to break down into tears again as he watched Jimin’s head shift to hit the other side of the special pillow that caged his head.

Namjoon resettled in the plastic chair that was positioned next to his bed. “Status epilepticus. I guess it’s pretty common with epilepsy.”

Yoongi glanced over his shoulder to make sure Jungkook was okay. He had climbed onto the empty bed and was playing with the buttons on the roll guard that controlled the head of the bed. Yoongi assumed that was probably against the hospital rules. But, he didn’t care. He didn’t have the capacity to care about hospital rules at the moment.

He turned back to Jimin, tracing the line that was embedded into the back of his arm and held down with tape to the IV bag of fluids above his head. He tried to read the impossibly long name for
whatever was feeding into his baby boy, but couldn’t. It looked like the letters were jumping off the label at him.

He instead looked back at Jimin, finding all the purple bruises from being manhandled in and out of the car and onto a gurney. He saw the crescent-shaped scar on his head from one of his surgeries from when he was a baby. He found a tiny spot of dried strawberry yogurt still clinging to his little cheek from breakfast.

“What caused it?” He signed.

Namjoon rubbed the lines in his forehead. He shrugged. “They think it might be the fever.” He signed. “But, they’re going to do an x-ray to make sure it isn’t a lesion or something worse.”

Yoongi swallowed as he realized that this would not be the last time that Jimin would be in the hospital. Emergencies were going to happen. This time it was something simple. But, next time? What about next time? The time after that? Yoongi had kidded himself into thinking that the hardest part about raising Jimin was watching him suffer without being able to do anything about it. But, he knew now that was completely wrong. The hardest part was watching him suffer knowing that this was only the beginning. Knowing that he was going to have to do this again and again and again.

Yoongi inhaled a shaky breath in as he continued to play with Jimin’s feather-soft hair, trying to ground himself. He watched as Jimin folded one of his hands under his chin and a bead of drool hit his shirt. Yoongi pulled his shirt down, inspecting a couple of drops of blood that marred the ‘best brother’ decal on the front. “What is this?” He asked, horror blasting through his veins.

Namjoon sighed. “He bit his tongue during one of the seizures.”

Yoongi felt his knees shake and his vision warp into a tight tunnel and suddenly Namjoon’s hand was on his chin and he was being led to sit down in Namjoon’s plastic chair.


Yoongi consciously inhaled, feeling his chest suddenly scream from the lack of oxygen. His temple throbbed.

“I just…” Yoongi pressed his face into his hands and then removed them. “This is so hard.”

“I know. I know.” Namjoon rubbed his lap. "I know it is."

Yoongi was shaking. “I don’t know,” He whispered out loud his worst fears. They tasted bitter on his tongue. “I don’t know if I’m strong enough for this.”

“You are.” Namjoon insisted, his eyes steeling hard. He had the same expression in the car when he told Yoongi that they got this. It was like an armor that Namjoon shielded himself. Yoongi wondered how he did it. “You are so strong.” He pep-talked. “Yoongi, you are the most-,”

“Daddy?”

Namjoon watched Yoongi’s head whip and he looked over his shoulder at Jimin, whose eyes
were open as he stared up at the ceiling. His head started to move as he scanned around, his face flushing red as he became upset. It twisted and he balled his fists as he started to cry.

Yoongi was up on his feet, reaching over the roll guard to stroke Jimin’s face and rub the large jeweled tears from his eyes. Namjoon rose too and moved to the other side of his bed. Yoongi had mashed all the hair off of his forehead into a pile and Namjoon gently smoothed down for him and stroked his cheek. He looked between the two of them, raising his arms and squeezing his fists to be held.

Namjoon collapsed the roll guard on his side and gently picked up his son with the special pillow that was there to protect his head and keep him from rolling. He replaced him on the bed and cradled him in his arms, being careful of his IV so he didn’t accidentally rip it out. He’d probably get yelled at by the nurse for jostling Jimin, but he didn’t care. Jimin wanted to be held and that’s all that mattered.


Jimin looked perplexed, his eyebrows pinched as he surveyed his surroundings, his fingers gripping. His tongue popped out – looking a little swollen from where he bit it – and his face twisted again into tears. “Ouch.” He said and then popped his tongue out again.


Yoongi sat down next to Namjoon, crossing his legs and rubbing Jimin’s temple. Namjoon glanced at Yoongi, who had pulled himself together. The panic in his eyes was still there. And Namjoon knew – just because he knew his husband – that he was freaking out. He was jumping ten years in the future. He was fretting over what they were going to do, how they were going to handle emergencies like this.

But, Namjoon saw the deep, deep love in his husband’s dark eyes as well. And even though he was panicking, even though he was doubting every single move he took, he was going to be there for Jimin. Because he loved him.

Jungkook climbed onto the bed foot of the bed, shuffling over on his knees to get a better look at his big brother. “Okay?” He asked in signed and pointed at Jimin, his eyes angled down.

“He’s okay, Kookie.” Namjoon said. “Do you want to give him a kiss? I’m sure he’ll like that.”

Jungkook shuffled closer and Yoongi kept a hand on his shoulder to ensure Jungkook didn’t get too enthusiastic with his affection. He was very, very gentle, though, as he leaned down and pecked Jimin forehead and gave him a little pat on the knee. “Okay.” He signed and then sat back on his heels.

Jimin had to crane his head around the special pillow to look at Jungkook, stopping the tears as he concentrated to get the best angle. Namjoon helped by shifting his arms down so Jimin could see him. “Koo.” Jimin said with a smile when he finally got him in his line of sight.

Jungkook just responded by smiling a little, his nose scrunching up.

Jimin put his hand over his mouth and blew a kiss. “Kiss.” He said and then sighed, looking like that simple movement took all of his energy. He pressed his hand under his cheek and his jaw fell slack.

Namjoon tightened his arms and watched Jimin’s petal pink eyelids flutter shut as sleep took him. Emergencies were going to happen. They were. It was a reality with their son. But, as long as they were there for him, everything would fine. Fine.

Namjoon was right – a nurse came in and angrily told Namjoon that he shouldn’t pick up Jimin, since it could pull his IV out. Jimin was placed back into bed and the nurse spent a good five minutes fussing over him and checking his IV – which Namjoon knew he didn’t pull – before stomping out.

A couple minutes later an x-ray technician came into the room with a portable x-ray machine to get pictures of Jimin’s head. Namjoon, Yoongi, and Jungkook were politely kicked out of the room for that procedure, so they went down to the cafeteria to grab cups of coffee and lunch for their youngest.

“I’m filing for Jimin’s adoption tomorrow.” Yoongi announced after he cut the crusts off of Jungkook’s sandwich for him and then divided it into fourths so Jungkook could eat with one hand and play a game on Yoongi’s phone with the other.

Namjoon had spent the time in the cafeteria tracing Yoongi’s hand. Yoongi was still wound tight, his muscles in his back were stretched like rubber bands and his eyes were distant with his thoughts, but he was breathing steadily and sipping coffee. So, Namjoon busied himself with stroking and rolling the prominent veins in Yoongi’s pale hand and tried not to worry over Jimin’s x-rays.

But, Yoongi’s sudden announcement surprised Namjoon. “What about the new-,”

Yoongi took the hand Namjoon was playing with, balled it into a fist and punched the table. “Jimin is mine, dammit.” He signed with his other hand, his eyes sharpening with a flash of anxiety.

“Okay,” Namjoon glanced at Jungkook, but his attention was focused on the game. His hand folded around his husband’s. “Okay, we’ll file for adoption.”

“Tomorrow.” Yoongi insisted.

Namjoon smiled easily at his husband. “Tomorrow.”

Yoongi deflated a little. “I thought you were going to fight me on it.”

Namjoon’s eyebrows furrowed. “Why would I fight you on it?”

Yoongi’s eyes flitted up to him. “’Cause you’re a romantic.”

For the first time that day – that long-ass day – he giggled, feeling some worry steam out of him like a tea kettle. “I am.” He confessed. “It’s a fatal flaw.”

Yoongi’s tight muscles loosened a little. “I like it.” He signed. “I always like your idealism.”

He smiled slightly.

“I wouldn’t fight you on something like this, though.” Namjoon said quietly. “Jimin is ours.”

His eyebrows furrowed.
“I was just thinking about how we have to call Seokjin because he isn’t ours.” Yoongi signed. “To tell him what happened, so it’ll go in his file. And how he wasn’t ours a year ago, when he was being passed around from family to family. What if this has happened before and-,”

“Shhh.” Namjoon interrupted him. “You’re getting yourself worked up for nothing. He has us now. He’s going to be fine.”

“I know.” Yoongi said and sighed. “I just…I wish we had known him at nine and half months, you know? Before he was shaken. Before he had to go through this.” He motioned around. “Before this became his life.”

Namjoon felt himself tense up and he dropped his eyes to Yoongi’s hand again. He wished the same thing. He wished that he could be transported back in time to have a talk with the guy that hurt his son all time. Every time the Tae and Hoseok ran by Jimin and startled him accidentally. Every time he woke up in the middle of the night because he was uncomfortable. Every time his smile turned into a grimace because of seizures.

But, that wasn’t possible. And while Jimin’s future was altered now because of some person’s violence, it didn’t mean that it had to be all bad. He had Namjoon and Yoongi now. He had love. He knew his daddies. He can thrive.

Yoongi’s phone vibrated and Namjoon watched as he answered it, his eyes turning towards the table and his head nodding every couple of moments. He hung up and placed his phone back on the table. “Jimin’s x-rays are done.” He said, his eyebrows furrowing. “The doctor’s going to be in in a couple of moments to go over them.”

“Was there anything on them?” Namjoon asked.

“He didn’t say.” Yoongi asked and glanced at Jungkook, who had inserted a sandwich between his lips, but had become so involved with his game that he had forgotten to chew. Yoongi smiled at him and removed the sandwich. “Should we go back up?”

Despite having a nurse lecture him for ten minutes earlier, Namjoon immediately picked back up Jimin to cradle him against his chest as he sat in his bed. Yoongi sat next to Namjoon, shoulder-to-shoulder and kept his fingers running through Jimin’s hair. He watched him sleep, his eyelashes fluttering and his lips pursed. Yoongi didn’t blame him, he had an exhausting day.

“Good afternoon family,” The doctor said as he walked in. He was an older guy with white hair. “How’re we doing?”

“We hope.” Yoongi answered.

The doctor tacked up some x-rays of Jimin’s head to the lightboard across from his bed. A shadowy, milky white form of his brain lit up.

“Well,” The doctor said, his back turned so Yoongi had to interpret for Namjoon. He pointed to an indistinguishable spot on the left side of x-ray. “We have a little bit of swelling right here in this blood vessel.” He turned around to face them. “I know that he’s been fighting a bit of an infection, which may have caused the slight inflammation. We’re going to keep him for a couple of days on antibiotics to make sure everything is good to go before we release him.”
Yoongi could feel Namjoon’s arms tighten around Jimin. “He’ll be okay?”

The doctor nodded. “When we get inflammation like this, sometimes it could be an aneurysm – which is definitely something to look for with the severity of Jimin’s TBI - but I’m sure with some rest and antibiotics he’ll be just fine.”

Yoongi glanced down at Jimin and rubbed his arm. He’ll be just fine. Those words swirled around Yoongi, comforting him. He’ll be just fine.

The doctor left and both Namjoon and Yoongi glanced at each other. Yoongi felt himself deflate hard like a balloon and Namjoon just turned his attention back to Jimin. “Did you hear that, baby?” He asked and adjusted the pillow thing that was cushioning Jimin’s head. “You’re going to be just fine.”

Yoongi kissed the top of his head. “Just fine.” He repeated and pressed his face against Namjoon’s shoulder, taking his first actual breath in hours.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!<3
Chapter Notes

Chapter Warnings: r-word

Hello folks! Welcome back! I give you kind of a filler chapter before we get into the FUN stuff - CHRISTMAS! I'm very excited for Christmas.

I also started a curious cat! So if you want to ask me questions or have suggestions or whatnot and want to do it anonymously, you can do so through there!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Oh, shit.”

“What?” Yoongi looked up from where he was playing with Jimin’s small fingers as he slept hard. He had been sleeping all day against Namjoon’s chest as Namjoon cuddled him – the nurse giving up on lecturing him about pulled IV lines. Namjoon busied himself by pressing his cheek against the top of Jimin’s head and playing on his cell phone, his other hand patting his bottom every once in awhile.

Yoongi didn’t know how Namjoon was staying so…inert. Yoongi fidgeted – tapping his toes and biting his fingernails and rubbing his lap. He tried to play on his cell phone too by rearranging his calendar and contacts. He purged blurry photos. But, then Jungkook started getting restless too and he relinquished his device to their youngest so he could play games belly-down on the empty bed.

Yoongi was fretting. Jimin was fine. He was. And he was theirs. And they would make that permanent as soon as Yoongi could call their family lawyer. But, Yoongi was still anxious of the future. He was anxious over future hospital visits. He was anxious over the sheer enormity of it all, the weight settling deep in Yoongi’s soul. Jimin was…brain damaged. He was. And that damage was going to manifest itself in a number of ways. Unpredictable ways.

And that’s what Yoongi was struggling with the most. He could handle the fact that Jimin couldn't feed himself or walk to go to the bathroom himself. He could handle the fact that Jimin may never learn more than the handful of words that he knows. He could handle the fact that Jimin computed at infantile levels.

But, the unknown, the issues that may pop up in the future, Yoongi was struggling with. He just wanted his son to be healthy and happy. And it was his job as a parent to make sure that Jimin stayed healthy and happy. But, how could he do that if he couldn’t stay one step ahead of Jimin’s own little body?

It was like a stone settling deep in the pit of his stomach. It dragged him down to the floor. It made his fingers and hands feel heavy. It made him aware of every joint pop and movement. He played with Jimin’s small, pudgy hands and tried not to get lost in the sensation of the solidity in his middle.

Namjoon – in classic, reckless, Namjoon-fashion – ripped Yoongi almost violently from his
thoughts. Yoongi looked up into his husband’s face, which was rolled into a surprised ‘o’ at his cell phone. “What’s going on?” Yoongi asked.

“It’s one-thirty-four.” He said and looked up.

Yoongi felt his eyebrows shoot up and then he was on his feet. “Tae and Hoseok.” He breathed. He had never, ever been late picking them up from school. They were there everyday at 1:30, waiting. Every single day.

“Do you-,” Namjoon glanced down at Jimin who was sprawled on his chest, tied to his IV and drooling. “Do you want me to-,”

“No,” Yoongi said as he picked up Jungkook, hoisting him on his hip. Jungkook grunted and wiped his nose on Yoongi’s shoulder, his eyes never tearing away from Yoongi’s cell phone screen. “Stay with Jimin. He needs someone right now. I’ll be right back.”

Namjoon just casted Yoongi an apologetic glance before pressing his lips to Jimin’s forehead. Yoongi hurried through the pediatric ward of the hospital towards the exit.

“I need this, baby.” Yoongi said as he wrenched his cell phone from Jungkook’s grip. Jungkook groaned and writhed his fingers, his head twisting to glance behind them. “Please.” He signed and gripped towards the cell phone, whining out a noise.

But, Yoongi was already dialing the school’s front desk as he opened the back door of his SUV and set Jungkook down on his feet.

“Oliver School, elementary department. This is Tammy. How can I help you?”

Jungkook made a dash towards the hospital and Yoongi grabbed him by his arm before he could tear off. “Hi,” He greeted and jammed his phone between his ear and his shoulder so he could pick up his youngest, who was currently writhing like a fish out of water. “My name is Yoongi Min-Kim,” He grunted as Jungkook clocked him in the cheek. “I’m Taehyung and Hoseok’s dad. They’re in Miss Candace’s first grade class.” He got Jungkook – who was like wrestling a drunk octopus when he didn’t want to do something – into his car seat. “I’m going to be a little bit late picking them up. We had a medical emergency with one of my other kids.”

“Okay,” Tammy said. “I’ll have them in the office waiting for you. Thank you for letting us know.”

“Kookie,” Yoongi groaned as Jungkook stimmed hard and wiggled his arm out from underneath the buckle. “Please work with me.” He breathed before getting back on the phone. “Thank you.” He said. “Please let them know that I’ll be there in just a couple of moments.”

He hung up and then handed his cell phone to Jungkook and finished getting him buckled into his car seat. He threw himself up into his driver’s seat and roared back down the highway towards Hoseok and Tae’s school.

Yoongi rubbed his palms on the steering wheel as he sped down the road, one eye on the dashboard clock the whole time, cursing each minute that ticked up. He tried not to think about how upset Hoseok was going to be with them. He tried not to think about all the backwards steps they were going to take with his separation anxiety. He tried not to think about the betrayal in his dark eyes.

Yoongi pulled into a handicap space in front of the front office – the parking lot empty now except for a few cars. He recently got his license plate updated for Jimin and boy, was it coming in
handy now. He shoved it into park and pulled Jungkook out—his little chin hooking on Yoongi’s shoulder as they both hurried in to the school.

Even speeding illegally, Yoongi was still about twenty minutes late. He hoped that maybe Hoseok wouldn’t have noticed. Maybe he got distracted. Maybe he started to play with Taehyung and the time slipped away from him. “Be okay. Be okay. Be okay.” He chanted as he stepped up to the entrance of the school with Jungkook in his arms.

Hoseok…was not okay.

And while Yoongi could hope with his whole being that Hoseok would be okay, he knew—just as someone who had anxiety himself—that every minute was an eternity.

Hoseok and Tae were sitting in the little waiting area in front of the counter. Hoseok had his knees pulled up to his chest and his face buried in them. Taehyung’s feet were swinging, one of his shoes untied. His face was puffy from crying too and really, Yoongi really wished this whole day would be over and he could stop feeling like the worst dad in the history of worst dads.

Tae’s eyes found him first. His face lit up and he pounded Hoseok’s shoulder and then jumped to his feet. “Daddy!” He said, his arms out. “I’m so glad to see you.”

Yoongi put down Jungkook to hug Tae. “I’m sorry I’m late.” He said and kissed Tae’s temple. “Something came up.”

Yoongi looked up to Hoseok, who was uncurling his legs from his chest and wiping his face, his dark eyes full of hurt that made Yoongi feel like he sat on the official rank of parents somewhere between Hitler’s mother and the parents from Home Alone.

Hoseok got to his feet and picked up his backpack. “You’re late.” He signed with a deep frown.

“I know.” Yoongi squatted and looked at them both. “Jimin had an emergency.” He signed. “We had to take him to the hospital.”

Taehyung gasped and Hoseok’s eyebrows furrowed. “Is he okay?” Tae asked, stepping forward.

“He is.” Yoongi said. “He had a bad seizure. But, he’s okay now.”

“That’s why you were late?” Hoseok signed small. “Because, you were helping Jimin?”

Yoongi nodded and grabbed Hoseok’s hand. “I didn’t mean to be late. I’m so sorry, Seokie.”

Hoseok’s chin quivered but he nodded and stepped forward. “Scared.” He said into Yoongi’s shoulder as he collapsed into a hug, his arms wrapping around Yoongi’s neck.

Yoongi could feel Hoseok’s heart thrum through his back as he rubbed it. “I know, baby.” He said. “I’m so sorry.” He pulled away so that he could talk. “Will you forgive me?” He signed and rubbed his face.

Hoseok’s eye darted down and he nodded. “Yeah.”
Yoongi blew his hair out of his eyes and Hoseok’s heart-shaped lips turned up. “’Cause you love me?”

Hoseok nodded. “Yeah. I love you.” He signed. “You won’t be late again, right?” His eyebrows scrunched up and his smile disappeared.

Yoongi sighed, his heart hurting. “I can’t promise that.” He shook his head. “But, I can promise that we will never, ever leave you. Because you are ours.” Yoongi kissed his little cheek that was moist with salty tears. “And we are yours. Is that okay?”

Hoseok scrubbed his face. “Yeah.” He signed with a dramatic sigh. “I guess.”

Yoongi wrapped his arms around all three boys and pecked their faces until Jungkook groaned from being constrained and Taehyung was laughing so hard he was snorting. “Let’s go.” He said and stood up, pulling Jungkook up with him. “Jimin needs his older brothers.”

Two days after Jimin was admitted to the hospital, after two rounds of IV antibiotics, six meals served to him as he reclined in one of his daddy’s arms, another x-ray and a thumbs up from the doctor, Jimin was cleared to go home.

“I’m so tired.” Yoongi signed as he sat in between Jimin and Jungkook’s car seats in the middle row of the SUV, his hand wrapped around Jimin’s. Jimin had been weaned off the hospital-grade Tylenol and was starting to feel all of his bruises and sore IV sticks. His lower lip was quivering and at every bump in the road, he would groan out a little “ouch.”

Namjoon’s eyes moved forward and he rolled out his neck. He was tired too. And sore. Someone had to be at home with the other kids, as life didn’t stop when one was in the hospital. They ended up taking turns so he and Yoongi could get one night in an actual bed, instead of the roll-away the hospital provided. But, nobody slept. Not really. Well, except for maybe Jimin. He slept a lot.

He glanced into the rearview and watched as Yoongi press his lips against Jimin’s forehead. It’ll be better now that he’s home. They could get back on their routine and everything would be fine.

He pulled into the driveway and eyeballed a familiar blue Prius that sat on the curb in the front of the house. He turned around. “Did you invite your mom over?”

Yoongi perked up to glance out the window. “No.” He shook his head. “Well, I mean…” He started. “I did awhile ago. But, I assume that she would come closer to Christmas.”

“Did you tell her about Jimin?”

Yoongi stared at Namjoon, his eyes rimmed with dark circles and his pupils blown wide with exhaustion. “I…don’t remember.” He signed and rubbed his cheek with Jimin’s hand. “These last couple of days have been a blur.”

That wasn’t a lie. Namjoon sighed and rubbed his neck as he rolled into the garage. He couldn’t even remember what he had for breakfast. Or, like, how he got everyone ready and dressed. He was tired too.
Which made interacting with his mother-in-law that much more frustrating.

“Where are my grandbabies?” She demanded as she stepped out into the garage. She was tiny – Namjoon towered over her – and had dark hair with shocks of white running through them. She was nice and full of humor, but her accent made it borderline painful for Namjoon to lip-read. It was worse when he felt like he could fall asleep on command.

“Nini!” Tae yelled and jumped out of the SUV with Hoseok on his heels. She got down to give them big hugs and lots of kisses. ‘Nini’ came from ‘halmeoni,’ which she tried to teach the boys, but Hoseok was nonverbal and Tae couldn’t get his mouth around such a big word, so it was shortened. Hoseok just signed “grandma.”

“Grandma.” Jungkook had a big, wide smile over his face as he clung to her leg, his fingers running up and down her linen capri pants. Jungkook absolutely adored his Nini. And Namjoon thought – with a heavy heart – that Kookie must’ve saw his biological grandma in her. That he found what he had lost in her.

“Eomma,” Yoongi said and then launched into what Namjoon assumed was Korean, since he couldn’t lip-read him anymore. But, honestly, it could’ve been Kling-on. Namjoon wouldn’t have been none the wiser.

Namjoon turned his attention to Jimin as he delicately got him out of his car seat, trying not to jostle him too hard. Tears still rolled down his face. “I know.” Namjoon said to his son. They had dressed him in the comfiest thing they could find – Jungkook’s Cookie Monster onesie – and he sort of drowned in the blue fuzzy material, his face a round moon in the cerulean material. “I’m sorry. I don’t mean to hurt you.” Namjoon nosed his cheek. “I love you.”

“Daddy.” Jimin sniffed and reached up and touched his cheek.

“...the newest?” His mother-in-law asked, her hand around Jungkook’s as he buried his face into her leg.

“This is Jimin.” Namjoon introduced as he grabbed Jimin’s diaper bag closed the car door. “He’s blind in his right eye. But, he can hear you.”

“Hello, little one.” She patted his bottom. “Look at those chubby cheeks. You look like a little manggaetteok.”

Jimin’s head turned, but then he grimaced and stuck his tongue out. “Ouch.” He said and then smeared drool on Namjoon’s shoulder.

Namjoon’s mother-in-law’s eyes widened. “Did he just stick his tongue out at me?”

“So, he’s...retarded?”

“Nini,” Tae’s eyes widened at his grandmother as he fished out a juice box from the snack drawer of the fridge. “You can’t say that! That’s a mean word.” He admonished with a slight gasp.
Yoongi glanced down at Jimin to make sure he was still sleeping as he was bounced gently. He tried to put Jimin down in his own bed, but as soon as he crossed the threshold of his door, there was a little, upset “daddy,” that pulled him back in. Yoongi didn’t blame him. Hugs were the best medicine anyway.

“He’s right.” Yoongi said. “You can’t use that word anymore. It’s offensive.”

“Oh,” His mother’s shoulders scrunch and she held up her hands. “I’m sorry, Taehyung-ah. What should I say instead?”

Tae’s lips rolled as he deliberated it over. He shrugged. “Jimin is just Jimin.” He said simply as he scampered back to the living room.

His mother – in her usual busybody fashion – was preparing dinner for them. She complained relentlessly about the lack of ingredients in the house, but managed to whip up something anyway. That was fine with Yoongi, who was going to order the first restaurant that popped up on UberEats.

They had gotten on the subject of Jimin and his hospital stay, which segued into Jimin’s epilepsy and the cause of it. Yoongi told her Jimin’s story about the shaken baby syndrome, which was met with a headshake from his mother and a line of expletives in Korean. He told her about the head trauma and the consequences of it – the blindness, the cerebral palsy, the mental handicap. He told her that Jimin was damaged, but still perfect. That he could still be a masterpiece with rough edges.

“Cognitively disabled is a pretty widely accepted term.” Yoongi added as he buried his nose in Jimin’s hair.

Yoongi looked like his mother. He had her same angular, sharp eyes, the same gold ring around his pupil, the same nose, and the same knobbly fingers. He watched as she patted Jimin’s back with a small frown – his frown – on her face. “What?” He demanded.

“He’s just…” She shook her head. “It’s a lot.”

Yoongi’s arms tightened protectively around Jimin. “So what?” He snapped, sounding a little harsher than he meant.

She sighed. “I don’t mean like that.” She said as she stirred something in a pot. “I may not be hip to the lingo, but I know that Jimin’s fine now that he has you.” She said. “I just mean…” Her eyebrows furrowed. “I just mean, don’t forget to take care of yourself, okay? You’ll do none of your kids good if you don’t take care of yourself first.”

Yoongi sighed and averted his eyes to the hallway. Namjoon basically fell on his face into the bed. Jungkook crawled in next to him for an afternoon nap. The other boys were playing video games in the living room.

“Go get some sleep.” She patted Jimin’s back again and then started to lift him out of Yoongi’s arms. Yoongi carefully guided him until he was settled against his mother’s shoulder. Jimin was small for his age, but he was still six years old and looked incredibly big against Yoongi’s mother’s five-foot frame. “I got Jimin. My little manggaetteok.”

“You don’t have to do that.” Yoongi argued. “Once he wakes up, he’s going to be sore and need some Tylenol and then it’ll be dinnertime soon and someone has to feed him and-,”

“Go.” She said sternly, her eyes flashing. “I can handle him for an hour or two. Get some
“But, comma.”

“Yoongi-yah.” She said and angled Jimin so Yoongi couldn’t take him back. “Go sleep and get a shower. You smell like a hospital.”

Yoongi sighed, knowing he wasn’t going to win this argument. “His hips are really fragile so be careful and when he wakes up, you have to say ‘hi’ to let him know that he’s safe and if he needs a diaper change-,”

“Yoongi-yah,” She groaned. “Go.”

“Okay, okay.” Yoongi said, his hands up in a surrender position. “I’m going.” He mumbled, his arms feeling empty without a weight of a child in them.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!<33 Here or on my curious cat
Christmas (Part 1)

Chapter Notes

Hello all! Christmas is going to be a two-parter! I have a lot of fun surprises for you all!

Also, someone asked about following me on other platforms. I do have a stan twt

I generally keep my twt separate from my AO3 since I don't just write for BTS, whereas my stan twt is ONLY BTS. But, y'all can catch me there!

Also! PLEASE if you use one of my works in AO3 bingo, let me know! I would love to know if I am a part of your bingo card!

Yoongi sat on his knees, trying to remain quiet as he tried to stuff as many presents as he could underneath their tree. They got a fake tree for Jungkook’s sake, because they weren’t sure how he would manage with the smell of a real tree. And when they went to the hardware store to pick one up, Yoongi assumed a medium-sized, modest tree would be fine. One with lights already on them. He was really cursing that decision as he stacked up presents that flooded out from underneath the tree, covering the floor and the coffee table and the TV console. We should’ve gotten the biggest one. He thought as he jammed a small present amongst the branches.

He glanced up at Namjoon, who was propping up two small bicycles next to the back door, a cookie hanging from his lips. He took one for the team and nibbled on each cookie that was decorated by the kids, even though Yoongi was pretty sure Jimin drooled on his and Jungkook picked his nose before smearing a line of frosting on his with his fingertip…and then subsequently jammed his whole hand into the frosting container because he liked the sensation.

Yoongi sighed and sat back with his hands propping himself up as he surveyed the absolute mess of presents that sat underneath the tree. They really went a little ham this year, but it was Taehyung’s first Christmas with his family and Jimin’s as well. And knowing where they came from, Yoongi and Namjoon really wanted to make sure their Christmas was extra special.

*It may be Jungkook’s last with them.*

His eyebrows furrowed as that thought ran through his head. He glanced outside at their dark backyard, at the sky. They lived in Altadena, which allowed for some stars to pierce past the light pollution of Los Angeles. He stared at them, trying to find Santa flying his sleigh. Trying to find a star to put his hope for a Christmas miracle on. They hadn’t gotten any calls from Seokjin about Jungkook’s mother after she didn’t show up for his last visit. But, that didn’t mean that she didn’t want him. Or was planning on not taking him back.

But, if Yoongi had one Christmas wish, it would be that they would get a call from Seokjin saying that Jungkook’s mom had signed over rights. That he was free. That he could be theirs. Because he was theirs.
There was a movement that caught Yoongi’s attention and he looked up to some fake mistletoe – because actual mistletoe was poisonous – and then at his husband who was grinning at him with his dimply smile, blue frosting smeared on his upper lip.

“Why are you so cheesy?” Yoongi groaned as Namjoon took a seat next to him on the middle of the living room floor. Yoongi wiped his face for him and then kissed him with his hand cupping his cheek, warm fondness flooding his chest.

“You gotta be a little extra on Christmas.” Namjoon said and then pecked Yoongi’s nose.

Yoongi sighed and glanced at the cable box clock. It was 11:56. “It’s not Christmas yet.” He signed to his husband.

“Oh, that changes everything then.” Namjoon said and shifted away with a playful smile. He moved his eyes to the Christmas tree. “Too bad we can’t fit the house underneath the tree.” His eyes flicked back to Yoongi.

Yoongi laid on his back on the floor. “I couldn’t find any house-sized bows either.”

“Darn.” Namjoon giggled and they both stared at the lights of the Christmas tree.

Their biggest present – to Namjoon’s absolute glee – was their new house they actually got the keys for the last week. Yoongi sucked in a breath. It didn’t come without some blood, sweat, and tears. He was glad that Halsey’s studio was pretty understanding over the fact that Yoongi couldn’t work on the project while Jimin was in the hospital. And they seemed pretty happy with the final product. Ashley even sent him a text of just emojis that included a lot of hearts and knives and skulls. Yoongi honestly didn’t know what she meant, but he guessed if it was bad, he would’ve heard something.

“They’re going to have a good Christmas, right?” Namjoon asked, his voice tinged with incredulity.

Yoongi sat back up and then looked around at basically the entire toy aisle of Target wrapped in Christmas-themed Disney wrapping paper. At the two bikes for Hoseok and Taehyung and the big wheel for Jungkook. They looked for something for Jimin, but the age-appropriate adaptive vehicles were a little too large for him. And there was going to be an expo for medical equipment in the city that next month. They decided to go with Jimin and find something that was good for him so he could play outside with his brothers.

Yoongi looked back to husband. “If I got this many presents on Christmas, I would shit my pants.” He answered.

“No,” Namjoon said and raked his fingers through his hair. “I know they’ll like the presents. But, Christmas is about more than that, you know? It’s family and love…” His eyebrows furrowed. “When I was a kid, I would watch, like, the Christmas Story and It’s A Wonderful Life thinking that that’s how Christmas should be. But, they never lived up to the expectation.” His shoulders slumped and he dropped his hands.

Yoongi shifted so that he could press his cheek against Namjoon’s shoulder. He ran his palm against his olive skin and sighed. “It’s gonna be perfect.” He said and stared into Namjoon’s eyes.

Namjoon smiled and moved to wrap his arm around Yoongi’s shoulders. He used his other hand to cup Yoongi’s face. “I love you.” He breathed, his warm eyes twinkling with the lights. “I’m glad I get to spend the rest of my Christmases with you.”
Yoongi squeezed his eyes shut and pressed his face into Namjoon’s chest.

“What?” Namjoon asked.

“You’re so cheesy.” Yoongi pulled away to sign at him, a big smile over his face. “But, I love it.” He kissed him. “And I love you.”

“Daddy.”

“Daddy. Daddy.”

“Daddy.”

Feeling more like an indigenous drum than a human, Yoongi cracked open his eyes to Taehyung and Hoseok – their hair a mess, wearing their matching Christmas onesies that Yoongi got just to watch Namjoon squeal and blush – and their little hand pats on his shoulder and side.

Hoseok was just beaming, rivaling the sun itself and Taehyung’s full cheeks were blushed with excitement. “Daddy, it’s Christmas! Santa brought us so many presents!”

Yoongi elbowed Namjoon awake and then propped himself up. “Yeah? Did you go out and see?”

Taehyung threw his hands up in the air. “Yes! So many! And a bike!”

“Same!” Hoseok signed. “I got a bike too.”

“You didn’t open any, right?” Yoongi sat all the way up.

“No,” Taehyung shook his head. “I wanted to wait for Jimin and Kookie.”

“Same.” Hoseok signed.

"Good." Yoongi glanced at the baby monitor. “You want to get Jimin up?”

“Okay!” Tae said.

“Gently!” Yoongi said. “Don’t scare him.”

“Okay!” They both ran from the bedroom, a pitter-patter of bare feet on their floor echoing through the house.

Yoongi sighed and turned to Namjoon, who had propped himself up on his elbow. “Good morning.” He signed.

“Good morning.” Namjoon signed back, a smile growing over his face.

“Merry Christmas.” Yoongi signed.

“Merry Christmas.” Namjoon said. He tied his arms around Yoongi’s waist and dragged him back into bed and dotted kisses all over his face. “You want to get Kookie and I got Jimin?”
“I’ll get the eddys ready.” Yoongi put his hand in.

“And I’ll grab the stockings.” Namjoon put his hand over Yoongi’s.

“Break.”

They both rolled out of bed and crossed the hallway to the babies’ room. Kookie was already up, playing in his toy box on his knees. Taehyung and Hoseok were tickling Jimin, coaxing big laughs and squirms out of their little brother, his eyes crescents above his cheeks.

Namjoon breezed into the room and scooped up Jimin, dipping him and giving him a big kiss. “Good morning, Chim.” He said. “Merry Christmas.”

“Hi. Kiss!” Jimin blew him a kiss as he was laid on the changing table. “Daddy!”

“Boys,” Yoongi waved to get their attention. “Go to the living room, okay? We’ll be right out.”

They chased each other out of the room and Jungkook got to his feet and started to toddle off after them, his nose scrunching. Yoongi intercepted him. “You need to go potty, Kookie?”

Kookie’s eyebrows furrowed and he averted his eyes to the floor.

“Let’s go potty.” Yoongi said with a little push. “Come on. And then we get to open presents!”

After potty, a production line of chocolate milk making, and Jimin settled into his floor sitter, the house was ready for presents. Not a moment too soon, since both the older boys were already sitting amongst the mess, picking out which present they were going to open first.

Namjoon sat down on the floor with them and Jungkook climbed into his lap so he could touch the string lights on the Christmas tree. “Dad,” He signed. “Red.”

“Good job, Kookie.” He pointed to another light. “What’s this one?”

He didn’t answer, instead his jaw popped open and he played with the bulbs. Namjoon was glad they got LED so they wouldn’t get hot.

“One present at a time.” Yoongi signed as he sat down next to Jimin’s floor sitting. “I don’t want you tearing into them all at once, okay? And those ones wrapped in green are from Nini.”

“Okay, Yoongi.” Namjoon interrupted. “Let them open presents.”

They started hunting amongst the pile. “This one is for Jimin.” Hoseok picked up a teddy bear with a ribbon around its neck. He placed it on Jimin’s lap and Jimin beamed a big smile and hugged the teddy. He handed a present to Taehyung and Kookie and then pulled a big present onto his own lap.

None of Yoongi’s rules were heeded as the kids exploded in an atom bomb of wrapping paper and ribbons and gleeful noises from Hoseok and big wows from Taehyung.
Namjoon helped Kookie open his presents, who winced a little every time the paper was torn and stilled with his fingers next to his ears. Namjoon took over opening for him by lifting up all the tape and sliding the gifts out. That seemed to work better and he immediately took to a toy piano that Yoongi got him.

Yoongi helped Jimin, but still got him to grip the paper and rip it. Jimin crammed a bow into his mouth and then Yoongi had to coax it back out. His favorite seemed to be the teddy bear, however, as he kept rubbing his face on the soft material.

Hoseok beamed his gigantic smile as he pulled presents out of their paper. Taehyung had pressed a bow to his dark hair and he laughed as he clutched a big Captain America action figure to his chest.

Taehyung was taking his time with each present. He opened them extremely slowly, folding the paper back methodically, like he was savoring each second. When he finally revealed what was inside, he would beam and examine the packaging. All of the packaging. And then he would gently set it down. He was three presents in when Hoseok was done opening all the ones for him and started helping Jimin open his. He was three presents in when his smile faded from his face and he burst into tears, a Lego set on his lap.

Namjoon jerked to comfort him, but he had Jungkook on his lap. Instead Yoongi scooched forward, looking like a dog who had an itch on his butt and scooped Tae up. “Baby,” Yoongi said. “What’s wrong?”

Tae shook his head and pressed his face into Yoongi’s shoulder. Yoongi was talking, but Namjoon couldn’t see if Tae was talking back.

“What’s wrong?” Namjoon signed. Hoseok had turned too and was rubbed Taehyung’s shoulder.

“Baby,” Yoongi said, ignoring Namjoon. “Santa didn’t bring you all of these because you’re adopted now. He brought them because you were a good boy this year.”

“Wait,” Tae had pulled away, his full lips pouting and his face red. “Was I a bad boy last year?” He asked, horrified.

“No, baby. No.” Yoongi said and patted his back. “Santa...just didn’t have enough presents for all the other kids. So, everyone only got a couple. But, he has plenty now, so he’s making up for all of the years where you only got one or two presents.”

Tae coughed a little and breathed as he got himself together. “Yeah?” He asked.

“Your presents have nothing to do with you being a foster or not. Okay?” Yoongi petted his hair down.

Taehyung sniffled. “I was scared...” He said. “For all the other fosters. I was worried they only got one present while I have like...a million.” He wiped his face and crawled off of Yoongi’s lap to sit next to Jimin. “Last year I only got a kite.”

Hoseok scooched forward to pat Taehyung’s shoulder. “One Christmas, I didn’t get any presents.” He signed. “My mom was asleep the whole day.”

“You didn’t get any presents?” Tae asked.

Hoseok shook his head and shrugged. “I couldn’t get her to wake up. She did that a lot.” He
said his eyes turning down. “She would be up for a lot of days even during sleeping hours and then sleep for a lot of days.” He shrugged again. "I guess she forgot to put my letter to Santa in the mail."

“Oh.” Tae got to his feet. “I broke my kite, but you can have my arrowhead.”

“Boys,” Namjoon intervened. “It’s okay. Santa has brought a lot of presents. Let’s get them open, okay?” He turned to Tae. “You want to help Kookie open some of his presents? He doesn’t like the way the paper sounds.”

Tae did just that, now thoroughly distracted – even though he still had a pile of his own presents to open still. Namjoon sighed and rubbed his back as he showed Kookie how to work a light board toy.

He spent one Christmas when he was eight or nine watching as the biological children of his foster parents opened Razor scooters. He then watched them play on the Razor scooters as he sat on the porch. The parents’ excuse for not getting him one was because he’d have to take it with him when he left and it would be heavy.

He spent another Christmas helping out at a homeless shelter. And that wouldn’t have been so bad. He liked helping people. But, he was on dishwasher duty and spent the whole day washing dishes.

He made a friend one year. And they made each other bracelets as presents. His friend also got adopted for Christmas. Namjoon got a soccer ball.

Namjoon knew what Taehyung was feeling. He knew it so well, that felt like wounds being lanced open on his soul. He just wished that he could pierce past the idea that Taehyung was anything less than absolutely priceless and show him that he was precious.

Precious.

Yoongi cradled Jimin and Jimin’s new teddy on the couch, which Jimin kept saying “ba,” when he patted him. Yoongi wasn’t sure if that was an attempt at the word “bear,” or just verbalizing. But, Jimin kept repeating “bababa,” as he choked the life out of his new stuffed animal.

Namjoon sat down next to him with Jungkook in his arms and one of the new kid-tablets in his hand. All the kids except for Jimin had crashed shortly after breakfast. Hoseok and Taehyung were tangled around each other as they laid on the floor amongst the mess of paper and plastic bubble packaging and toys. Hoseok had one hand wrapped around his new Care Bear and Tae’s foot was resting on his new bike’s frame. They had both put on their matching Iron Man and Captain America sweaters over their pajamas.

“What should our password be?” Namjoon asked as he shifted Jungkook and poked at the tablet. “And how many hours are we limiting?”

“Two.” Yoongi signed. “Two’s enough. You know how Tae gets with video games.”

“Password?”

“Bababa.” Jimin babbled and then blew a spit bubble as he held his teddy.
Yoongi smiled as he watched Jimin enjoy himself. “We can just combine all of their names? Taekookminsoek.”

Namjoon giggled. “We have enough to start a soccer team.”

Yoongi giggled too. “Enough for a music group.”

Namjoon reached over and ruffled Jimin’s hair. Jimin turned towards the sensation and smiled. “Well, Paul says that Jimin likes to dance. He could be the main dancer. Huh, Chim?”

“Chim.” He repeated and held out his hand.

Namjoon giggled and then turned and pulled a box off the floor. He handed it to Yoongi. “Merry Christmas.” He said.

Yoongi propped Jimin up and took the box, a surprised look on his face. “I thought we agreed that we weren’t getting anything for each other so we could focus on the kids?”

Namjoon shrugged and both of his dimples popped out in a wide smile. He shifted Jungkook so he could turn on the couch. “It’s not just a Christmas present.”

Yoongi tore into the paper and opened the box. Inside was a frame and a photo of a candid shot of all of the kids. Taehyung was on his tip-toes playing with Jimin in his chair and Hoseok was doing this lazy pirouette and Jungkook had his eyes on a toy. He looked up to Namjoon. “When was this picture taken?”

Namjoon shrugged. “I think one Tuesday evening after going to that taco place down the street. I thought it would be good for your desk in your studio.”


“‘There’s more.” Namjoon said.

Yoongi put the picture down and looked in the box. He pulled out papers from their family lawyer. “Jimin’s adoption papers.” He smiled and looked up.

“We’re not on the docket yet.” Namjoon signed. “But, the paperwork has been started.”

“I’m so excited.” Yoongi said and kissed Jimin’s cheek. “You’re going to ours, buddy.” He said. “We have the paperwork to prove it.”

“Bababa.” Jimin just said back and then gripped on his bear’s ear.

“There’s one other thing.” Namjoon said.

Yoongi fished out another piece of paper – an envelope actually. It was still open and had a window like it was return envelope for a bill or something. Yoongi glanced inside and pulled out a lined piece of paper. “What is this?”

Namjoon sucked in a breath. “You have to read it.”

Yoongi opened it up.
To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Sara Ramirez, formerly Seoyeon Jeon. I am the mother of Jungkook Jeon. I was contacted by Beacon Agency almost a month ago regarding my son, who I had left in care of my mother when he was an infant.

I had just turned 17 when I found out I was pregnant. The father wanted me to get an abortion. The father’s mother wanted me to get an abortion. I even wanted to get an abortion. I asked my mother, but she refused to make the appointment for me. I told her I didn’t want to have a child. I was in high school. I wanted to be a high schooler. I wanted to join the color guard and pass chemistry. I just wanted to run from my mistake and never look back.

But, she wouldn’t let me do that. She said that actions had consequences. She said that I needed to be responsible.

Five days after bringing Jungkook home, I snuck out in the middle of the night and ran away. My mother forced me to have the child, but she couldn’t force me to take care of him. I left with my boyfriend to a different state. I ran from my mistake.

I then got married at 18. That was a mistake.

My life felt like a series of horrible decisions and mistakes. And I couldn’t face them. I just kept running away from them. I ran from Jungkook. I ran from my first husband. I just kept running.

When I got the call from the agency, I felt like it was a second chance for me and him. That I could turn around and close the gap between us. That I could start fresh.

But, he didn’t know me. I was a stranger. The first meeting I watched him play with a toy. He didn’t even look at me. I tried to play with him and I ended up making him upset.

And I realized – it didn’t matter if I had a second chance or a million. I ruined them all when I ran from him the first time.

So, to conclude this long letter, I am signing over parental rights to Jungkook. I am running away from him. Again. His foster case manager said that his current foster family was interested in adopting him. I heard that he had brothers. I heard that he would be loved. So, even though I’m running away again, I feel ok about it this time around. I feel like this was the best decision for him.

I would be open to maintaining contact with him – pictures, watching him grow, etc – if his adoptive parents were ok with that.

And if they’re reading this as well, I just want to let you know that I’m glad my mistake became your blessing. Please take care of Jungkook.

Merry Christmas,

Sara Ramirez
Chapter End Notes

Please comment or you can catch me on my curious cat! <33
Christmas (Part 2)

Chapter Notes

Just as a warning, my chapters are going to come a little bit slower than my normal update every day routine. I joined a health initiative at work (sarcastic yay) and have committed to working out in the morning when I usually spend my mornings drinking coffee and writing this heap of soft namgi family with their soft kids. I'm not going to stop writing it, but the chapters will probably come every couple of days instead of everyday. Thanks for understanding!

Anyway, for this chapter I give you a literal can of marshmallow fluff! <3

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Yoongi looked up to Namjoon, his head spinning a little. *I am signing over parental rights to Jungkook.* The words bounced in his head like bingo balls, ricocheting around the edge of his skulls. His heart beat picked up speed as he had to focus his whole energy on those words. *I am signing over parent rights to Jungkook.*

Jungkook’s mother is giving them up. She’s leaving. He could be theirs. Jungkook could be theirs.

He whipped his head up to Namjoon. “Jungkook-,” He started, but stopped as he watched a second set of preliminary adoption papers appear in front of him. He dropped the letter in his hand – on top of Jimin’s head – and picked up the papers. He scanned for the name, finding it with his fingertip. Jeon, Jungkook.

“Merry Christmas,” Namjoon said and pressed his lips to Yoongi’s temple.

“How?” Yoongi demanded as he motioned to the papers. “I…h-how…how?” He garbled, unable to form a coherent sentence over the excitement building in veins. He felt like an over-carbonated can of beer or soda that was about to burst at any second.

“Well,” Namjoon started. “Seokjin emailed me yesterday morning at nine, saying that Jungkook’s mom stopped by the office. I went down there at ten to get the letter and then went down to the lawyer’s office at ten-fifteen asking to file for his adoption and expedite the paperwork so that I could give you a copy today.” Namjoon smiled cheekily. “They were not very happy, but,” He shrugged. “It’s pretty unnerving watching a grown, deaf man cry in your office.”

“You did not cry.” Yoongi’s eyes widened.

“Oh,” Namjoon nodded. “I was bawling like a baby. It was ugly.”

“Oh my God.” He looked down at the adoption papers, the realization seeping deep, deep into his bones. It was like he could breathe. It was like he had been slowly suffocating these last months and he finally was able to take a breath. Their family was complete. Their family was complete.

He, unsurprisingly, broke down.
“Alright,” Namjoon said and massaged Yoongi’s scalp. “I know. It’s a lot.”

“I just thought this day would never happen.” Yoongi signed, his fingers shaking with excitement.


Yoongi did through a haze of tears. He looked at the Christmas fallout that covered the floor. He looked at Hoseok clutching his toys and Taehyung’s long, long legs sprawled in every direction. He looked at Jimin, who was biting on his bear’s ear and then finally Jungkook, who had both Namjoon’s t-shirt in both fists as he slept hard.

Their family. Their perfect family.

“We have another present for you guys,” Namjoon said as he shook the two elder boys awake.

Hoseok squinted at him. “What?” He just signed lazily as he yawned and stuffed the back of his hand into his eye socket.

“Another present.” Namjoon signed as he squatted. They had picked up the Christmas mess and Jimin was in the back getting Jimin changed and his teeth brushed. Jungkook was rocking on the couch, his teeth already brushed. “It was too big to fit underneath the tree. We have to take you to it.”

Both boys sat up, confusion twisting up their little faces.

“Come on.” Namjoon prompted, hoisting up Hoseok by his armpits. Tae got to his feet.

“What about our clothes?” Tae asked.

“PJs are fine.” Namjoon said. “Just go get your teeth brushed and your hearing aids and shoes on and we will go.”

The boys changed and Namjoon got himself changed too. Jungkook was up on his feet, pulling off Christmas bulbs from the tree and throwing them on the floor, a big smile over his face. They bought all new plastic, shatterproof bulbs at the hardware store when they picked up the tree and Namjoon watched him for a second.

“Jungkookie,” Namjoon said. “You just like making messes, don’t you?”

Jungkook hopped around like a bunny for a second in his pajamas and then pulled off another bulb and threw that on floor. He then squatted and started arranging the bulbs by color. Namjoon giggled over the fact that he had just opened a bunch of toys and was having more fun tearing apart the Christmas tree.

The boys emerged – hearing aids and Tae’s glasses on - and so did Yoongi with Jimin, who was still holding his bear like his life depended on it.

“He really likes that bear.” Namjoon said.
“Excuse you,” Yoongi signed with one hand. “His name is Mr. Ba.”

“Ba?” Namjoon said kissed Jimin’s forehead. “Is that Mr. Ba, Jimin?”

Jimin didn’t answer. He just pressed his cheek against Mr. Ba. Namjoon watched his face grimace on one side and his arm start to shake with a little seizure.

“Baby,” Namjoon’s eyebrows furrowed and rubbed Jimin’s shoulder.

“He was doing that while I was getting his teeth brushed too.” Yoongi signed with a frown. “I think he might be overtired. You’ve had a big day and it’s not even eleven yet.” Yoongi combed his bangs back as he spoke to him gently.

“We’ll make the trip quick.”

“He’ll probably fall asleep in the car too.”

They got everyone loaded up in the SUV and Namjoon drove the fifteen minutes across town to their new house. Namjoon was right – Jimin did fall asleep in the car. He clutched Mr. Ba to his chest and beads of drool dripped off of his chin and hit his pajama shirt.

They pulled into their new driveway and Namjoon parked the SUV right in front of the garage.

“Where are we?” Tae asked as he hopped out of the car.

“Your guys’ Christmas present.” Namjoon said as he pulled Jimin and Mr. Ba out of the car. He didn’t bother with his wheelchair. He expected that they wouldn’t be here for terribly long. Just to get a good look...maybe pick out rooms.

Tae spun around. “Where?” He asked.

“This is your Christmas present.” Namjoon said as he adjusted Mr. Ba. “The house.”

Both Tae and Hoseok looked confused. “Daddy,” Hoseok said. “Are you getting rid of us?”

“You’re not getting rid of us, right?” Tae’s lower lip pouted out.

Namjoon stopped to compute that for a moment. Why would they think that they were getting rid of them?

“No, boys.” Yoongi said as he led Jungkook around the car. “We’re all going to live here.” He signed and said. “All six of us.”

Hoseok’s face rolled into an ‘o.’ “It’s our new house.” He signed.

“New house?” Tae asked, his eyes widening.

“Yeah!” Namjoon said excitedly, trying to get them hyped. “You want to see inside? Pick out your guys’ room?”

“Yeah!” Tae exclaimed, throwing his hands up.

“Can Tae and I stay in the same room?” Hoseok asked.

“Yep.” Namjoon said. “And Jimin and Jungkook get their own rooms.” He said as he
followed Yoongi and Jungkook up to the front door. “We’re going to put a bunch of sensory stuff in Jungkook’s room and put some mobility stuff in Jimin’s room.”

“That’s so cool.” Tae signed.

They let them into the house. It was empty still – minus a bottle of champagne and two paper cups in the fridge from when Yoongi and him celebrated with a glass of bubbly after closing and getting the keys.

“It’s so big!” Hoseok signed.

“Go explore.” Namjoon prompted and the two ran down the hallway towards the bedrooms.

Namjoon turned to Jimin, who was still attempting to sleep open-mouthed with Mr. Ba in his arms and his cheek pressed against Namjoon’s shoulder. Namjoon kissed his forehead, heat flooding his veins. In a couple of weeks, they would go in front of a judge and claim Jimin forever.

Jimin jumped suddenly like he was startled and his eyelids snapped open, his eyes that were always looking at the ceiling scanning as his lower lip pouted.

Namjoon looked up to see Yoongi squatting next to Jungkook, his hand on his back. “Everything okay?”


“Screamed?”

“To hear the echo, I think.”

“Does he do that, like,” Namjoon said as he stroked Jimin’s cheek. “A lot?”

Yoongi shrugged. “He verbalizes sometimes. But, this is the first time he’s screamed.”

Jungkook turned around, balled his fists and opened his mouth.

“Baby,” Yoongi said as he squatted, wincing. “Shhh. You don’t have to scream. We already have Hoseok. He screams enough for all of us.”

Jungkook just started skipping around the empty living room, his long dark mop flopping in his face. He turned hollered again and then burst into giggles, his arms flapping. Namjoon watched him have fun. “He’s so happy, he’s exploding with it.” Namjoon said.

“Well,” Yoongi said and straightened. “It’s a good day be exploding with happiness.”

Yoongi rubbed Jimin’s back and then put his hands over his own face in Jimin’s favorite game to distract him from being startled. “Peek-a-boo.” He said and uncovered his face.

Jimin smiled a little and put his bear over his face. “Boo!” He said and ripped Mr. Ba away.

Yoongi winced again, his shoulders tightening and looked down at Jungkook. “I’m going to bang on the piano.” He said and grabbed Jungkook’s shoulder. “Maybe redirect this energy into something.” He winced as Jungkook yelled. “quieter.”
Namjoon sat on the piano bench facing the wrong way with Jimin nestled in his arms. Jimin had fallen back asleep to the music and Namjoon just rocked him slowly as he watched Jungkook’s little fingers chase after Yoongi’s as they played together.

Namjoon couldn’t really appreciate piano music to its fullest since he couldn’t hear it. But, he loved watching Yoongi play – a small line forming between his eyes as he concentrated and his lips pursing out and his shoulder completely relaxing as he got lost in the melody. He loved watching Yoongi do the things that he loved because of he could see the quiet passion in his eyes. He could feel the blue fire in his heart, radiating off of him in waves.

Namjoon looked at his whole life as it was strewn across the surface of their coffee table. Financial records and tax return statements. His transcripts from college. His job paystubs. Letters from peers and supervisors. All mixed with Yoongi’s as they got the paperwork ready to submit to the foster agency. Once that was approved, they would submit to a home-study to evaluate their house and living situation. And then once they completed all the necessary classes, they would be certified to foster.

Namjoon couldn’t wait.

“Age range?” Yoongi asked as he folded his pale, thin legs underneath his butt as they sat on their living room floor. He was filling out a tome-thick stack of paperwork that asked questions from if they had any history of substance abuse to their parents’ citizenship status.

In the stack was a sheet of preferences for what kind of children they would take in. Obviously, the agency would contact them beforehand to make sure they would be compatible. But, having their preferences on file would make it easier for the agency to match.

Namjoon shrugged. “I don’t really care.”

“Boys older than fifteen can be hard to handle.” Yoongi signed as he scanned the page. “Girls older than fifteen can be hard to handle.”

“There’s a lot of teenagers in foster care, though.” Namjoon argued and picked up his container of Chinese takeout.

“Let’s just start with smaller kids.” Yoongi said, circling from infants to seven. “And we can potentially work up to teenagers.”

“Okay,” Namjoon nodded. Since Yoongi was still...apprehensive about the foster care thing, Namjoon was letting him set his own limits and take everything at his own pace. And while he seemed eager to get the certification, questions would arise that would make self-doubt cloud Yoongi’s dark eyes.

“Disabilities?” Yoongi signed. “It just says ‘yes’ or ‘no.’”

“I would want to take in deaf kids.” Namjoon said. “So, yes?”

Yoongi looked up. “But, there are more disabilities out there than just deafness, Namjoon.” Yoongi said. “What if they tried to place...” He shrugged. “I don’t know, the bubble boy with us or something?”

“Then we will take him in and love him exactly the same as any other child.” Namjoon signed gently. Yoongi’s eyes just averted downward and his lips rolled into a lopsided pout.

Namjoon picked up his hand that was holding the ballpoint pen. Yoongi looked back up at him. “You have to have more faith in yourself, Yoongi.” He said. “You’re going to be an amazing
father.”

“I…” Yoongi started to sign. His shoulders fell. “I just… I don’t ever want to hurt a child. That’s just all I can think about.” His eyes fell again. “What if my best isn’t good enough?”

Namjoon stroked his fingers down Yoongi’s cheek and he tipped his chin up. “Your best,” He said out loud. “Is more than some kids ever had, Yoon.”

“We’re running out of Christmas songs.” Yoongi said with a little smile, bringing Namjoon out of his memories.

“I don’t mind.” Namjoon said and adjusted Jimin. “I love them all.”

Yoongi made a face at him as his hands moved over the ivories. “You’re so full of it.”

Tae and Hoseok padded into the room and Namjoon waved at them from the piano. “Did you guys pick out your room?”

“Yeah!” Tae said. “It’s got a bench in front of the window!”

“That’s cool!” Namjoon signed. “You guys like the house?”

“We have a pool!” Hoseok signed. “And a slide!”

“It’s so big too.” Tae nodded. “Like a mansion!”

“Or a castle.” Hoseok signed back.

“Or Avengers Tower!”

“I’m glad you guys like it.” Namjoon smiled, tears stinging his eyes. All he’s ever wanted was to give his children the childhood he never had. He dreamt about it. He fantasized what that would feel like. Like a million balloons in his chest. Like he was floating amongst the clouds. Like he was hanging off the edge of heaven.

And he realized, in that second, how much better than his dreams it was.

“Am I early?”

Namjoon looked at Seokjin in their doorway, dressed in an ugly Christmas sweater and jeans. He had a couple of presents stacked in one hand and a dish in the other – even though Namjoon explicitly told him not to bring anything.

“No, no.” Namjoon moved out of the way to let their case manager in. “You’re right on time. We’re playing Uno!”

“Oh, really?” Seokjin asked as he stepped in and handed over the tupperware container. “Who is winning?”

“Jimin is.” Namjoon grinned and accepted the dish. It looked like the green bean casserole he made for Thanksgiving. “Oh, you brought Jungkook’s favorite.”
Seokjin smiled. He was an extremely handsome fellow. Like, Namjoon thought he could go into entertainment or something. “I remembered how much Jungkook loved it.” He said. “So, I made some just for him.”

“That’s so nice of you.” Namjoon said. “I know he’ll appreciate it. I’m not sure what else he is going to eat of Yoongi’s Christmas meal.” Although, he knew that Yoongi was baking up some chicken nuggets and cutting some cucumbers just for him.

Seokjin nodded. “Last time, he thanked me by punching me.”

Namjoon winced. “Well, he has his own way of showing-;”

“I know,” Seokjin giggled. “You should get him into a class or something. His punches have power to them.”

“I’ll suggest that to Yoongi.” Namjoon laughed. “I can see Kookie doing taekwondo or krav maga.”

Yoongi came around the corner, flour dusted on his shirt. He smiled when he was Seokjin. “Hey, Jin. Merry Christmas.”

“Merry Christmas.” He said back. “I got some presents for the kiddos.” He handed the stack over to Namjoon. “And I got one for the parents too.” He handed an enveloped card with Namjoon & Yoongi written in neat handwriting on the backside.

“You didn’t have to get us anything, Jin.” Namjoon said as he took the card, touched. “You’ve already done so much for our family.”

He waved Namjoon off. “It’s not a big deal.” He said. “And it’s more of a thank you for being the only family that thinks of the case manager during the holidays.” He smiled jokingly.

“I have a surprise for you too.” Namjoon said and led him into the living room.

Tae and Hoseok were bickering as they sat with Jimin on the floor – probably over who had Uno first – their hands going fast as they signed to each other. Every time Tae cut Hoseok off in sign, Hoseok’s apple cheeks would flush and he would sign “no, look at me.” Jungkook was laying on his back, half underneath the Christmas tree as he played with the string lights and Jimin had an Uno card in his mouth and his other arm around Mr. Ba as he sat in his floor sitter.

Namjoon scooped up the paperwork that he surprised Yoongi with that morning. He handed it to Jin – the only other person who would appreciate its importance.

Seokjin glanced over Jungkook’s first and then smiled. “You filed.” He said as he sunk down on the couch. “I’m so happy for him.”

Namjoon took a seat next to him. “We are too.” He said.

Seokjin shook his head. “Poor guy.” He breathed. “He was so confused when I picked him up from daycare instead of his grandmother. He knew something was wrong and I just didn’t have the heart to tell him his grandma passed, you know?”

Namjoon looked at Jungkook as he gripped the light cord and pulled it off the branch. “He’s more observant than people give him credit for.”

Seokjin nodded. “I’m glad he found you guys first.” He said. “Autistic kids don’t always get
the support they need when they’re fosters and trying to navigate grief and confusion and then also their own challenges.” He sighed. “It doesn’t always end well.”

Namjoon nodded and then motioned to the papers. “There’s one more.”

Seokjin flipped to the other stack of papers. His large lips pursed out into a surprised ‘o.’ “You’re adopting Jimin?” He asked a turned, a big smile over his face.

“Yes,” Namjoon smiled back. “It’s a decision we came to awhile ago. But, we were just waiting for the perfect time.”

“That’s amazing.” Seokjin said as he teared up a bit. He banished the tears with the pads of his thumbs.

“Well, don’t cry.”

“I’m not crying for him.” Seokjin joked. “I’m crying for myself! Jimin was my toughest case.” He sniffled a little. “Okay, and I’m crying for him too.”

Namjoon giggled and picked up the tissue box from the coffee table and let Seokjin take a few.

“I didn’t have Jimin’s case from the beginning. I got him when he was around three after his original manager retired.” Seokjin said as he wiped tears from his eyes. “I was new and they were giving me all the cases that nobody wanted, y’know? And I remember meeting him for the first time and just…” He sighed. “And I just saw his wonderful personality and his bubbliness and I thought ‘who wouldn’t want you?’” His eyes flicked to Namjoon. “But, everyone just sees the list of responsibilities that Jimin comes with and they never give him a chance.”

Namjoon watched Jimin as he held out his moist, warped card to his arguing brothers. He babbled with a small furrow between his eyebrows, like he was trying to mediate their fight. Nobody ever gave him a chance. Hell, Namjoon almost didn’t give him a chance in the beginning. But, he was glad he did. He was glad that Yoongi fell so deep in love with him from his first words that he took him home right then. Because, Jimin belonged with them. He always belonged with them.

Seokjin looked at his hands and then back up to Namjoon. “He’s been in twenty-six houses before he found you guys.”

“Wow.” Namjoon breathed, shocked. “Really?”

Seokjin nodded and rubbed his face. “Really. And some were great, but couldn’t take him long term.” He winced. “Some weren’t so great, because they didn’t want to learn for him.” He rubbed his knees. “But, I’m glad he found you guys. Or well,” He shrugged and smiled. “Yoongi found him in my office. It was fate.”

Namjoon smiled at his whole family. His whole family on their first Christmas. At everything it took to get them here. Right here. A meth lab bust. A home-inspection gone wrong. Twenty-six previous homes and even a loved one passing away. Everything that happened happened for a reason. And that reason was the fire that Namjoon could feel coursing through his veins. That reason was the loved that folded over them, swirled around them. “Not fate.” He shook his head. “Destiny.”

Chapter End Notes
Please comment or catch me on my curious cat
Chapter Notes

I was sitting in my office with my sugar gliders typing this chapter when Hobi (one of my sugar gliders) jumped on my computer and somehow exited out of my word doc without saving?? So, sorry this is a bit late as I had to rewrite the last part.

Also, someone mentioned the last chapter about including more Taehyungie! I actually have a very, very special chapter for him planned (in a good way) in a couple of chapters. So, hold on for that. In the meantime, I give you Jungkookie being a cute bean.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

After Christmas ended, packing began.

And it went pretty well – given that both Yoongi and Namjoon couldn’t really focus on one task for too long at any given time with four kids. They got most of the house packed up in about two days, boxes and boxes lining the walls with STUDIO or BIG BOY TOYS or DISHES – FRAGILE written on the side in black Sharpie.

He left the babies’ room for the actual moving day, since Jimin couldn’t sleep in a bed without rails. Yoongi started early – right after they got both of them up and changed and fed. So, everything would be ready when the movers arrived with the truck.

“Moving day!” Namjoon sang way off key as he half-jogged through the house, dressed comfortably in sweats and a baggy t-shirt. Yoongi smiled as he stood at the babies’ closet and pulled articles off the rod and packed them in a box labeled BB’S CLOSET. Namjoon was excited. Very excited. And while Yoongi was excited to get into their new house, he was not excited over the prospect of unpacking everything he just spent two days packing.

Jimin sat in his floor sitter so Yoongi can keep an eye on him, playing with Mr. Ba and his silky that Yoongi thought was lost, but actually was just caught between the bed and the wall and was discovered when his furniture was moved.

“Daddy,” Tae poked his way into their room.

“Yes, baby?” Yoongi said and signed at the same time.

“Um,” He started, his eyes turning down and then back up. “Do I have to pack my pillows?”

Yoongi shook his head. “No, you can just take those with you in the SUV.”

“Okay.” Tae started to turn.

“Wait,” Yoongi shook his hand. “Have you seen Jungkook?”

“He’s in our closet.” Tae said.

“Closet?” Yoongi put down the jacket he was folding, concern flashing through him.
Jungkook isolated himself when he was feeling overwhelmed. But, usually it was a blanket thrown over his head or sometimes he would just sit between Hoseok’s bed and the wall. The closet was new. “Is he okay?”

Tae shrugged. “He was playing a game on the tablet.”

Yoongi walked down the hall anyway to check on him. Jungkook never really had too much of a problem with changes in the routine. He was pretty go with the flow in that regard. But, moving was complete upheaval. It was change in the permanent, profound sense. That was a little different than having to take a detour around a construction zone or something minor like that.

He found Jungkook sitting in Tae and Hoseok’s empty closet in the corner, his face pressed against a towel that was still semi-folded up, which meant he took it out of the linen closet and the iPad laying in his lap. Yoongi could hear Ariana Grande play from the tablet. He was rocking.

“Kookie,” Yoongi said and squatted. “You doing okay, buddy?”

His eyes flicked up before they turned down to his tablet. His eyebrows furrowed a little.

“Do you want a snack or something?”

He didn’t answer.

“A big hug?”

Kookie rocked a little faster and his hand flapped as he stimmed. But, that could mean a lot of things. Kookie stimmed when he was bored, upset, happy. It was movement for him. It was sensory input when he felt understimulated…or something to focus on when he was feeling anxious.

“I know that moving is a big change.” Yoongi tried. “And it might be stressful right now, but once we are moved into the new house, it’ll be super cool.” He tried hyping him up. “You’re going to get your own room and have room for all of your toys. We’re going to get you a couple of bean bag chairs you can crash pad into. You won’t get woken up by Jimin anymore.”

His fist balled and it looked like he was playing an imaginary drum as he stimmed.

“Do you want to hang out with Daddy?”

He shook his head and pressed his face into the towel.

“Do you want to be left alone?” Yoongi asked. “You can take a nap or something?”

Jungkook just stimmed and Yoongi reached out and smoothed down his hair that was flopping into his face. Yoongi took that as a yes. He kissed his head and stood up.

“Okay,” Yoongi said. “Do you need to go potty?”

Jungkook shook his head. “No.” He signed.

“Okay,” Yoongi hoped that he would naturally crash for a mid-morning nap or something. “I love you, Kookie.”

He flashed the sign for “I love you,” back and clicked on the iPad.

“Moving truck is here.” Namjoon sang from the main part of the house. “Time to load up.”
Yoongi ducked back into the babies’ room to finish there. Jimin was babbling to Mr. Ba, punctuated by him exclaiming “kiss,” and then blowing his bear a kiss. Yoongi worked quickly around him, getting the last of Jungkook’s toys and Jimin’s diaper supplies and anything else that could be thrown into a box into a box.

He got Jimin moved out of the bedroom on his hip. The front door was open and movers were already moving the living room furniture out through the front door.

“Where are Hoseok and Tae?” Yoongi asked as he got Jimin in his wheelchair, tilting it back to 45 degrees.

“They’re on their bikes in the driveway, staying out of the way of the movers.” Namjoon answered back in sign as he squatted to pick up a box.

“Can you check on Jungkook?” Yoongi asked Namjoon. “He’s not taking all the activity well.”

“Sure,” Namjoon said as he adjusted the box in his arms. “Right after I take out this box.”

“Do you need help?” Yoongi signed.

“No,” Namjoon’s eyes flashed at him. “I got it. And you shouldn’t be lifting anything heavier than fifty pounds anyway with your bad shoulder.”

Yoongi pouted as he gently pushed and pulled Jimin’s chair, rocking him a little. An unfortunate accident involving a delivery scooter while he was living in Brooklyn left him with a bad right shoulder. “But, I feel so useless.”

“No buts.” Namjoon said. “It’s order from the doctor and you’re not useless. Someone has to keep Jimin entertained.”

Yoongi glanced at Jimin, who was cooing at his bear. “Mr. Ba is doing a fine job of that without my help.” He grumbled.

“What was that?”

“Nothing.” Yoongi signed. “Go put that box down and love on our youngest. He needs some of his Joonie Daddy.”

Namjoon grinned, his dimples deep and his eyes shining. “It’s moving day!” He hollered as he skipped outside.

Namjoon passed the box to one of the movers. The others were arranging their living room furniture in the back of the truck. He watched them jam one of his expensive handmade petrified wood side tables in a corner. “Hey,” He said. “Be careful with those. They’re one of a kind.”

“Sorry, boss.” One of them said and then half-turned and his lips moved, but Namjoon couldn’t catch what he said.
“Can you repeat that? I’m deaf.” A fact he had reminded them of about four times already that day. He rolled his eyes.

“Did you want us to start on the kitchen next?” He asked.

“Uh,” Namjoon said. “Master bedroom.”

“Sounds good, boss.” He said and jumped out of the truck.

Namjoon’s attention was grabbed and he watched Taehyung ride his electric green bike past the stop sign – a hard rule that was set before they even got their little butts on the seat. And Tae was blatantly ignoring it as he sped around the corner. “Taehyung!” He yelled, but he was out of range for what Tae could hear.

He stomped through the front yard towards them. Hoseok hit the brakes – his long, tan toes curling around the pedals and his eyes wide as he watched Namjoon grabbed Tae’s bike frame and dragged him back. Tae looked over his shoulder, his eyes widening in surprise.

“Taehyung Kim.” Namjoon said in his most authoritative voice he could muster. “What is the rule about going past the stop sign?”

He looked up at the sign. “Don’t.” He answered simply.

“Correct.” Namjoon said. “Now, do you want your bike taken away? Because little boys who can’t follow the rules get their bikes taken away.”

Tae’s lower lip pouted. “No.” He said. “Please don’t take my bike away.” His face heated red with tears. “I’m sorry. I’ll follow the rules.” His hands moved fast in sign.

“Oh,” Namjoon softened. “This street gets busy.” He pointed to the throughway they lived on. “Sometimes cars go really fast and we don’t want you to get hurt. Okay?”

He nodded. “Okay.” He signed and Namjoon sighed. Tae was a good boy. And Namjoon was so glad that Tae was comfortable enough to toe the naughty line every once in awhile, given that when he first got to them, he didn’t speak unless spoken to first. Namjoon waved to catch his eyes.

“It’ll be better at the new house.” He signed. “It’s in a cul de sac, so you can ride your bike everywhere.”

Tae rubbed his face and smiled a little. “Okay.” He signed. “I’m excited for the new house.”

Namjoon turned to Hoseok, who had been watching the exchange like a car crash he couldn’t tear his eyes from. “Are you all packed up?”

Hoseok nodded.

“Okay,” He looked between his eldest. “Be good.” He signed and then jogged back up to the house, narrowly colliding with the movers who were walking his and Yoongi’s bed out. He waited until they were out of the way before ducking into the house, trying to finish his first mission that was tasked to him.

“Jungkook,” He said, looking around their emptying house. He glanced in the living room before turning down the hallway. “Jungkook?” He said as he poked his head into rooms. He turned into Hoseok’s and Tae’s room and looked in the closet, where Yoongi said he was. But, he wasn’t there. “Where are you?” He gave a cursory glance in his bedroom before turning into Yoongi’s
studio. He found Yoongi and Jimin.

He couldn’t read Yoongi’s lips, but by his anxiety-filled eyes as he watched a mover attempt to pick up one of his boxes that was full of music-mixing equipment Namjoon was imagining the “Be careful with that. That’s like a ten-thousand-dollar instrument.”

“Hey,” Namjoon greeted. “Have you seen Jungkook?”

Yoongi was dressed in a pair of sweats and a white shirt with the letters ‘FG’ on the front. He had a light pink stain on his shoulder from where Jimin drooled strawberry milk on him that morning. He pushed and pulled Jimin’s chair, fidgeting as he watched the strangers touch his stuff. His eyebrows furrowed. “He’s not in Hoseok and Tae’s closet?” He asked in sign.

Namjoon shook his head, concern lighting through him. The front door had been opened for most of the day. Jungkook liked to run. He could’ve darted outside. But, Namjoon was just in the front yard. If Jungkook had run out, he would’ve seen him, right?

Right?

Yoongi glanced down at Jimin, adjusted his bear for him and kissed his cheek. “Be right back, Chim.”

They then split up. Namjoon started checking everywhere. Any nook and cranny that might’ve fit his four-year-old child with autism. There were a lot of them. And he was sure Jungkook knew them all. He checked the bathroom and the master closet. He checked behind the doors. He checked Jungkook and Jimin’s closet.

Jungkook was upset, so Namjoon really hoped that he wasn’t in a dark unknown hole somewhere having a meltdown with no support. He hoped that he didn’t accidentally slip out of the front door. He hoped that he didn’t get into something potentially dangerous.

Jungkook, where are you?

He checked the living room – but it was completely empty. He tried the kitchen, which was also empty. But, he looked in all the lower cabinets. Even the fridge.

Namjoon rounded the corner towards the pantry and let out a gust of air. “Jungkook.” He breathed.

Jungkook had found a ten-pound bag of Mahatma white rice that Yoongi had gotten on sale at Safeway. It had been overturned and rice was strewn all over the kitchen floor, Jungkook sitting in the middle of it. Both of hands were jammed through the hole, deep in the rice. There was rice on his lap and in his dark hair.

“Jungkook,” Namjoon squatted and watched Jungkook pull two little fistfuls of rice out. He opened his hands and watched as it ran through his fingers and then repeated the action. “Are you sensory seeking? Huh? Does that feel good?”

Jungkook didn’t answer except for a small furrow in his eyebrows. Namjoon sighed and squatted. What a mess. He thought as he looked at the fallout of the Kook bomb strewn all over the floor. Rice was such a pain to get up too.

A movement in the corner of Namjoon’s eye stole his attention and Namjoon looked up to Yoongi, who was surveying the mess.
“I found Jungkook.” Namjoon said.

“Did you?” Yoongi put both of his hands on his hips. “He found the rice, I see.”

They both watched Jungkook pull out more rice and let it run through his fingers, his focus on his hands. Namjoon combed his fingers through his hair and looked back up at Yoongi. “It’s better than a meltdown.” He said optimistically. Anything was better than a meltdown.

“Yes,” Yoongi agreed. “A messy day is better than a bad day.”

Namjoon rubbed Jungkook’s back. “It’s time to clean this up, buddy.” He said gently. Yoongi brought the trash can and a small broom and dust pan. “I’ll help, okay? But, you have to clean up the mess you made.”

Jungkook’s eyes looked at him briefly before averting to the floor. He picked up a pile of rice and then chucked it in the trash can – getting most of it on the floor. Namjoon rubbed his forehead, stomping away the ember of frustration. It would be easy to get frustrated or even mad. They had a lot to do today.

But…

Namjoon sighed and looked at Yoongi. “A messy day is better than a bad day.” He repeated.

“You have to thank the house.” Namjoon signed to Tae and Hoseok as they squatted in their empty house – the truck already almost done being unloaded at their new place. Yoongi was holding Jimin, his chair loaded up in the SUV with the last of the stuff in the house. Jungkook still had some rice in his hair, but he was twirling and screeching, listening to his voice echo off the walls, his nose scrunched up. “It did a good job keeping you safe and dry.” Namjoon explained. “So, we’re going to say goodbye and it’s going to be a good house for a new family.”

“A new family?” Tae asked as he looked around at their empty place, the indents from the furniture still pressed into the carpeting and a fine line of dust lining the walls.

“Yep,” Namjoon nodded. “Maybe with more little boys.” He tickled Tae’s ribs and Tae smiled his wide, boxy smile. “Or little monkeys like you were.” He signed and then tickled Hoseok.

Hoseok went first. He walked to the living room wall and patted it. “Thank you,” He signed. “For being a good house.” He signed. “My last house leaked when it rained. Thanks for not leaking.”

Tae went next. “Thank you house.” He sang, his voice echoing off the wall. Jungkook responded with a holler. He leaned on Namjoon’s shoulder. “You were a good house. Be good for the new family.”

“Jungkookie,” Namjoon said and held out his hand for their youngest. “Can you say ‘thank you?’”

Jungkook signed ‘thank you’ and then screamed with his little fists balling. He giggled as his
voice echoed. His squeaky shoes sounding like dog toys as he danced around. Yoongi was very glad
that he seemed to be past whatever was bothering him earlier.

Yoongi cupped Jimin’s face. “Jimin,” He said once Jimin’s eyes focused on him and he
smiled. “Can you say ‘bye bye’?”

“Bye bye.” He sang in his little voice, his hand waving.

“Are we ready?” Namjoon asked as he stood back up to his full height.

Yoongi looked around their empty house. There was no furniture in it anymore. But, Yoongi
could still see the marks his family left – the stray crayon mark on the wall and the dent that Hoseok
made in the chair rail accidentally and all the old nail holes where he had hung pictures from school
and the park and Namjoon and Yoongi’s wedding.

Memories. They were memories. Memories that Yoongi didn’t know he was going to have
until he had them. Memories that were going to be with him, tucked in his heart forever. Memories
that made him so happy, that he felt like he was going to explode with them.

But, he was excited for the new chapter. The chapter where they were foster parents with
stray kids anymore had ended. They were a family now. A real, permanent family. He was excited
for that chapter. Ecstatic for that chapter.

“Yes,” He whispered as he looked around one last time, his heart feeling full. “I’m ready.”

They finished that day at Rodolfo’s – this mom and pop Mexican restaurant with an outdoor
seating area. It was their favorite restaurant. Everything was served on paper plates. They didn’t care
too much if Jimin chucked corn chip on the ground and Jungkook could actually eat without being
inundated with smells. And, to top it all off their food was amazing.

“Can we paint the walls green?” Tae asked as he nibbled on his kids’ taco, his feet swinging
underneath him.

“We can paint the walls whatever color you want.”

“Can we get bunk beds?” He asked.

Yoongi glanced at Namjoon and gave him a pointed look. “Can we get bunk beds, Dad?”

Namjoon sucked in a breath. “I really don’t want bunk beds with Jungkook.” He said as he
tried to keep a squirming Jungkook from slipping off of his lap.

“I don’t think so, buddy.” Yoongi said and combed through his hair. “Jungkook’s little and if
he gets up on top and falls out, he can hurt himself.”

Hoseok slammed his hand on the table. “Can I get a bean bag chair?” He asked in sign.

Yoongi nodded. “Yeah, that’s okay.”

“Me too!” Tae signed excitedly. “I want one too!” His eyes flashed. “Please.”
Yoongi chuckled. “Okay, you both can have a bean bag chair.”

“And pool toys!” Hoseok signed. He was sitting on his knees on his chair as he happily stuffed taco meat into his mouth with his fingers. "Water guns." He pretended to hold a gun and shoot Tae.

“Okay,” Namjoon said as he flipped Jungkook upside so his feet were next Namjoon’s ears. Jungkook screeched with laughter and his black hair turned into a halo around his head as he did a handstand on Namjoon’s lap. “But, no going into the pool unless Dad or I are there. The gate will be locked, so you guys can’t sneak in.”

“We know.” Tae signed with a nod.

Hoseok shook his head and looked at Yoongi. “I don’t know how to swim.”

“You’ll both learn.” Yoongi said and leaned over to tickle Jimin’s belly. “And Chim too.”

“Chim.” Jimin repeated and then opened his mouth. Yoongi poked some pork filling from Jimin’s plate in it and he chewed thoughtfully, his eyebrows furrowed and his full lip pursed out.

“Can we have a pool party for my birthday?” Tae asked.

Yoongi giggled. “Your birthday was last week, Tae.” Yoongi shook his head.


“What about me?” Hoseok asked.

“Your birthday is February. It’ll be too cold.”

“What about Chim?”

“Chim.” Jimin said and beamed.

“Jimin’s birthday isn’t until October.”

“When is your birthday, Daddy?” Tae asked.

“March.” Yoongi said. “Just a couple of weeks after Hoseok’s.”

“Oh,” Tae said and then his eyebrows furrowed. “Wait. How old are you?”

“Well,” Yoongi said and smiled. “How old are you?”

“Uh,” Tae thought about it. “I’m seven now.”

“Well,” Yoongi propped up his chin on his hand. “I’m eight.”

Tae giggled and flicked some food on the table. “You’re not. You’re joking. You’re like nineteen.”

“No,” Hoseok slapped Tae gently. “Dad’s older than that. He’s like twenty-four.”

“Twenty-four?” Tae’s eyes widened. “That’s a lot. You’re old.” He basically yelled. Yoongi caught the eyes of two baby-boomer couples double dating at the table over. They stifled giggles over Tae’s words and Yoongi felt his face heat red.
Namjoon was laughing so hard that tears were squeezing out of his eyes. “I don’t think you’re *that* old, babe.” He said.

“Are you older or younger than Dad, Dad?” Hoseok asked Namjoon.

“I’m younger.”

Tae looked slightly shocked like you just told him some juicy gossip. He looked back to Yoongi. “But, if you’re older, why are you *shorter*?”

The table next to theirs wasn’t holding back now as they laughed at Tae. Yoongi felt himself cycle through a couple of different shades of red, finally landing on raspberry jam. “Okay,” He said. “Enough talking about my age.” He grumbled in sign. “And my…” He motioned with hand. “height.”

Namjoon was still giggling. He flipped Jungkook back over and kissed him. Jungkook made a face. “Don’t be mad.” He said. “It’s cute. You’re cute.”

“I’m not mad.” Yoongi said. “I just don’t want to an existential crisis on the veranda of our favorite taco shop if I can help it.”

“What’s an exis-existencial crisis?” Tae asked and looked between the both of them, his eyes wide and innocent.

Yoongi and Namjoon looked at each other and then burst into laughter. Yoongi folded his arm over his ribs when they started to ache.

“What?” Tae groaned, dramatically flopping in his chair.

“Nothing,” Yoongi stopped and got ahold of himself. “Nothing.” He smoothed Tae’s hair down as he watched the sunset slowly descend in the west. “I love you.” He said and moved his hand to Hoseok’s shoulder. “All of you.” He said and watched the skies paint themselves purple and orange and pink, more than ready for their next chapter.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment or find me on my curious cat
Sooo, this is kind of a weird one-off chapter. Actually, the next chapter is a weird one-off chapter too and then I have something NEW for the fam so enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“It’s okay to be nervous.” Namjoon assured with a rub on Yoongi’s shoulder as they approached the adobe-style widespread building that made up Cherry Oak Elementary. His other hand was holding Jungkook’s wrist. “He’s only ever been with us.”

Jimin was going to school. He was…going to school. He was going to spend five hours a day, five days a week away from Yoongi and Namjoon. Away from the safety of his home, his parents. With strangers who were going to teach him – according to his IEP that was designed for him – two new words in three months, how to hold his own spoon and bring that spoon to his own mouth, and how to recognize the difference between shapes nonverbally.

He was going to be with strangers. Strangers. Yoongi’s precious bubbly bear that had already been the subject to violence once in his life was going to be voluntarily handed over to strangers.

They had dropped the older boys off at school already – this first day of their spring semester. They were excited to go back to school and show off their Christmas presents. Technically, Cherry Oak had already resumed the semester five days ago. But, the construction of Jimin’s IEP – which had started a month prior - delayed his start date, so he ended up starting school a bit late. It was okay, though. Jimin wasn’t going to be in a regular classroom. His classroom was in a little building tucked in grove of large oak trees.

Yoongi and Namjoon had already met Jimin’s teacher. A young woman with skin the color of caramel and t-shirt that read I Run on Coffee & Velcro. She was at the IEP meeting. As was an administrator, the guidance counselor, and some sort of special education professional person, and an ASL interpreter for Namjoon. She had a good sense of humor and had a level of snark that Yoongi appreciated.

But, that wasn’t enough to placate the anxiety building in his chest as they entered the hallway that was quiet. In Hoseok and Tae’s school – even in a Deaf school – the hallways were always teeming with sounds of children laughing and running and talking. Jimin’s hallway was quiet.

Yoongi thought this was a good idea at first. Jimin needed to go to school. He was seven now. In the first grade. While starting him in the middle of the school year wasn’t ideal, he could at least get started, now that he had a semblance of stability in his life. Even if it was just for the socialization.

But, every step they took felt like it vibrated up Yoongi’s whole body, shaking him to his core. Jimin had never, ever been separated from them. Ever. Even when he was in the hospital, he had one of his daddies right there with him. And a million questions flew through Yoongi’s head. What if he has a seizure? What if they get distracted with a different student? What if he gets sad that Yoongi or Namjoon isn’t there? What if he gets hurt? What if he puts something in his mouth that he
shouldn’t? What if someone gets frustrated with him and hurts him?

What if someone hurts him?

Yoongi’s breath got caught, sticking to the side of his ribcage between his lungs and his heart.

“Yoongi,” Namjoon said. “Your face is all pinched like you just sucked on a lemon.”

Yoongi felt himself scowl. “It is not.”

Namjoon stopped him in the hallway. “Jimin’s going to be fine.”

“I know.” Yoongi said, bristling slightly. But, he broke eye contact, averting his gaze to his sneakers.

Namjoon forced his chin back up. “No, you don’t. You’re stressing.” He rubbed his shoulders. “But, you met his teacher. And he only has three other classmates. There are two paraeducators in there with her. He’s going to be fine.”

“But-,”

Namjoon’s narrow eyes widened slightly, a challenging look that said don’t you dare. Yoongi looked at Jimin’s wheelchair, picking at the squishy part of the handlebar that was starting to peel up. Jungkook was making it a game to step and stand on Namjoon’s foot. “I just…” Yoongi started. “If anything happens to him…” His sentence splintered off. Saying it out loud would just make his fears real.

“Baby, look at me.” Namjoon said and Yoongi met his eyes. “They’re special education teachers. Kids like Jimin is who they are trained to handle.”

“But, they don’t know him.” Yoongi insisted. “Not like we do.”

“Do you not want to do this?” Namjoon asked pointedly. “We don’t have to do this.” He motioned around. “Public school. There are other ways for Jimin to get an education. We can hire a tutor to work with him. Homeschool him ourselves. We don’t have to do this.”

Yoongi rubbed his forehead and sighed. “But, his IEP is all planned and you know how it was getting that together.”

“Yes, you’re right.”

“And I want him to be able to socialize outside of his brothers.”

“Another excellent point.” Namjoon’s smiled tilted slightly, revealing a dimple. “So, tell you what, why don’t we give this a try? Two weeks? We’ll do two weeks. If you absolutely can’t stand being away from minnie that long, if public schooling isn’t a fit, then we can pull him out and do something else? Okay?”

Yoongi weighed it out in his head as Jungkook grabbed his hand and stomped around, his shoes squeaking with his stomps. Two weeks. That wasn’t terribly long. That was fifty hours total. That wasn’t too long. He nodded. “Okay.” He signed.

“Okay.” Namjoon signed back and then pecked his nose. “You’re so beautiful when you’re protective.”
“I have to be.” Yoongi grumbled. “Jimin needs someone in his corner.”

Namjoon’s gaze softened. “I know.” He breathed and cupped Yoongi’s face. “But, he has us now.”

“He has us now.” Yoongi repeated. *Forever.*

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“Good morning, Mr. and Mr. Kim.”

“Min-Kim.” Yoongi corrected as he stopped to shake the teacher’s hand. Her name was Claire or Ms. Beller and the two paraeducators were Sam and Quinn. Their names were printed on the whiteboard.

Yoongi scanned the classroom. It was actually pretty standard. There were tables instead of desks and there was an area that looked like it was set up as kind of a hangout are with padded floors and bean bag chairs, but otherwise it was a classroom. That eased some of the tension that had Yoongi wound tighter than an overstretched rubber band ball. *Just a normal classroom.* He thought as he looked around.

“Good morning, Jimin.” The teacher greeted. “And Jungkook. Hi, Jungkook.”

Jungkook responded by waving, his focus zeroing on the bean bag chairs in the corner. He toddled across the classroom and flopped into one, giggling loudly.

“Let me introduce you to the staff.” Claire said and Namjoon took over pushing Jimin’s wheelchair in. “This is Sam.” She motioned to a young man who was busy setting up a tower of blocks on one of the table. He waved. “He’s going to be Jimin’s main para.”

“Is this Jimin?” He looked up at the teacher and then rose to his feet. He smiled. “I’ve been looking forward to meeting Jimin. How’s it going?”

Yoongi shook his hand. He didn’t really want to admit it, but he was…uncomfortable with Jimin’s aide being male. And maybe it was Yoongi trying to find the worst in everybody, but with Jimin’s track record he didn’t want to take any risks.

“Hi, buddy.” Sam greeted, getting right into Jimin’s face on his left side so he could see him. “Are you ready for school?”

Jimin waved his sweater sleeve at him and smiled. “Hi.” Namjoon had dressed him that morning and had put him in a hand-me-down sweater from Taehyung that was way too big for him. His sleeves kept falling over his hands and he kept putting the extra material in his mouth to chew on.

“There’s another paraeducator?” Yoongi asked the teacher.

“Yes, that’s Quinn.” Claire pointed at the lady sitting at the desk. “She’s in charge of Joey and Thalia and Sam here has Ben and now Jimin.”

“Oh.” Yoongi said and Namjoon grabbed his hand. He kept running his lower lip between
his teeth as he looked around the classroom. They had their own bathrooms. And an area with cots for naps. They had buckets and buckets of toys. A big wall that looked like it was just Velcro and felt pieces cut into fun shapes. A board with their names on it, each letter in a balloon. Jimin’s name was on there now.

“Do you have any questions? You’re looking around like a deer caught in headlights.” Claire asked.

Yoongi felt his fists ball. “He’ll be okay, right?” He blurted, the words came out calm, but to Yoongi they felt like small explosions rocketing out of him.

Her eyebrows furrowed. “Of course he’s going to be okay. What do you mean, Mr. Min-Kim?”

Namjoon squeezed Yoongi’s hand. “My husband’s just a little worried since this is Jimin’s first time separated from us.”

The teacher nodded. “Well, you’re more than welcome to stick around for as long as you like. The other kids haven’t arrived yet. But, once they do we usually start the day with music to get the blood flowing and-,”

“Jimin sings.” Yoongi blurted and winced.

“He sings?” Sam asked with a big smile. “What do you sing, Jimin?”

Jimin’s head just scanned around. “Daddy.” His hand opened and closed, gripping the air. Yoongi moved so that he was next to Jimin’s chair. Jimin smiled wide at him, drool hitting his sweater. He offered a sweater covered hand out to Yoongi. Yoongi grasped it.

“He knows the first two words to Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.” Namjoon answered.

“Well, maybe we can sing some Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star?” Sam moved to a bin of stuff and pulled out a small set of bongo drums. He tapped his fingers on the surface and Jimin’s attention was stolen with the noise. “Twinkle, twinkle little star…”


“You’re so musical, Jimin.”

“Chim.” Yoongi said quietly as he squatted next to Jimin’s chair.

“I’m sorry?” Sam asked.

“Chim.” Jimin repeated for Yoongi, his hand banging on the drum, missing a couple of times and hitting his own lap instead.

“That’s what he calls himself.”


“I’m right here.”

Jimin picked up his drums like he wanted to show Yoongi and then chucked them off of his lap. Yoongi winced when they hit the floor.
“Sorry about that.” He said.

Sam giggled. “It’s okay. Toys make excellent projectiles.”

Yoongi sighed as he rubbed his arm. Ji"min will be fine. He will be fine. Sam was nice. His teacher seemed competent. Ji"min was going to be fine. Fine. Hanging around was just going to be counterproductive.

Yoongi straightened to his feet and then bent over Jimin and cupped his face. “I love you.” Yoongi said. “You’re going to have a great day at school, okay?” He kissed his nose. He’ll be fine.

Namjoon took a turn saying goodbye. “Chim.” He gave him a fat kiss on his cheek. “You’re going to do great. You’re growing up so fast.” He suddenly grew teary-eyed, his lower lip quivering a little. He banished them away. “Too fast. Stay little, okay?”

“Bababababa.” Jimin said, running a sweater-pawed hand against Namjoon’s face. Namjoon pulled Mr. Ba out of the basket on the back of his chair and handed it to him. Jimin wrapped his arm around the stuffed animal. He blew a kiss. “Kiss.”

“Kiss.” Namjoon repeated and kissed his forehead.

He’ll be fine. Yoongi chanted to himself like a manta. He’ll be fine. He’ll be fine.

Namjoon frowned at the stain on his button down. It was yellow, so he was pretty sure that it was banana milk from Jungkook, their youngest extremely good at drive-by handprints. He moved his tie, revealing another stain. What a mess. He thought and then rolled his eyes with a snort. He was sure that he didn’t own a shirt now without a stain on it.

A movement caught his eye and he looked up to the first couple of students that were trickling into his class. ASL 102. Most of them were already in his first class from last semester. “Hello,” He greeted as he hopped on top of his desk, picking up his roster sheet.

“Is this ASL?” Someone asked, looking hesitant as they stepped into the classroom.

“I hope so.” Namjoon said and signed. “My French is pretty rusty.”

Namjoon glanced at his phone that was sitting next to him as he swung his feet, trying not to think of the knot of nerves in his stomach over Jimin being at school. He was probably just as nervous as Yoongi over the whole thing, his palms sweaty and his mouth feeling like it was full of cotton balls every time he thought of his little boy miles away from any of his daddies in the hands of strangers.

But, he couldn’t let Yoongi know that he was stressing. Yoongi’s anxiety was making him vibrate at a frequency that could shatter glass. Namjoon had to be the buoy that Yoongi could cling to. The solid ground that he could place his feet. If Yoongi knew that he was nervous too, he would just unravel.
If he kept his mind moving, he couldn't focus on it too hard. So, instead he shifted his attention to his roster, checking off names and then handed out his syllabus.

“Hello,” He greeted as he turned on the projector and then sat back down on top of his desk at the front of the classroom. Instead of individual desks, the community college he worked at had long, gray tables that sat four each. He scanned over his class of 18 students. “Most of you know me already, but just to introduce myself. My name is Namjoon Kim, I am the professor of ASL here at Mission. I am deaf and have been all of my life. I have a bachelors in education from USC and then a Masters in ASL instruction from Gallaudet.” He clicked to his favorite slide – the Christmas family photo. “I have a wonderful husband-,” He watched three girls’ shoulders fall with disappointment. “And four beautiful kids, two of which are deaf, one of which isn’t deaf but is nonverbal autistic and uses ASL to communicate and then Jimin, who just talks in Jimin.” He chuckled and glanced at his phone again as it sat dark next to his hip. And who I hope is having a wonderful time at his first day of school.

Yoongi sucked in a breath as he rolled out his shoulder, pain shooting from the joint into the rest of his back. He looked down at the box of heavy kitchen stuff he was pushing through the house with contempt. He wasn’t lifting anything heavier than fifty pounds, like his doctor said. Instead he was pushing. But, that was even starting to get to him.

He kicked the box in frustration and then turned to make himself a cup of coffee, shoving a mug under the Keurig and starting the machine.

The house took two days to pack up and was taking almost a week now to unpack. Yoongi scanned around his living room with a sigh. It was half-unpacked. There was a couch and the television had been hooked up for Jungkook and Namjoon had started to unpack his million of books that he refused to just buy on his iPad because that “took away from the experience of reading an actual book,” or some nonsense like that. Like he had time anymore to read books in the first place. He had four kids all under the age of eight.

His kitchen was about the same – random small appliances littering the surface of their counter and dishes that he needed to find a home for. It was chaos and it was driving Yoongi crazy. It was just irritating the fried nerves that Yoongi had.

When the Keurig was done, he went to find Jungkook to check up on him, since he had been quiet the last hour and that usually meant he was getting into something he shouldn’t.

He found him in his room. Jungkookie’s room was the only room of the house that was 100% done. And really, it was just because Namjoon had such a fun time putting together his sensory corner that he ended up finishing his room all the same time.

They padded the floor with those foam blocks that snap together like puzzle pieces and he had a sensory pea pod that was like a bean bag chair with a divot in the middle that Jungkook could bury himself into. They got him a hanging light that was shaped like a jellyfish and his toy box and a wall of spinners and buttons that he could play with. A built in speaker that played music.

Jungkook loved it. Honestly, it worked so well that it was a pain now to get him to separate from it. At least he was getting the sensory input he craved without having to watch music videos that were too mature for him. That was a win in Yoongi’s book.
“Hi buddy.” Yoongi sat down and leaned against the wall as he watched Jungkook spin some of the spinners on wall. He bounced and flapped his hands for a second before tangling them up and jamming them under his chin. His basically neat and tidy room calmed Yoongi a bit.

“It’s so quiet.” Yoongi leaned his head back and stared at the ceiling fan. Jimin took up so much of his time that now that he didn’t have him he just felt…empty. Yoongi rubbed his forehead. He hoped that Jimin was okay. All he could imagine was him crying. Crying for his daddies and not getting answered.

Jungkook rocked as he hit a button on his wall. Yoongi watched him, an idea popping into his head.

“Hey, Jungkookie.” Yoongi grabbed his wrist and pulled him so that Yoongi could hug him. Jungkook groaned and pushed himself away, his eyes on his wall. “Do you want to play the piano with me?” He asked his squirming preschooler.

Jungkook just groaned and flopped his body over in Yoongi’s arms. Yoongi laughed and stood up. He grabbed his coffee mug and then Jungkook’s wrist.

“Come on,” Yoongi said. “Let’s play some piano.”

Namjoon’s classed ended half an hour before Jimin got out of school at 1. He met Yoongi in the parking lot of the school and stood next to his car as he watched Yoongi hop down out of the SUV and then open the back door to unstrap Jungkook from his car seat.

“How was your day?” Namjoon asked once Jungkook’s feet were on the ground. He leaned forward and kissed his husband that was dressed in head-to-toe black, including a black beanie.

“Day,” Yoongi grumbled. “It wasn’t really a day. It was a five-hour anxiety attack.” He complained. “The house is still a mess. My shoulder is bothering me.” He crossed his hand over his chest to grip his shoulder and rubbed it out. “Can this day be over already?”

Namjoon squatted and picked up Jungkook. “Kookie,” He said. “What about the deal we had?”

Jungkook’s nose scrunched and he buried his face in Namjoon’s shoulder, inhaling deeply.

“What deal?” Yoongi asked as they walked up to the school together.

“I told him to flush your watch so you would be distracted all day.” Namjoon said. “I guess he didn’t want to earn five bucks.” He bounced him to reposition him on his hip.

Yoongi’s eyes narrowed and his chin jutted out. “You did not tell our four-year-old to flush my watch.”

“I sure did.” Namjoon joked with smile. “I told him to do whatever it took to get your mind off of your worries.”

“You’re full of it.” Yoongi shook his head and then sighed with a little smile. “I did have a nice time teaching Jungkook some piano.”
“Yeah,” Namjoon pushed Jungkook’s bangs that were constantly in his eyes out of his face. His eyes looked at the sky and he flapped his hands. “Did you have fun, Jungkook?”

“We need to get him some actual lessons.” Yoongi signed. “Maybe Tae into some art classes or something.”

“What about Hoseok?”

They looked at each other, their eyes softening over the sensitive soul that was Hoseok. The first class that popped into Yoongi’s head was math since he was still struggling academically. But, he hadn’t really expressed interest in anything. He liked video games and his brothers. He liked movies. But, it wasn’t like Jungkook and music or Tae and art. He hadn’t…gravitated towards anything extracurricular yet. Yoongi couldn’t really see him in team sports. Maybe he’d like gymnastics or something like that. Yoongi thought.

Yoongi filed that for a later time as he approached Jimin’s classroom. Excited to pick him up from his first day of school and nervous. Nervous over what he was going to find.

But, all of his worry was squashed when he saw Jimin sitting in his loose half-circle of other profoundly disabled kids, a big smile on his face as he waved around a flag made out of chiffon. “Ohohohoh.” He said as he put the material over his face and ripped it away. “Boo!” He giggled at Sam.

He was fine. Of course he was fine. Yoongi almost started crying. All of his worry was for nothing. Jimin was fine. He was…a happy first grader enjoying playtime. Of course he would be fine. Yoongi sucked in a breath, feeling it finally go all the way to the ends of his lungs. The sensation was amazing as he approached him.

“How’d he do?” Yoongi asked, staying just out of range of Jimin’s vision. He held Namjoon back too. He wanted to surprise him.

“He did wonderful.” Sam said with a big smile. “We did have a slight,” He held up his thumb and forefinger. “mid-morning tantrum over the yogurt selection but that was easily taken care of.”

“Did you try to give him lemon?”

“Key lime pie, actually.”

“Yeah, he’s not a big fan of the citrus ones.” Yoongi smiled.

“I’ll keep that in mind for next time.” Sam said.

Yoongi arced around his chair, keeping his hands over his face. Jimin’s head tilted and then he froze, his face rolling into an ‘o.’ Yoongi pulled his hands away. “Peek-a-boo.”

Jimin started wiggling, doing that happy “sksksk,” noise that Yoongi figured out was him just panting with happiness. “Daddy!” He almost screamed, his arms going.

“Hi, baby.” Yoongi said and kissed his cheek. “You ready to go home?”

“Daddy!” He repeated at the top of his lungs. “Kiss!” He blew Yoongi a kiss.

“I think so.” Sam said.
“Say ‘bye-bye’ to Sam.” Namjoon said as he unclicked the brakes of his wheelchair. “And then we’ll go get your brothers at their school.”

“Bye, bye.” Jimin waved his hand, his grin so wide that it hid his eyes and flushed his cheeks. Yoongi held his and Jungkook’s hand all the way to the parking lot, the sound of Jimin babbling – telling them all about his day in his own Jimin way – music to his ears.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment or catch me on my curious cat
Amazing Brother

Chapter Notes

Chapter Warnings: mentions of corporal punishment

So, by pure coincidence and cosmic divination, Winter Bear was released yesterday by Tae! In celebration, I give you an entire chapter in Tae's POV.

I'm pretty excited about this chapter as it's a delve into a layer of character development that you wouldn't otherwise see if I just kept in Yoongi and Namjoon's heads. Also, I get to talk in kid-talk and that's just too stinkin' fun.

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Tae woke up in a start, a bad dream chasing him from unconsciousness to consciousness, his eomma’s voice still in his ears. Loud and piercing like she got when she was really mad.

_Taehyung, what did I tell you…_

He sat up and breathed and blinked, alternating between breathing and then blinking as he figured out where he was. He rubbed his eye and looked at his brother Hoseok. Hoseok took forever to fall asleep because he was afraid of every shadow that moved, but once he was asleep he slept heavy. And it was no different as he laid sprawled out on his back, his hand petting his own chest as he snored.

Tae looked to his right. The hallway light was on. _That’s weird_. He slid out of bed to investigate.

Suddenly the floors shook under his feet and he looked behind him at the window. It was raining really, really hard. And there was flashes of lightning outside. Taehyung couldn’t hear the thunder or the rain – it was too far away. But, if it thundered close enough he could feel it in how the walls shook.

He turned back to the hallway, padding around the corner. Jimin’s light was on too. Taehyung all of a sudden felt nervous – his mouth going dry and his stomach went flip-floppy. Both his dads were surrounding Jimin’s special bed that had walls.

“Is everything okay?” He said and stood on his tip-toes to see.

Yoongi – his shorter dad. His dad with eyes were dark like the storm clouds outside. The dad that they ‘signed’ a little bit lower on his forehead to show which dad they were talking about – turned around. “Hey, Tae.” He said. His voice was low and would get all garbly in Tae’s ears. He couldn’t really tell what was being said unless he could see their face to match their lips with the sounds. “Jimin’s okay. He just had a little seizure. You can go back to bed.”

But, concern for Jimin – Tae’s super special best buddy – had him tip-toeing in instead. “A seizure?” He asked and approached the bed.
Yoongi was slipping his arms underneath Jimin’s body and scooped him up, his pajama bottoms riding down a little and the top of his diaper peaking out above the hem. Namjoon – his other dad, the tall, deaf one with the sweet, easy smile – helped and his other dad took Jimin to the rocking chair, where he sat down with him.

Tae followed, putting his hands on Yoongi’s knees as he peered at Jimin, judging what level of okay he was. Because there was okay. But, then there was the ‘okay’ that just meant that Tae needed to stop asking questions and do something else because Jimin needed to be taken care of because he wasn’t actually okay.

Jimin looked a little different than everyone else. He had big cheeks and lips that pointed out a little like a chicken beak and he had a dent in his head above his right ear that you could see in the light sometimes. And his eyes were always looking up, no matter what. His legs kind of had this funny angle to them and he was always playing with his hands or sucking on his fingers.

But, that was Jimin. He was a little different and that’s what made him Tae’s super special best buddy was because there was no one like Jimin. No one on earth. And Tae loved Jimin so much that he felt like he was going to explode with it sometimes.

And it really made Taehyung sad seeing Jimin sad like he was. His lower lip pouted out and his hand gripping air. Tae petted his head. “Chim,” He said. Jimin said ‘Chim’ because it was easier than saying ‘Jimin.’ Like Tae called himself Tae because it was easier than ‘Taehyung.’ “It’s okay.”

Jimin hand came up and kind of smacked Tae’s hand away and he started to cry, his face heating red and big tears rolling down his cheeks. Tae's stomach flip-flopped again. “But, Jimin,” He insisted. He was okay. He had both daddies and him. “It’s okay.” He turned around and grabbed his bear off of his bed. “Look, it’s Mr. Ba, Jimin.”

Jimin twisted his head and Dad shifted him until he had Jimin’s head resting against his shoulder. “He’s okay, Tae. He’s just tired and needs some sleep.”

“But,” Tae’s eyebrows furrowed. “I gotta…” He started. I gotta make sure he’s okay. He my brother. I have to help my brothers when they’re sad. That’s what good brothers do. And I’m a good brother.

I’m a good brother.

“Tae,” Something squeezed his fingers and he looked at his other dad as he dropped to his knee next to Tae. “I know you’re worried, but if you stay up with Jimin, then Jimin won’t want to go to sleep.” He signed.

Tae just let out a big gusty sigh and stomped his foot a little as a response.

He chuckled. “I know.” He signed on his forehead. “I know you want to make sure he’s okay.” Tae was suddenly lifted into his dad’s big arms and he automatically curled his legs around his waist and wrapped his arms around his shoulders. “Has anyone told you what an amazing brother you are?” He signed with his free hand.

Tae thought about that question. “No,” He signed. “I’ve never had brothers before Seokie and Kookie and Chim.”

“Well, you are.” Namjoon smiled, but his eyebrows went all scrunchy like he was sad about something. Tae’s fingers flexed to poke at his dimple. “You’re an amazing brother.”

Tae smiled at the praise, feeling all lit up inside. “I am?”
“Of course you are.”

Tae sighed again and looked at Jimin, who was sucking on his fingers as he was rocked. He really liked being rocked like a baby. It made him sleepy. “Can I give Jimin a kiss?”

His dad leaned down so that Tae could stretch and peck Jimin’s head, above his dent. “Goodnight, best buddy.” He whispered, since Jimin could hear, but couldn’t see sign language.

He was carried back to his room and Tae rested his head on his dad’s shoulder. He always felt so nice being carried, being hugged, being surrounded by his daddies. It was like being wrapped up in a warm blanket. But, better. Because blankets couldn’t talk or tell you they loved him and Tae’s dads did that all the time.

He was suddenly swept into the air and then dropped with a kiss to his neck underneath his jaw. He giggled as the blanket was put over his body and his dad got into his face. “Goodnight, baby bear.” He whispered. He had an accent because he was deaf, but it wasn’t as thick as Hoseok’s.

“Goodnight, Daddy.” Tae answered back with a big yawn.

Tae squinted at his bowl of rice porridge, picking up his spoon and mixing around white sludge. He wasn’t a fan of juk. Actually, he was pretty sure juk was the worst thing on planet earth and he couldn’t figure out why anyone would actually eat this stuff. But, a complaining tongue reveals an ungrateful heart. That’s what the Jensens taught him. He wasn’t allowed to complain about his food because that means he was ungrateful for what he had in comparison to others, some of which who had nothing. And then he would get it taken away and he would go hungry that meal.

He stuffed a spoonful in his mouth and forced himself to swallow. He grimaced. Gross.

Hoseok did not learn about gratefulness because as soon as he sat down and saw that they were eating porridge for breakfast, he slumped all the way down in his seat and let out a whining noise that made him sound like a creaky door. “I hate juk.” He signed.

Their dad – Yoongi – was too preoccupied to listen to Hoseok, however, with trying to feed Jimin, who didn’t seem to be liking the juk either. He kept angling his head away from the spoon and his hand was waving like he was trying to get it out of his face.

“Grumpy,” Dad said. “Why aren’t you eating your breakfast? You’ve never fought juk before.” He tried getting another spoonful into Jimin’s mouth but he flattened his lips and his eyebrows scrunched. “Chim, please eat your breakfast.” His dad said.

Jimin tried waving his arm in front of his face again. His fist balled and he burst into tears. “Ouch.”

“Okay, okay.” Dad put the spoon down. “What’s wrong, baby? Does something hurt?”

“It’s his leg.” Tae volunteered as he ate the juk. It wasn’t that bad if he just shoveled it down as fast as he could go. But, he let a mouthful sit there and congeal as he watched Jimin with worry.
His dad looked at him. “How do you know?”

“When his leg hurts he wiggles his ankle like he’s doing now.” Tae said. That was Jimin’s way of talking. He didn’t use many words. But, he talked with his whole body – his smile and his wiggly wormy fingers and even his feet.

Dad watched his feet as he rolled his ankle and then flexed his toes. “Okay,” He pulled him out of his booster seat. “Let’s get you some stretches and some meds.”

There was a noise and Tae looked towards the hallway as his other dad – Namjoon - carried out Kookie, who was also crying, his face as red as a firetruck and his fingers fluttering and wriggling next to his head and his feet kicking in the air.

“What’s going on with him?” Yoongi asked.

“Category five hurricane Jungkook.” His other dad said as he started the sink. He stripped Jungkook of his shirt and got his hands under the water of the faucet. “He found our shampoo in our shower and got into it. What’s wrong with Jimin?”

“Pain.”

“Poor baby.”

“We’re going to do some stretches and see if that’ll help.” He said rubbed Jimin’s head. “If not then I’ll give him the hard stuff.”

“Can I help?” Tae asked as he scraped the bottom of his bowl. He glanced at Hoseok, who hadn’t even touched his. Instead he was playing with it, his chin on his palm.

“Yes,” Yoongi said. “You can help by getting dressed and getting your own backpack together.”

“’kay.” Tae said and cleared his and Hoseok’s bowl at the same time, place both dishes next to the sink. He patted Jungkook’s knee. “It’s okay, Kookie.” He said.

But, Jungkook wasn’t listening to him as his face twisted around like you were stabbing him with a pencil. His eyes were on his hands as their dad washed off fruity-smelling shampoo from them. Jungkook didn’t like smells. At all. They made him upset. So upset that he threw up sometimes or would bite himself. It was thing called autism. Taehyung didn’t really know what it was but he knew that Jungkook didn’t like smells.

Tae scampered to his and Hoseok’s room. He was really glad that they got to keep sharing a room. Sometimes Hoseok would wake him up because of bad dreams, but he liked getting into the same bed at night. He liked staying up with their tablets and playing Pokemon together. He liked knowing that his brother was only a couple of feet away from him.

Tae changed into some school clothes and pulled out his reading sheet for one of his dads to sign and a flyer or something that the teacher said to give to the parents. He watched Hoseok pull out his reading sheet too and then move back to his bed to put on his hearing aids. Tae waved to get his attention. “Don’t forget your invitations.” Tae signed.

Hoseok picked up the stack of invitations that he filled out with their dad’s help. They were to his birthday party. He begged for, like, four days straight to have a birthday party at Peter Piper Pizza. Like he was going to die if he didn’t have a party with all of the class for his birthday.
Tae didn’t know why, though. He loved just having his birthday at home where Dad would make him his favorite foods – last time it was japchae and meat – and he would get a cake with toys on top. They played games altogether as a family – even Jimin, even though he didn’t know the rules – and had fun. Tae opened more presents even though Christmas had just happened. It was the best birthday he ever had.

But, their dads agreed to a birthday party if that’s what Hoseok really wanted. And he insisted he did.

“Will you help me hand them out?” Hoseok asked, signing small.

“Yeah,” Tae smiled. “I’ll help.”

“Okay,” Hoseok looked relieved as he straightened the stack in his hands. “Cool.”

His dad – Yoongi – popped his head into his room. “Are you guys ready?” He signed, Jimin on his hip, his head resting on his shoulder and drool dripping down his chin. He was still sniffling a little, but he didn’t look as unhappy as he did earlier.

“Almost.” Tae answered and waved his reading sheet. “Can you sign this?”

“Mine too.” Hoseok said.

He entered their room and picked up a pen, glancing over the sheet. “Did you read?” He asked and looked at Tae.

“I did.” Tae said and pulled out the chapter book he was currently reading. *Henry and Mudge*. It was about a little boy and his dog. “I’m on chapter three.”

“Good job, TaeTae.” Yoongi signed his name and looked at Hoseok. “What about you? Did you read?”

Tae tested higher than Hoseok on the AR test. He got a 3.5, but Hoseok only got a 1.2 – the lowest in the class. Hoseok nodded and pulled out his book. “I read this.”

“Did you read it?” Dad asked. “Or look at the pictures?”

“I read it.” Hoseok signed, his hands low.

“He did.” Tae said. “I saw him.” *He almost cried.* He wanted to add but didn't.

“Okay.” Their dad signed their name. “Let’s get going, okay? We gotta drop off Jimin at school.” He started to turn and then froze. “Oh. I’m checking you both out at ten. So, there’s no lunches made. Okay?”

“Checking us out?” Tae asked. “Why?”

“You have an eye appointment.” He signed at Tae and then turned to Hoseok. “And you are going to meet with a special doctor about those panic attacks.”

“Oh.” Tae said and bit his lip. *More eye appointments.* His nose scrunched. He didn’t like going to the doctor’s, but he didn’t mind if it was on a school day and he got to get checked out early.

“Let’s get going.” He signed again.
Hoseok waited until after attendance and the pledge and reading time to hand out his invitations. Tae helped and since he was also classroom helper that week, he handed out the math worksheets as well.

He hopped back to his desk when he was finished that was right next to Hoseok’s because the teacher tried to separate them one time and Hoseok cried. He sat across from Melody and Matthew. But, Matthew was absent that day.

“Melody,” Tae leaned over the desk to catch Melody’s eyes. “Are you going to come?”

Melody had curly red hair and, like, a million freckles. She glanced at the invitation and then shrugged. “I don’t know.” She signed. “I have to ask my mom.”

“You gotta come.” Tae signed back.

“I have to ask my mom.” Melody signed again, her eyebrows furrowing.

The teacher flashed the lights and everyone put one pointer finger over their lips and a peace sign in the air for ‘peace and quiet.’ Taehyung always made it a game to see how long he could hold his breath.

“Hoseok and Nathan, it’s time for speech.” The teacher signed and Hoseok dropped his last invitation and then followed Nathan out of the classroom to the speech therapy room. “And everyone else, let’s get started on the worksheets.”

Instead of doing the worksheet, Tae looked around the classroom to make sure everyone got an invitation. They did. Some put it in their cubbies and others – like Melody – had it laying on their desks. Taehyung suddenly felt nervous. What if people didn’t show up? He chewed on his lower lip. That would make Hoseok sad.

There was a wave and Tae looked up to the teacher. “Everything okay?” She signed.

“Yeah.” He signed back and started his worksheet, his insides feeling all jumbled up like his headphones when he would leave them in his pocket.

“Alright,” The doctor said and handed Taehyung a lollipop. “You are good to go, mister. Good job.”

Tae beamed and accepted the candy. He blinked away the feeling of something touching his eye. “It felt weird.”

“Yeah?” She helped him off the table and led him back across the hallway to where Dad was waiting with Jungkook and Hoseok. “What did he feel like?”
“Like,” Tae tried to think of what it felt like. “Like, there were feathers tickling my eyeball.” He giggled and snorted as he ripped the paper off the lollipop and stuffed it in his mouth.

“That is super weird.” She agreed and opened the door to the first room they were in with the poster on the wall with the letters and the mask-thing you look through.

Jungkook was stimming his hands hard – his fists going like he was playing an imaginary drum – and his face all pinched up like he had sucked on a lemon. He wasn’t having a good day – Tae could tell. Tae tried to play with him in the car, but Jungkook just put his hands over his ears and rocked.

Hoseok was trying to play with him this time with one of his toys, but Jungkook just turned to Dad, leaning on his knee. “Hungry.” He signed.

“We’re going to get lunch right after this.” Dad said and petted his hair down. “Just a little longer.”

Jungkook made more noises and paced around as he stimmed. Tae slid up into his chair and tapped his toes together as the doctor clicked around on her computer. “I don’t see any sign of any abnormalities.” She said once she turned around.

“Ab-,” Tae tried to say that word. “Abner-,”

“His eyes seem okay. His nearsightedness is pretty severe. That might cause retinal detachment, but if he isn’t having any other issues, then I don’t think there is anything to worry about.”

His dad breathed out a sigh of relief. “That’s good.”

“If he has anything weird going on, I would come back. But, otherwise, annual visits.” She smiled.

“Great,” Yoongi smiled back. “Thank you, doctor.”

“Hungry.” Jungkook signed again.

“Okay,” Yoongi said to him, cupping his face. “You little monster, we’ll get you some food.”

They got McDonald’s!

Tae was so happy. At the Jensens’, they would go to McDonald’s sometimes but only the biological kids got Happy Meals. The foster kids had to make a peanut butter and jelly and bring it with them if they wanted to eat. Tae got his own Happy Meal and it even had an *Incredibles 2* toy in it.

They ate in the car on the way to Hoseok’s appointment. Hoseok was sitting up front because he was the oldest. He could see that Dad was talking to him, but he couldn’t decipher what was being said. Instead he focused on his cheeseburger from the third row, pulling his legs up to sit cross-legged.

Jungkook was rocking really hard like he always did when he was in the car, eating his
nuggets and French fries with both hands. Tae looked at the empty car seat for Jimin. He missed Jimin. But, he was in school right now. Dad said that they were going to pick him up after Seokie’s appointment.

Tae wished that Jimin could go to his school. But, Dad had said that his school was only for deaf kids and Jimin wasn’t deaf. He said that he had a special teacher and they did a bunch of cool stuff like play with felt boards and letters. So, while Tae was bummed, he was happy that Jimin was having fun at school.

Once they got parked, Dad had to unclick Jungkook out of his car seat and then he could hop out himself.

“Help me real quick, Tae.” Dad said and Taehyung stood ready as he was given a plastic bag and Dad stuffed trash in it from lunch. Hoseok had his arm around Jungkook’s shoulders, as he kept edging away like he wanted to run. That also happened sometimes. He even tried once, but Hoseok grabbed his arm before he could run away.

“Kookie,” Dad said once he got Jungkook in his arms. “You can’t run in parking lots.” Jungkook just drummed his imaginary drum, humming lowly to himself.

The doctor’s office was not like the one they usually went to when they were feeling bad or had ear aches. This one had a bunch of windows and toys in the waiting room and gigantic fish tank in the wall that had all sorts of fish in it. Hoseok, Jungkook, and him all sat on their knees in their chairs, watching the fish swim around.

“Look,” Tae patted Hoseok’s arm and pointed at an orange fish. “It’s Nemo.”

“And it’s Dory.” Seokie signed and pointed. “Look, Kookie, it’s Dory.” Jungkook’s eyes were just really wide and his mouth was open as he watched all the fish swim around.

“Hoseok,” Dad touched Hoseok’s shoulder and he spun around and sat down on his butt. Tae did the same thing. Jungkook still stood on his knees, his eyes on the fish tank. “You’re going to go back and talk with a doctor, okay?”

Seokie’s eyes went wide and scared like when he got lectured for not making his bed in the morning. He was always scared. He was scared of the top ladder of the jungle gym and when the swing went too high or when adults were angry with him. He was scared of monsters in his closet – even though they weren’t any ever – and being left alone at school. He was scared of scary movies or even movies that just had scary-looking characters in them like Sleeping Beauty. He was scared of cars when they crossed the street. He was scared to get in front of the classroom and write on the board. Hoseok was scared of everything. To the point where he would cry and shake and scream.

“Okay,” He signed.

“And there’s going to be a lady in there with you that can interpret so you can use sign.” Dad said, his dark eyes serious. “I need you to be honest with her, okay?”

“Honest?” Hoseok asked, his eyebrows scrunching.

“Whatever questions she asks you I want you to be completely honest.”

“You’re not going in with me?” Seokie asked, his fingers pulling on his shirt like he did when he was nervous.

“No, baby.” Dad shook his head. “For this to work, it needs to be between you and the
doctor, okay? You don’t have to be honest with me, but you have to be honest with her. Okay?”

He shook his head, his breathing coming in hard huffs as he got to his feet and followed the nurse through a door that led to the back. He casted a look over his shoulder before disappearing.

Dad sat down in Hoseok’s empty seat and adjusted Kookie’s t-shirt. Tae tapped his arm. “Dad,” He said. “Is Seokie okay?”

“He’s okay,” Dad nodded and Tae tried to figure out if he really meant okay or just the okay that meant adults were lying to make you feel better.

“What’s wrong with him?” Tae asked. “Like, why are we at the doctor’s?”

“He’s just going to talk to someone.” Dad pulled out his cell phone to text.

“What makes him scared or sad, mostly.” Dad said. “Or anxious.”

“Ank-shious.” Tae repeated. “What does that mean?”

“Like, nervous.”

“Oh.” Tae settled back in the chair. He watched his feet tap together. Anxious. He turned again with a different question. “About his dad?”

Dad looked at him. “What do you mean?”

Sometimes when Hoseok’s dreams were really bad, he would get in Tae’s bed and they would talk until one of them fell asleep. Mostly, it was about their homes before they were adopted. Hoseok’s parents lived in a trailer that had a roof that leaked when it rained. He wasn’t allowed in the kitchen. If he was caught in the kitchen, his dad would smack him.

“Like, when his dad would smack him for going into the kitchen?”

Dad put his fingers in his eyes and rubbed them really hard. Taehyung looked at his hands, feeling like he said something wrong.

“He did what?” Dad signed.

“I don’t know…” Tae whispered. “I don’t know if I should talk about it.”

“What has Hoseok told you, Tae?”

“Well,” Tae started, feeling a whoosh rush out of him. “Like, his dad was gone a lot but his mom was also asleep a lot so Hoseok didn’t eat very much. And sometimes his dad would get mad and smack for no reason or when he did something like squeeze their cat too tight. Sometimes they would lock him in the bathroom. But, Hoseok never knew why. And there were strangers and-,”

“Oh,” Dad cut him off. He sighed and slumped back a little, turning to look at Jungkook – who was still staring at the fish. “That’s something Hoseok told you in confidence.”

“In confidence?”

“Like,” Dad signed. “Like in secret. If he wanted to tell us, he would’ve.”
“Oh,” Tae kicked his feet. “Yeah.”

Dad sent a text on his phone and rubbed his forehead. He turned towards Tae. “If…” He winced like something bit him or stung him or something. “If Hoseok tells you something…like bad. Like, he was hurt really bad or…” He winced again. “Or touched in ways he didn’t want you tell me or Dad immediately. You understand?”

Tae nodded. “Like…if he was beat up?”

“Yes,” Dad said.

Tae rubbed his hands together. He didn’t recall anything like that. “He hasn’t said anything.” He shook his head.

“Okay,” Dad folded his arm around Tae’s shoulders. Tae moved into the touch. Safe and comfy. “But, if he does. Let us know.”

“Okay,” Tae nodded. “I will.” Because he was a good brother. And that’s what good brothers do. They made each other happy and made sure they were protected.

“You’re an amazing brother, Tae.”

Tae laced his fingers together and beamed. It was all he ever hoped to be.

Chapter End Notes

Please let me know if you enjoyed the chapter and maybe I’ll do Hoseok sometime??
Immeasurable and Overwhelming

Chapter Notes

Chapter Warnings: panic attack

I got so many comments on my last chapter! Thank you very much! Some of you liked the Tae POV chapter and some did not. And that's okay, as long as you continue to trust that I won't leave anything (or one) out.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

“Namjoon, you have, like, a *sh*t-ton* of kids, right?”

Namjoon glanced at his framed picture of all of them on the courthouse steps shortly after Jungkook and Jimin’s adoption was finalized that now made a home on his desk. They couldn’t get Jungkook to look at the camera and Jimin was about ready to fall asleep, but they looked so cute in their matching button-down shirts. He then looked at the dean of sociology and language standing in his doorway. “Well, I’m not sure what unit of measurement that is, but I have four kids, sir.”

His boss was a nice enough guy in the I-wear-belt-buckles-with-words-on-them-and-cowboy-hats sense. He always had a knack for catching Namjoon completely off-guard and he used that talent now as he strode into Namjoon’s office and took a seat in one of the chairs across from his desk. He gave a big sigh. “So, you know Beth, my wife?”

“I think I met her at the Christmas party?” Namjoon said. “Two…years ago?”

“Yeah, well,” He shifted. “We divorced last Christmas and I bought all these tickets to Disney to take my kids this spring break, but apparently she has them spring break and is taking them to Frisco to her rattlesnake of a mother and the goddamn travel agent won’t let me refund them and I could use them over the summer for the two weeks I get to see my kids.”

“I'm sorry to hear that, sir.”

He rolled his eyes. “But all my kids are over the age of fifteen now and I know it’s gonna be like pulling teeth to take them. I rather them go to a family that’ll appreciate them.” He threw a stapled packet of papers on Namjoon’s desk.

Namjoon looked at the papers. It looked like a printed out confirmation email. *Disney*. He thought as he connected it all together. *The…theme park, Disney?* That sounded expensive. Like, it had always been a pipe dream and maybe around Christmas when Namjoon bonus or when Yoongi got a really good project, he could think about taking the family to Disney. But, they had just purchased a house and adopted two more children. Those were expensive endeavors.

But, *Disneyland*. He hadn’t even been to Disneyland and he’s lived within driving distance of it his whole life. He imagined all four of them on Main Street Disney. He imagined them with big smiles over their faces as they met Mickey Mouse. He imagined their eyes full of fireworks and magic and wonder. It was a dream.

*A dream.*
He looked up. “H-how much?”

“Oh,” His boss shifted. “You don’t have to pay me, Namjoon. It’s a gift.”

“Oh, I can’t take these.” Namjoon pushed the papers back. “It wouldn’t be right.”

“I don’t want them to go to waste, though.” His boss stopped the papers.

“Yes, but sir,” Namjoon said. “Disney’s **expensive.**”

“Sure it is.” His boss leaned back again. He sighed. “But, I really want you to have them.”

“It’s not professional to accept gifts from my supervisor.” Namjoon insisted, staring his boss down.

He sighed and shifted. “Tell you what, give me half of what I paid for them and we’ll call it squared.”

Namjoon looked at the packet and flipped to the last page. “Half.” He repeated. That was not bad, actually. He could probably do half. And they were three-day tickets? “I can do half.”

The dean smiled. “Great.” He stood up. “Now I can email my bitch of an ex and tell her to enjoy her time in Frisco with her even bigger bitch of a mother.” He started to walk out and then turned around. “Oh, there’s seven tickets in there. So, you’ll have an extra.”

“Well, my husband’s mother could probably come with.” He said.

“Great.” He said. “Enjoy your time.”

“Thank you, sir.” Namjoon nodded, his mind already spinning with his four boys in matching Mickey Mouse ears in the Happiest Place on Earth. “Thank you so much. I know my boys will really enjoy Disneyland.”

He stopped and turned around again. “It’s World.”

“Excuse me?” Namjoon asked, not sure if he got that.

“Those tickets are for Disneyworld.” He said. “In Florida.”


“That’s not an issue, right?”

Namjoon looked down at the papers. Disney World was on the other side of the country. That…changed things. He tried to work through the logistics of traveling with 4 kids – all with disabilities – on an airplane. Two airplanes. There probably weren’t any direct flights to Orlando from Los Angeles. With Jungkook and his sensitivities? With Hoseok and his anxiety? With Jimin and his…everything? He rubbed his forehead and looked back up at his boss, who was expecting an answer. “I would definitely need to talk it over with my husband. I thought these tickets were for Disneyland in Anaheim. You know, three hours away.”

He waved Namjoon off. “Nah, my tickets are too spoilt to be taken to Disneyland. Let me know if you can take them, okay?”

“I will.” He glanced back down at the paper, the image of all of his kids watching the fireworks above the park dressed in Disney t-shirts still seared into his brain. “I will.” He murmured
“Disney World?” Yoongi fingerspelled with one hand as he sat on his knees in the living room next to Jimin, his analytical narrow eyes full of skepticism. “Disney World?”

Namjoon was on his knees too, on the other side of Jimin as he assisted with getting him into his gait trainer. He had graduated to using the gait trainer in a locked position at home for thirty minutes to an hour. Paul’s goal was to strengthen his core and get him on his feet. And Jimin was always so excited to be stood up, his little feet tap-dancing and his smile big and wide.

Yoongi snapped him in using the harness that went between his legs and then put on Nick Jr on the television. Dora the Explora filled the screen and Jimin’s head cocked so that he could see as he bounced on his toes. “I don’t know.” He signed and got to his feet. “That would be a lot.”

“I know.” Namjoon agreed and stood up with him. He glanced outside the front window, watching Hoseok and Taehyung ride their bikes up and down their driveway. Their front door was open, but their storm door was closed so the kids could let themselves in and out.

“We have so much stuff going on with Jimin and his appointments and Jungkook and his therapy and Hoseok and his therapy. And then there’s the whole process of traveling to a different state and then if there’s a medical emergency and-,”

“Yes,” Namjoon grabbed both of Yoongi’s hands. “You’re right.” He held them still. “Do me a favor, okay?” He said and Yoongi’s head tipped and his eyebrows furrowed in confusion. Namjoon rolled his eyes. “Just humor me.”

“Fine.” Yoongi said.

“Close your eyes.”

Yoongi’s eyes slid shut.

“Now imagine,” Namjoon started, painting the same picture he had in his head. The same picture he couldn’t get out of his head. “Taehyung, Imagine Taehyung, okay? Imagine him in Mickey Mouse ears with his wide, rectangular smile over his face as he spins in a teacup ride. Imagine Hoseok meeting Maui, while probably hiding behind your hip. Imagine Jungkook and Jimin with ice cream all over their faces watching the fireworks show.” Namjoon pulled Yoongi close to him, wrapping his arms around his waist. “Isn’t that nice?”

“Mmm.” He could feel Yoongi hum under his fingertips. He nodded. “Yeah, that is nice.”

“Now, yeah, the airports will suck and finding accessible…everything is going to suck. But, isn’t the memories we can create worth the hassle?”

Yoongi opened his eyes. “I-,” He started and then his eyes widened a little and he looked around Namjoon’s shoulder. “Shit, Jungkook’s-,” But, Yoongi was already moving as he chased their four-year-old through their storm door into the front yard. Namjoon followed them outside to assist.

And then froze as he watched Yoongi move so fast – the fastest Namjoon has ever seen his
husband in the six years they’ve been together – as he yanked Jungkook out of the way of Taehyung’s bicycle that was coasting down the slope of their driveway.

Taehyung panicked and hit the brakes and before Yoongi could recover and help him stay upright, he flew over the handles of his bike and crashed onto the concrete, face-first.

This all happened in probably a second, maybe a second and a half and Namjoon was already moving as soon as he saw Tae’s panicked face, skidding onto his knees next to his son and giving himself road rash. “Baby.” He said and scooped him up, cataloging damage. “Are you okay?” He said as he noted the blood that was starting to trickle down his forehead because he hadn’t been wearing his helmet, his broken glasses, the scab on his chin.

Tae was all wide-eyes and a surprised, sheet-white face. He didn’t answer and Namjoon felt his stomach twist with worry. “TaeTae,” He said. “Are you okay? What hurts?”

Taehyung suddenly found his lungs and inhaled a big breath of air. He let it out in a big sob, his face heating red. He clutched his left arm to his chest. “My arm!” He yelled. “It hurts!”

“Where, Tae?” Namjoon demanded.

Tae pointed to his wrist.

“Your wrist? Does your wrist hurt?”

“I-I can’t see what-,” He sobbed, his chest contracting with hard huffs and his face pinched with pain. “My arm hurts!” Blood trickled down his forehead. At least that wound didn’t look too bad. Namjoon guessed he got his arm in front of him before he completely hit the ground.

Namjoon felt something touch his shoulder and he squinted in the low light of the sunset at Yoongi. “Should we go to the emergency room?” He looked worried.

Namjoon glanced at Jungkook, whose Diego shirt had ripped from being yanked. He was stimming, his eyebrows pulled together. He looked at Hoseok, who had stopped on his bike, his face pale and sick like he was about to throw up. He glanced at the house where Jimin was parked in the living room in front of the television.

He looked back at Tae. Front and center. Taehyung was front and center. “Taehyung,” He rubbed his face of tears. “Can you move your arm?” He said.

Tae shook his head as he sobbed. “No. It hurts!”

That settled that. They were going to the emergency room. Namjoon scooped Taehyung up into his arms. “I’ll take him.” He said. “You stay here with the other kids.”

Yoongi jerked, his eyes full of anxiety. “Namjoon-,”

“It’s okay.” Namjoon said as he cradled their son. “He’ll be fine. But, it probably needs to be x-rayed.” He leaned over and kissed Yoongi. Confidence and worry fighting for a place in his ribcage. “We got this.”
Yoongi watched the SUV pull out of the driveway, his hand on Jungkook’s shoulder so he couldn’t bolt again. The other rubbed the worry lines in his forehead as he prayed that Taehyung was okay. That was a hard crash. Yoongi was only a second too late. If he had been a little faster, a step quicker than maybe he could’ve been there to stop him from falling. Yoongi replayed it over and over in his head. He was right there. He could’ve saved him and now Tae was hurt and it was Yoongi’s fault and-

“Daddy,” Hoseok said and Yoongi was taken out of his thoughts. He turned and watched Hoseok hop off of his bike, letting it fall on its side in the grass. “Is Taehyung okay?” He signed, his breathing coming in hard huffs.

“Seokie,” Yoongi signed, pushing his own worry aside as he held a firm grip on Jungkook’s arm. “He’ll be okay. Just breathe.”

Hoseok inhaled through his nose and out of his mouth. “He fell on the ground.” He signed, mimicking Tae falling off his bike in sign. “He was crying.” Hoseok’s breath picked up speed again. “What if he got really hurt?”

“He’ll be okay.” Yoongi signed.

“But, Daddy,” He whined with his voice. “How do you know?” He signed.

“Baby,” He said. “Tae will be okay. He hurt his arm and he hit his head a little. But, giving yourself a panic attack isn’t going to help him. You have to calm down, okay?”

However, Hoseok was past the point of no return and Yoongi dropped to his knees so Hoseok could cram his body into his chest and grip his hoodie. He was crying and vocalizing loudly and breathing too fast. And Yoongi just held him and rubbed his back, while keeping his other hand on Jungkook.

They were two visits into Hoseok’s therapy. And to him, therapy was playtime where he was asked questions about his old home. But, to Yoongi and Namjoon it was a real insight into what Hoseok had been put through the first five and a half years of his life. And none of it was good. In fact, Yoongi was just thankful that he had survived as he was retold what Hoseok and the doctor had discussed after their visit.

“Okay, baby. Shhhhh.” Yoongi murmured. “Shhh. He’ll be okay. He’ll be okay.”

These first visits were for diagnosis-purposes only. Once they really pinned down Hoseok’s issues, then they could see about working on giving him the tools for how to cope. For now, the doctor prescribed an as-needed anxiolytic for when he had panic attacks. Yoongi decided that Hoseok could use one now.

“Let’s go inside, okay?” Yoongi rubbed his tears and signed. “Can you walk with me?”

Hoseok nodded and held onto Yoongi’s waist as the three of them walked into the house together. Yoongi closed the door and hit the top lock that hooked into the ceiling that Jungkook couldn’t get to – as unlocking doors was becoming a favored pastime of his.

Jimin was still standing in his gait trainer, watching television, in complete bliss from the chaos around him. Yoongi let go of Jungkook and hoisted up Hoseok into his arms. Hoseok wrapped his legs around Yoongi’s waist and Yoongi grabbed him a little kid-dose anti-anxiety tablet from the pill bottle and a Capri-Sun. “Swallow this, okay?”

Hoseok was calming down organically – his eyes glazing over from exhaustion and his face
splotchy from his tears - but Yoongi wanted to give him some medicine anyway, in case he worked himself up again. Hoseok swallowed his pill and sipped his Capri-Sun.

“Tae will be okay.” He murmured and rubbed Hoseok’s cheek as he pressed it against Yoongi’s shoulder. He coaxed him to take another drink of juice. “Just breathe. In and out.”

Yoongi heard Jungkook grunt loudly and turned to him stimming hard as he paced behind Jimin, probably trying to find the remote so he could change the channel of the television. He had a sing-song tone that he would vocalize when he was looking for something, kind of like he was practicing scales. His hands grew faster as he grew frustrated when he didn’t find it.

“You want music, Kookie?” Yoongi asked and Jungkook stopped to register him.

“Music.” He signed and then tangled his hands up and jammed them under his chin.

Yoongi went to the television console and picked up the remote and changed the channel to VH1. Jungkook immediate took a seat next to Jimin, his eyes focusing on the screen.

Yoongi sat down on the couch with Hoseok in his lap and stared out the back door, hoping to God that Taehyung was okay with Namjoon.

“I know, TaeTae. I know it hurts.” Namjoon said as he held his son his lap in the triage room of the ER. “Can you hold it out for the nurse?”

Tae was still crying hard. His wrist was starting to swell and purple and Namjoon was pretty sure he had broken it. The bleeding had stopped on his head thanks to a paper-towel-wrapped ice pack he had been given by someone in the emergency room. Dried blood streaked his face and paired with the dirt smudges on his clothes, it looked like Taehyung had gone street fighting and not fallen off his bike.

“I-I can’t see-,” Taehyung blubbered between tears.

“I know you can’t lip-read.” Namjoon wiped his face. “I know. Shhh. It hurts. I know.” He rubbed his back and looked at the nurse.

“I’m just gonna put you guys down as next.” The nurse assured and handed Namjoon a small cup of liquid Tylenol and a small water bottle. “Have him drink that and we’ll call you back as soon as a doctor’s ready.”

The nurse left and Namjoon wrapped his arms around Taehyung. “I know, baby.” He said into his hair, his heart clenching with every sob he made. He dug his face into Namjoon’s t-shirt. “Hey,” Namjoon pushed him back and rubbed the tears from his face with his thumbs. “Can you drink this? It’ll make you feel better.”

Taehyung coughed with his sniffles and sucked in a couple of deep breaths. He shakily took the cup from Namjoon and drank it and then sipped some water with Namjoon’s help. Namjoon grabbed the ice pack he was given early and gently pressed it to Taehyung’s arm. He whimpered with the contact. “It hurts.”

Namjoon dotted kisses on his cheek. “Hey, when the doctor makes it all better, would you
“Ice cream?” Tae repeated, squinting. Namjoon had taken his glasses off since one of the lenses were busted.

“Yes, baby. That’s how I always made myself feel better after I hurt myself.”

“Did you fall off your bike too?”

Namjoon felt his eyes tighten. He actually never owned a bike growing up. “No, but I fell down a lot in the playground and stuff. I was clumsy.”

“Clumsy?”

“Yes,” Namjoon smoothed down his hair. “You wanna hear a funny story? When I got married to your Dad, I tripped walking down the aisle because I was super nervous and wasn’t watching my feet and I ended up slipping on some petals and falling in front of everyone.”

Tae’s square smile started to make an appearance. He gave a little giggle. “Did people laugh?”


Tae’s smile grew wider. “Nini laughed at you too?”

“She was laughing the hardest.” Namjoon smiled at the memory of his now mother-in-law almost bent over in her seat, her flowery hat falling off her head as she laughed at Namjoon. “At least he’s grounded.” She had told Yoongi at the reception.

Tae hesitantly laughed and then his smile fell and he looked down at his lap and then back up. “Sorry for not wearing my helmet.” He rubbed his face and sniffled. “Am I going to get in trouble?”

Namjoon gave a little sigh. “No,” he said. “I think bumping your head and hurting your arm is punishment enough, don’t you think?”

“Yeah.” Tae agreed.

“Do you think you’re going to wear it from now on?”

“Yeah.” He sighed big. “I learned my lesson.”

Namjoon gave him a big kiss on the forehead as he rubbed his back. He was salty with sweat and a little metallic with blood. “I love you, TaeTae.”

“TaeTae.”

“It’s so heavy.” Tae complained as he stared down at his cast that covered his arm from the palm of his hand to his mid-forearm with contempt. It was neon yellow and hanging in a sling that the doctor was going to make him wear for the first week while the swelling goes down.

Namjoon sighed as he carried his son across the parking lot of the emergency room. After two hours, one x-ray, some nice hospital-grade children’s Tylenol, and more paper towels than
Namjoon could count, Tae was diagnosed with a hairline fracture in his wrist. The treatment was a plaster cast for six weeks. “It could be worse.” Namjoon said. “It could be your signing hand.”

Tae gave a big sigh. “I guess.”

“Now, don’t get it wet, okay? Even when you wash your hands, you have to make sure you don’t get it wet.” Namjoon said as he opened the passenger side door of the SUV and set Tae down.

“I know.” Tae said. “Can Hoseok sign it?”

“He sure can.” Namjoon said as he handed him his seat belt buckle. Tae clicked it in after getting it around his bound arm.

“And Kookie and Jimin too?”

“Well, both of them don’t really know how to hold a pen, Tae.” Namjoon said. “But, we could probably figure it. Maybe they can put their handprint on it or something.”

“Yeah!” Tae said.

As he promised, Namjoon took Taehyung to an ice cream shop – one where they smash all the ingredients into the cream in front of you and then roll the ice cream up into sausages. Tae watched through the glass, mesmerized as they chopped up half a Hershey bar, a graham cracker and a marshmallow into his. “I broked my arm.” He told the lady behind the counter and got an extra cherry.

Altadena was an hour or more for any beaches that were swimmable. And those that were swimmable were always overrun with tourists. On top of that, Yoongi – who Namjoon was positive was a house cat in his past life – hated sand and the water. So, even though they lived in Southern California, they never made it to the water, really.

Namjoon decided to change that and headed for Santa Monica. They were halfway there anyway and the traffic gods were on their side, that they made it time to watch the sun make its final plunge beyond the horizon.

Namjoon didn’t want to get sandy – or have to deal with crowds on the pier with a kid who was deaf and now also without use of his arm – so they stuck to the parking lot, sitting in the open trunk of the SUV. Namjoon held Tae’s ice cream cup for him so he could eat it.

When he was finished, Namjoon put the cup down and wrapped his arm around Tae’s shoulders. “We don’t get to spend much time together, just you and me.” He started.

“No,” Tae agreed and then shrugged. “But, that’s okay. I like having Seokie and Kookie and Chim around.” He patted his knee and then wiped ice cream off of his face with his sleeve. “They’re like having best friends forever.” His eyebrows furrowed.

“They are, aren’t they?” Namjoon smiled at Tae. He had him clean off the blood from his face with a baby wipe he found in the car, but he missed a spot. And some was still caked in his hair.

“Yeah,” Tae said and kicked his feet. “Yesterday at school,” He started to giggle. “Someone on the playground asked if Hoseok and I were twins.”

“That’s funny.” Namjoon nodded. “What did you tell them?”
“Hoseok wanted to say yes to mess with them. But, that would be lying.” Tae snorted. “I told them we were adopted by you and Dad and that we have two other brothers. But, they weren’t deaf so they didn’t go to Oliver.” He patted his cast.

“Yeah, it’s not good to lie, even if you’re just joking around.”

“That’s what I told Hoseok.” Tae said proudly. “He said that Dad lied to Jimin to get him to take his medicine that morning and it was like the same thing. I told him it wasn’t the same thing because Jimin doesn’t know what a lie is.”

“You and Jimin are the same age, you know. You could be twins.”

Tae thought about that. “Twins with Jimin?” He smiled and kicked his feet. “Jimin’s my favorite. Well, Hoseok’s my favorite too. And so is Jungkook.”

Namjoon sighed and pressed his lips to Tae’s head. TaeTae, his little mild-mannered angel who never asked for any more than he needed. His artist. His free spirit. He watched the sun slowly creep down the horizon and sighed a little. His people-pleaser. His middle child. His little kindred spirit that knew what it was like to feel unwanted and alone. Namjoon’s heart flipped. “Hey, Tae?”

“Yes, Daddy?”

“Can you do something for me?” Namjoon smiled a little.

“What’s that?”

“Can you count every drop in the ocean for me?”

Tae’s nose wrinkled and he looked at the Pacific for a second before looking back up at Namjoon. “No.” He shook his head. “That would take forever. There’s like a million drops.”

Namjoon’s smile grew wider as he took in Tae’s bewildered expression. “Okay, then.” He said and looked towards the water. “Can I instead do something for you?”

“What?”

Namjoon carefully slid Tae into his lap, watching his arm. “Can I promise that I will love you for as long as it takes you to count every drop of the ocean?” He nosed Tae’s cheek.

“But, that’s silly.” Tae’s eyebrows furrowed. “Why would we count the ocean?”

“Because, baby,” Namjoon cupped his face and looked into his onyx eyes. “My love for you is like the ocean – immeasurable and overwhelming.”
Yoongi heard the door open and close and the pitter-patter of feet as Tae jogged through their entryway into the main room. Yoongi wanted to get up and hug him, make sure he was okay. However, Yoongi couldn’t move as he had Hoseok and Jimin sleeping side-by-side on his chest. Hoseok had his arms wrapped around Jimin and Jimin drooled as he napped.

“Daddy,” Taehyung burst into the living room, his arm wrapped in a yellow cast in a sling that was hanging around his neck. “I broked my arm.”

“You broked your arm?” Yoongi said with surprise.

“Yes,” Tae said. “I had to get an x-ray and they put me this vest that was super heavy and told me to hold still. And then they put the cast on me and it was all wet at first but then it dried really hard and now it’s heavy.” He said and looked at his arm. “I’m not allowed to move it unless I have to for, like, two weeks.”

“Oh, Tae.” Yoongi said as he took in his cast and his sling, his little fingers poking over the edge of the plaster. “That was a hard fall.”

Namjoon walked in behind him. “It’s just a hairline fracture. Very clean – the types of breaks you want. It’ll heal quick.”

Yoongi let out a little sigh of relief, knots of worry undoing in him. He broke his ankle once during basketball and then his shoulder his his accident. They weren’t fun injuries, but as long as Taehyung did what the doctor told him, he would be fine. “And his head?”

“He’ll have a sizeable egg.” Namjoon carded Tae’s hair back. “But, it was all superficial damage.” He said. “Tae did ask if he was going to ‘hurt his brain’ like Jimin did to the doctor and then went to explain how Jimin ‘hurt his brain.’”

Yoongi glanced at Jimin in his arms – his violet eyelids shut and his full lips parted. He had one of his hands jammed under his cheek. “What was his story?”

“Well he was pretty sure he fell…down some stairs…in a tall building?” Namjoon said as he picked up Jungkook and gave him a kiss.

*It was better than what actually happened.* Yoongi thought as he cupped Jimin’s face. “Well, at least we know Tae’s imagination wasn’t hurt by his fall.” He said and pressed his nose to Jimin’s hair and inhaled.

Namjoon chuckled and set down a wriggling Jungkook on the floor. He took off towards his bedroom, barreling as fast as he could go. “Taehyung,” He touched Tae’s shoulder. “Let’s get you cleaned up, okay? Meet me in the bathroom?”
“Okay, Daddy.” Tae danced off down the hallway.

“How are they?” Namjoon moved to sit on the coffee table in front of him.

“Jimin’s fine.” Yoongi said. “He’s a little sore I think from all the exercising. Hoseok had a panic attack but fell asleep after some meds.”

“Oh, baby.” Namjoon brushed his hair off of his forehead. “His anxiety has been through the roof lately.” He signed.

“I know.” Yoongi signed back. “It’s been bad. I wonder what’s causing it to flare.”

“We’ll have some answers in a couple of weeks, right?”

Yoongi inhaled and let it out. He gently brushed Hoseok’s cheek. Between his struggles at school and bullies and anxiety, it felt everything was piling on their eldest with no reprieve. He really, truly hoped that counseling would help. Even if it was just to get some relief from his fears. “Yeah,” He signed finally. “Hopefully.”

Namjoon gently picked up Jimin and got him settled on his shoulder. “Maybe we can all use a vacation.” He gave a sheepish smile.

Yoongi rolled his eyes. He honestly couldn’t logistically figure out how to get his family onto a flying tin can known as commercial jets, to the other side of the country and then to Disney World? The amount of things that could wrong on an airplane and for them to be just stuck up there in the sky until they landed was immeasurable. “Babe,” He sighed. “I don’t think-,”

Namjoon waved and interrupted him. “We’ll…talk about it later, okay?”

Yoongi stared down his big, dumb, beautiful husband with his pillow-soft lips and his canyon-deep dimples. He wasn’t going to give up and that was because he was trying to – vaguely – live vicariously through his kids. And Yoongi couldn’t even blame him. His childhood sucked. “Fine.” He conceded. “Let’s get through Seokie’s birthday party first and we’ll talk about it later.”

Namjoon stood up and kissed Yoongi – he tasted sweet, like dessert. “I’m going to help wash off our son of grass stains and blood.” He smiled as he cradled Jimin against him.

“I’m going to be our son’s pillow as he sleeps off his meds.” Yoongi loved saying that - our son.

“I love you.” Namjoon smiled at him.

“I love you too.” Yoongi loved saying that too.

The next day, Yoongi had to go to Party City to pick up balloons and favors and decorations for Hoseok’s birthday party that weekend.

It was pretty quiet on a late Friday morning – just another parent shopping with their preschooler. Yoongi counted that as a blessing because Party City, he realized, was just a gigantic
hall of distractions for Jungkook, who stopped every other minute to pull a toy off of it's peg and play with it.

“Let’s pick out some party favors, hmm?” Yoongi said as they stepped into that aisle, trying to engage him. He pulled the plastic dagger-sword thing out of his hand and set back on the shelf. “No weapons.” He said and pushed him along the aisle.

Jungkook stimmed furiously, making an annoyed grunting noise with it. He turned around and started to go back to the swords, picking up one.

“Jungkookie,” Yoongi said calmly. “Stay with Daddy.”

Jungkook ignored him, instead throwing down the sword and picking up another one. He flipped it in his hands.

“Okay, baby.” Yoongi took the toy out of his hand and put it down. “We have a mission today. You have to help with Daddy’s mission.” He said and picked up the sword that Jungkook had thrown on the ground.

Jungkook grunted again, his eyebrows furrowed and his lips pursed that told Yoongi he was mad that he wasn’t allowed to play. “Home.” He signed on his cheek.

“No, baby.” Yoongi shook his head and picked him up into arms.

Jungkook responded by wriggling like a fish out of water, moans and grunts coming out of him and his face flushing red from being held.

Yoongi sighed and put him back on his feet. “Baby, we have to get party supplies for Seokie’s birthday. You want your brother to have a good birthday, right?”

Jungkook’s large, doe eyes regarded him for a second. He grunted and then stomped to the end of the aisle and grabbed some party favors that were within eye-level and held them up for Yoongi’s inspection. They were tiny containers of bubbles. Yoongi assumed that would be fine and put them in his hand basket. “Good job, Kookie. Can you find me some decorations now?”

Finding Hoseok’s party supplies turned into a scavenger hunt. Some things that Jungkook pulled off the shelf were a little questionable (princess tiaras) but some things were perfect (Iron Man table cloth). Thankfully, the activity got Jungkook to focus on something other than the cheap, plastic toys around him and Yoongi got his shopping done.

The last stop was balloons at the counter. Yoongi asked for a dozen of red and blue ones and the associate started blowing up and tying off balloons.

Yoongi felt a hand on his hip and then looked down to Jungkook stimming and cringing from the noise of the helium tank. “Ah, baby.” Yoongi glanced back at the associate. There were four balloons made. He turned back to Jungkook. “Is the noise bothering you?”

Jungkook grunted and groaned, his hands going in front of him. His whole little body tensed and his face twisted with the noise. His fingers moved to writhe next to his ears and cheeks started to redden.

“Okay,” Yoongi said, worry flashing through him. He looked up to the associate to let her know that he would be right back. “Excuse me-,”

She had loaded up another balloon on the tank and hit it so that it filled it up, causing that
whooshing noise that Jungkook couldn’t tolerate.

That was enough for Jungkook, who let out a sob as he patted and rubbed his head above his ears, hurrying full-speed to a full sensory-overload meltdown. Yoongi swiftly got him up into his arms. “I’m going to be right back.” He told the associate, leaving his hand basket of party supplies on the counter.

He got Jungkook almost to the door. Almost. They made it to the gray, industrial mat in front of the automatic doors. Jungkook jerked and writhed and Yoongi put him down before he almost jerked his bad shoulder out of his socket trying to hold on to him or worse – dropped his child. Jungkook threw himself down on the ground with both hands clamped over his ears and the automatic doors opened with the motion.

“Shhh. I know.” Yoongi knelt on the floor and rubbed his back. “I know.” He glanced behind him. At least they were far enough away from the balloon counter that he couldn’t hear the associate blowing them up. Or maybe she was done with Yoongi’s dozen that he had ordered. Or maybe she had stopped to gawk at Jungkook as he had his fit.

He turned back to Jungkook, who was beet red in the face and crying – wailing like kids did when they were upset. It was loud and echoed off the walls. Yoongi continued to rub his back and tried to be as comforting as possible. But, he knew that meltdowns really just had to run their course. He just had to stay patient.

“See?” Yoongi heard a voice behind him. “This is why you get put in time out when you act up. So you don’t act like that.”

Yoongi turned around to the only other parent in the whole friggin’ store shopping on one of the exterior endcaps with her little girl. Yoongi felt fire heat his face up – first with embarrassment. As an outsider it looked like Jungkook was throwing spoiled-child tantrum over something. And who else would be to blame for that but the parents? But, Yoongi quickly banished that away as anger lit him up inside. “Do you have something to say about my parenting?” He asked deadly low, his default voice when he was angry. “Because you can say it to my face.”

The lady looked shocked to be called out. Her face reddened. “Well, I-,” She stammered. “That’s right.” Yoongi turned and looked at Jungkook, who was still crying but he wasn’t as loud now. Yoongi carefully got him into his arms. “Because you don’t have anything to say.” Yoongi looked at the girl, who was watching the exchange with wide eyes. “Jungkookie’s a little different. Sometimes certain sounds and smells make him upset. He’s not being a bad boy. He just has a hard time controlling his emotions when something hurts.”

The lady stalked off without saying anything more, dragging the girl with her. Yoongi shifted his attention back to his son.

Jungkook’s fingers writhed next to his head, fisted his hair and he jammed his face into Yoongi’s shoulder and inhaled. He whimpered with his sobs and wriggled. Yoongi rubbed his back. “You’re not a bad boy.” Yoongi pressed a kiss above his ear. “Just a little different.”

Hoseok was so excited for his birthday party.
He woke up insanely early, crawled into bed with Namjoon and Yoongi – kneeling Namjoon in the stomach on the way – and bounced until Namjoon cracked his eyes open and signed "happy birthday," to him.

His smile was so big; he was like a strobe light of excitement. He was a firefly, buzzing around and illuminating from the inside out. He signed so fast that he was skipping over words. He kept asking when they were going to go, what time they were going to get there. And then when they finally got to Peter Piper Pizza – the restaurant full of arcade games on one side and then a sitting area on the other – he pinballed between Yoongi and Namjoon as they snagged the table the furthest away from the kitchen and decorated it up.

"Dad. Dad. Dad." He signed as he hung off of Namjoon’s belt loop. “When are the other kids coming?”

Namjoon looked at his husband. “You put three on the invitations?” He asked.

Yoongi nodded as he set the birthday gifts next to the cake. "I did."

“Three.” Namjoon answered and then glanced at Taehyung, who was busy putting a party hat on Jimin one-handed as he beamed open-mouthed at his brother, drool dripping down his chin. Yoongi dressed him cutely in a t-shirt that said *I Always Win at Musical Chairs.* The rubber band of the hat snapped underneath Jimin’s chin and he winced. “Hey, Tae.” Namjoon said and Tae turned. “Be careful with Jimin, okay?”

Tae nodded and the pecked Jimin’s head. “I know.” He said. "Nice touches."

Chim put his hand over his mouth. “Kiss.” He said and blew him a big kiss. "Tae."

Namjoon felt Hoseok tug on his jeans again. “Dad,” Hoseok pouted, his mouth turned down in a wishbone shaped frown. “What time is it now?”

Namjoon squinted at his watch. “Two-forty-five, Seokie. You have fifteen minutes.” He pulled off his watch and handed it to Hoseok. “When that arm reaches the three and that arm reaches the twelve, then your guests will start arriving.” He showed Hoseok on the face of the watch.

“Three and twelve.” Hoseok signed back with a nod and then took a seat on the bench that ran the length of the table, facing the door. He clutched the watch with both hand and tapped his feet impatiently on the floor.

“Do you want play some games?” Yoongi signed and then shook the container of tokens they bought. He had Jungkook’s wrist shackled in his other hand – their youngest ready to dart off towards the machines as soon as he was free. He had already tried. Four times.

“No, I’m fine.” Hoseok signed, the thumb of his open hand hitting his chest. “I want to wait for my friends.”

Yoongi and Namjoon shared a concerned glance. They had put Yoongi’s cell phone number on the invitation. Out of eleven classmates, only two had RSVP’d that they wouldn’t be able to make it. Nobody else had contacted them to say they were coming either way. However, Namjoon was uncertain how trustworthy first graders were to share stuff like birthday invitations with their parents and the last thing they wanted was for Hoseok to be disappointed with the turn out.

Yoongi sat down at the table between Hoseok and Jimin, letting go of Jungkook. Jungkook made a mad dash towards the games. Namjoon intercepted him and flipped him upside down, letting him hang from his ankles.
Yoongi pulled a package of yogurt drops that Jimin really liked and popped one in Jimin’s mouth. “Why don’t you guys go play and I’ll sit here with Hoseok and Jimin?” He said and crossed his legs.

“Are you sure?” Namjoon asked. "We can wait with you?"

“Yes,” Yoongi waved him off as he put his arm around Hoseok’s shoulders. “If Jungkook waits any longer, he’s going to bust a spring.” He grinned. “Go let Tae and him play.” He looked at Hoseok, brushing his hair off of his forehead. He looked up to Namjoon, his eyes flashing with worry. “I’ll wait here with Hoseok.”

Namjoon cast a look over his shoulder before heading to the arcade area with Tae and Jungkook. He only brought a handful of tokens with him, as the rest were for the party. He showed Tae how to play skeeball, since he only needed one hand to play that.

Jungkook was twirling in happy circles between all the lights and the sounds, his smile wide over his face and his nose all scrunched up. He tangled his hands and jammed them under his chin as he went from game-to-game, watching the demo screens intensely.

Namjoon followed him and he ended up at a game called the Cyclone. It was one of those reaction-timing games where the light spins and spins and you have to hit the button at just the right time to land on the jackpot space.

Jungkook crushed his face into the plastic dome as he watched the light spin. Namjoon giggled behind him, realizing the whole game was a gigantic sensory light-up toy.

“Kookie,” Namjoon said and pulled him so that he was front of the button. “You want to play this game? Watch me, okay? And then you can do it next time.”

Namjoon stuck in a token and the light stopped and started moving the opposite direction on its track. Excited, provoking music played like the machine was taunting Namjoon. He glanced at Jungkook, who was tracking the light with his eyes, his hands laced in front of his face and his elbows up. He then went back to the game and hit the button.

“Four tickets.” Namjoon groaned. “So close. Do you want to try?”

Jungkook pushed his way in front of Namjoon. “Me.” He signed and Namjoon chuckled as he inserted the token.

“Okay, you have to hit that jackpot one to get all of the tickets.” Namjoon pointed to the spot right in front of the button.

The light started moving and the music started playing and Namjoon watched Jungkook’s eyes zero in on the light. He tracked it around and around, his hands fidgeting. And then as quick as a snake strike, his tiny hand slapped the button and…

….he hit the jackpot.

Happy music started playing and the whole game flashed and a pile of tickets started to feed out of the machine. Jungkook hopped around in a circle, his nose scrunching and his hands clapping.
“Again.” He signed. “Again. Again.”

Namjoon just stood, frozen and appalled as he watched the tickets feed out of the machine into a big mess on the floor. “You got the jackpot, Kookie.” He said. “Wow! Look at that! You won!” Namjoon was pretty convinced that these machines were all rigged because he hadn’t actually seen anyone win one before.

“Again.” Jungkook signed and stopped jumping. “Again.”

Namjoon put another token in the machine and the light started spinning again. Jungkook laced his hands in front of his face again, his head twirling a little as he tracked the light. Namjoon watched in amazement as his little boy play the arcade game. Jungkook’s hand darted out – as quick as before – and he hit the button. And won. Again.

“Jesus.” Namjoon breathed lowly as he watched the tickets start to fall out of the machine again. “We need to get you into…” Namjoon started and then shrugged. “I don’t know. I don’t even know what this skill is? Hand-eye coordination?” He murmured to himself.

Jungkook flexed his fingers before balling them into fists and stimming in front of his face. He looked up and flashed his two front teeth in a smile before averting his eyes to the floor.

Namjoon felt a pat on his hip and he looked down to Taehyung. His cast had been signed by Hoseok, who wrote ‘Seokie,’ a happy face dotting his i. And Yoongi busted out the finger paints and got Jimin and Jungkook to put their handprints on it. A couple kids in his class had signed it too and Tae himself had started drawing a fish scene on the part that faced him in marker. “Dad,” He signed. “Can I have more tokens?”

Namjoon dropped a couple more tokens in Tae’s hand and then turned to glance at their table. Hoseok’s feet were tapping and he still had his hands around Namjoon’s watch, his eyes intense on the door. Namjoon pulled out his phone and clicked the screen on. It was 2:58.

Namjoon sighed, hoping that regardless if Hoseok’s classmates showed up or not, he would have a good birthday party.

Seokjin was the first guest. He arrived at 3:01.

“Happy Birthday, Hoseok.” He said and handed over a beautifully wrapped present to Yoongi with a big smile. “How old are you today?”

Hoseok looked at Yoongi and Yoongi set down the present and interpreted Seokjin’s words for him. Hoseok beamed back at Seokjin. “I’m eight-years-old.” He signed.


“Jin.” Yoongi felt his face heat up at Seokjin’s blunder. “You go off the chin not towards it.” He showed him how to sign age in sign. “You just signed ‘blowjob’ at my son.”

Seokjin’s face heated red. “Oh my fu…God,” His voice hitched up in volume and pitch as he
Yoongi smiled at him. “It’s okay.” He said and cut him off. “Hoseok doesn’t know that sign.”

“Okay, well, um,” Jin rubbed his hands on his jeans. “I’m going to buy some tokens. All the tokens. I’ll buy every token they have.” He walked off towards the counter where you purchased tokens and redeemed tickets.

“Dad,” Hoseok signed. “The arms are on the three and the twelve.” He held up Namjoon’s watch. “Does that mean my classmates will show up?”

“That’s the time we put on the invitation,” Yoongi signed back and the grabbed Hoseok’s hand to squeeze. “Some kids might not show up, okay?”

Hoseok’s eyebrows furrowed and he frowned. “Why not?”

“Well,” Yoongi signed. “Sometimes kids forget to show their parents invitations. Some kids might have had other things going on today. Some kids might be out of town, since President’s Day is on Monday.” He said.

Hoseok’s excitement evaporated and the light that radiated off of him that Yoongi was sure could be seen from space like the Luxor in Las Vegas dimmed. And Yoongi felt his guts knot up as disappointment entered Hoseok’s dark eyes. He looked back towards the doors. “So people aren’t going to show up?” He signed.

Yoongi chewed on his lip. He didn’t want to lie, but he also didn’t want to crush his child’s dreams on his birthday. He glanced over his shoulder at the arcade area, wishing Namjoon would come back. He was way better at stuff like this. “Why don’t we just wait a little bit longer.” He put his arm around Hoseok’s shoulders. “Okay?”

“But, Dad.” He signed and shifted. “I gave everyone invitations.” He signed and his shoulders slumped.

“Oh okay,” Yoongi glanced at his phone. It was 3:14. “People might be running late. It’s okay. Don’t worry.”

Hoseok nervously chewed on his lip and flipped Namjoon’s watch in his hands. He glanced down at it. “What time is it now?” He asked Yoongi.

“It’s three-seventeen.” Yoongi signed back and the rubbed his shoulder. “Baby, it’s okay.” He signed.

They waited a bit longer and Yoongi fussed with Jimin, who had started babbling. He was squirming in his chair and pitched Mr. Ba off of his lap. “Uh-ooh.” He said, his head hitting the other side of his headrest.” Daddy. Uh-oh. Daddy. Uh-oh.” He said and gripped the air.

Yoongi bent over and picked up Mr. Ba and placed him back on Jimin’s lap. Jimin threw him on the ground with a big, playful grin. “Daddy. Uh-oh.”

Yoongi smiled at Jimin’s game. “You attention hog.” He picked up the bear again. He placed him back in Jimin’s lap and Jimin threw him on the floor again.

“Daddy,” Hoseok’s voice said and Yoongi looked back at him. “What time is it now?” He
signed and held up the watch.

“Uh-oh. Daddy.” Jimin said.

“Seokie, it’s only three-twenty-two.” Yoongi said.

“Three-twenty-two?” He signed back and slumped his shoulders. “It’s been forever.”

“Baby, it’s okay.” Yoongi smoothed down his hair. “We can start the party without the other kids and if they come, then they come.”

“Daddy. Uh-oh.”

“But,” Hoseok’s chin started to quiver and his nose turned red with suppressed tears. “But, I invited everybody in the class.”

“Oh, baby.” Yoongi pulled him by the arm into his lap. “I know you did. It’s okay. We can still have a party without them.” He folded Hoseok against him, feeling horrible that he was so disappointed on his birthday. *It’s my party; I can cry if I want to* ran through Yoongi’s head.

“Is Hoseok alright?” Seokjin asked as he sat down, a tumbler of tokens in his hand.

“We…” Yoongi said and rubbed Hoseok’s back. “We haven’t had any guests arrive yet.”


“Well, I’m here.” Seokjin grinned. “And *I* the best guest there is.” He shook the container of coins. “Does he want to play games?”

“Seokie?” Yoongi tapped his arm. “Do you want to play games?”

“I want to go home.” Hoseok signed back, his face red and puffy with tears. He rubbed his nose with the back of his hand.

“But, Hoseok,” Yoongi picked up the tumbler of coins, feeling his heart clench and Hoseok’s upset face. “Look at how many games you can play.”

Hoseok shook his head and crammed his face back into Yoongi’s shoulder. He wrapped his arms around Yoongi’s neck and squeezed as he sobbed.

“We haven’t had a very good school year.” Yoongi explained to Seokjin as he was slowly choked out like a rat being constricted by a snake. He sighed and rubbed Hoseok’s back. “His classmates haven’t been the most welcoming. We’ve been struggling with schoolwork. And we’re pretty sure that he has…” Yoongi gasped in air and started to pry Hoseok’s arms off of him. “An anxiety disorder.” He gasped.

“Wow.” Seokjin said and rubbed Hoseok’s back too. “That’s a lot.”

“We’ve been managing. But, it’s been…a challenge.” Yoongi winced as Hoseok’s volume increased. “Baby,” He said in his hair. “It’s okay. Shhh, I know.” Yoongi squeezed his eyes shut for a moment as he held him tight. All he wanted was for him to have a good birthday. Instead he was crying in the middle of Peter Piper Pizza. And Yoongi knew it really wasn't anyone's fault. It was just bad luck that Hoseok's birthday fell on a holiday weekend and maybe they should've given out invitations earlier. And maybe they should've picked a more fun place or something. But, to Yoongi, listening to his baby boy cry on his birthday was the worst thing ever.
“Yoongi,” Namjoon said and Yoongi opened his eyes to his name…and to Jungkook, who was holding an armful of tickets. Namjoon bent over and picked up Mr. Ba off the floor for Jimin, who immediately pitched it off of his lap again with a big giggle. “Everything okay?” He rubbed Hoseok’s shoulder.

Yoongi sighed. “No one’s shown up yet. We’re not dealing with it well.”

“Aww, baby.” Namjoon tapped his shoulder. “Jungkookie has something he wants to give you.”

Hoseok pulled away and raked his face of tears. His mouth was turned down in a frown and tears rimmed his eyes. “What?”

“Go on, Jungkook.” Namjoon prompted and Kookie stepped forward and thrust his armful of tickets out. “Kookie wanted to give you these, Seokie.”

“That’s a lot of tickets.” Hoseok sniffled and slid off of Yoongi’s lap. Jungkook handed the whole pile to Hoseok. “You’re giving all of them to me?” He asked in sign and then looked up at Namjoon.

“He wanted to make you feel better, Seokie.” Taehyung signed after he skipped up like a happy deer, his bangs falling in his face. “He saw you crying and signed ‘Hoseok’ and then pointed at the tickets.”

“How many are there?”

“We’re not sure.” Namjoon said. “But, he hit the jackpot four times. The associate actually had to open up the machine and reload it because it ran out.”

Hoseok sniffed and looked between everyone, holding the gigantic pile of tickets in his arms. He glanced at the doors and then back at Yoongi. “What time is it?”

Yoongi sighed. “It’s time for you to start having fun on your birthday, Hoseok.” He smoothed out his hair and caught a stray tear off of his cheek. Hoseok’s eyes averted to his shoes. Yoongi took in his little ski-tipped nose and his full cheeks and his dark eyes. Their precious boy that held so much on his shoulders. Their precious boy that deserved nothing but happiness.

“I kind of want that big flamingo.” Hoseok signed gently.

“We can win you that big flamingo.” Yoongi said and cupped his cheek. “You’re the birthday boy.”

“Can we eat too? I’m getting hungry.”

“Me too!” Taehyung chimed in.

“Yeah. We can do that.” Yoongi signed.

Hoseok wiped his face and looked at Jungkook. “Thank you for the tickets, Kookie.”

Kookie was hanging off of Namjoon’s leg and he scrunched his nose in response and shook his head a couple of times. Hoseok handed back Namjoon’s watch and then turned to Tae. “You want to play the racecar game with me?”

“Yes!” Taehyung said with a big smile over his face. Hoseok smiled back and put the tickets
on the bench next to Yoongi. “Let’s go play, Seokie.” Tae grabbed his hand and started to pull him. “You can be the red car since it’s your birthday!”

Yoongi patted the pile of tickets and sighed as he looked at the front door. The only person that entered was the pizza delivery guy. But, that was okay. He glanced at Hoseok was shyly playing with an arcade game. Hoseok had his daddies. And his brothers. They had each other.

And that’s all that mattered.

Chapter End Notes

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Please comment!<33
Looking Forward To

Chapter Notes

I got an ABSURD amount of comments on my last post. Thank you! I'm glad the Hobi Protection Squad has been activated and that everyone is ready to fight a class full of first graders for doing our lil Hoseok wrong. :')

Now, for the fun stuff - Disney World and constipation

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Yoongi sighed as he scrolled the online version of Walt Disney World’s *Resource for Guests with Cognitive Disabilities including Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)* that he found on their website while he listened to music play from Jungkook’s room. He *really* needed to get some work done. He had a project due to Kehlani’s producers in a couple of days. But, the idea of Disney World had been niggling at the back of his mind since Hoseok’s birthday party that last weekend.

He scrolled through the almost 40-page guide to the whole park for parents and their neurodiverse children. At least Disney World seemed to have their figurative shit together when it came to accessibility. However, while it looked good on paper, handling four kids – one hard-of-hearing, one severely deaf and anxious, one of which in a wheelchair with diapers and the other autistic – in a theme park full of crowds, he knew, was a *whole other story*.

He really, really wanted to make it work, though. That was the whole issue. Three days ago, he was fine rejecting the whole idea outright. His *family*? In *Florida*? It was, honestly, illogical. There were just too many working parts to have to handle. His family was not like the families the park was designed for. It just wouldn’t work.

But, then Hoseok’s birthday happened. His sweet, little Seokie so disappointed in something he looked so forward to. They ended up having a good time afterwards, coaxing his big laugh out of him. He blew out eight candles on his cake. He opened his presents. Between what Jungkook won out of the jackpot arcade game and what Yoongi and Tae and Namjoon won as well, they not only got Hoseok the big flamingo he wanted, but also a Mario Party for their Nintendo with the 5,000 tickets they managed to accumulate.

But, it wasn’t what he wanted. It wasn’t what he had expected. Hoped for. It wasn’t the vision that he had constructed – one where all the kids from his class came and was nice to him for an afternoon. The disappointment was just another notch in Hoseok’s psyche. Another scar on his already fragile heart.

And Yoongi wanted to fix it. But, what would be better than an amazing birthday party to an eight-year-old?

Disney World, of course.

Yoongi chewed on his lower lip and pushed his bangs out of his face. His hair flopped back into his eyes, however and he picked up his scrunchie that Namjoon always teased him for and put his bangs in a pigtail on top of his head.
He scrolled down the guide, finding the visual schedule and then snorted a little. That would be good for Jungkook, as he was currently learning how to do things in steps – such as brushing his own teeth - using a visual guide in therapy. He scrolled past pictures of happy families and cast members. Of characters. Of the monorail.

He tried imaging his family at Disney World, a picture forming in his head – the same on Namjoon tried to paint to him – all of his kids smiling and enjoying themselves. All of them in matching hats with Mickey ears. All of them in the sunshine, with stars in their eyes.

With all of the cares they carried on their little shoulders dropped at the front gate.

The child psychiatrist that was treating Hoseok was the best in the San Gabriel and San Fernando valleys. She was highly recommended, very experienced, and had credentials that were a mile long.

She had also been meeting with Hoseok now for almost three weeks – five visits that just involved her sitting and talking with Hoseok in a special playroom. He explained – using toys or coloring sheets or sign – what he had been through before he found Namjoon and Yoongi. His worries. His fears. What he thought about during panic attacks. His troubles at school. And she used that come up with a diagnosis and a treatment plan so Hoseok could learn how to cope with his issues and stop dragging so much baggage around with him.

And now it was finally time to learn what she had compiled.

“Daddy,” Tae said as he leaned on Yoongi’s leg, one of the kids’ tablets sitting against his casted arm. “My dragon growed up.” He showed Yoongi the math game he was playing.

“Wow,” Yoongi signed back. “That’s cool. You hatched that one yourself?”

Tae nodded. “Yeah, with subtraction.”

They were sitting the psychiatrist’s office. Dr. Greene was her name. Namjoon made a Friends joke that Yoongi didn’t laugh at which was met with “Come on, you’ve seen Friends.” But, Yoongi wasn’t laughing because he didn’t get it. He wasn’t laughing because he was nervous. Nervous over the results. Nervous over what the doctor had compiled.

“It’s going to be okay.” Namjoon murmured and laced his fingers with Yoongi’s. “Whatever it is, we’ll get through it.”

“I know.” Yoongi said and glanced at Hoseok, who was playing with Jungkook in the kids’ area on the corner of the room. He gave his little brother a big smile and a high-five when Jungkook figured out a puzzle board. Jungkook high-five him back with a big smile and tangled his hands together.

Namjoon dropped Yoongi’s hand to replace Mr. Ba in Jimin’s hand. Jimin wasn’t having a very good day, but Yoongi or Namjoon couldn’t figure out why. Yoongi thought it was his tummy and Namjoon thought that maybe one of his teeth were bothering him because he kept chewing on Mr. Ba. Whatever was bothering him was keeping his little lips pursed up and a furrow in his
eyebrows. But, he hadn’t said “ouch” yet, so they were assuming (hoping) that it wasn’t pain.

“Taehyung,” Yoongi prompted and patted Tae’s shoulder. “You want to show Jimin your tablet?”

“Okay, Daddy.” Taehyung said and moved to the other side of Namjoon, where Jimin’s wheelchair was parked.

Suddenly, the door to the office opened and lady in a polo and a pair of pink Nikes breezed into the office. “Hello,” She said. “So sorry I’m late. My last client’s parents kept me over.” Yoongi interpreted her words to Namjoon as she sat down at her desk and opened a big folder. “I don’t think we’ve been introduced.” She shook Namjoon’s hand.

“Namjoon.” Namjoon simcommed. “I’m Hoseok’s other dad.”

"Dr. Greene." She said and then flipped through papers for a couple of moments. “Well, Hoseok has had a rough start to life.” She read through her notes, flipping papers over. “Spending his first five years living in a methamphetamine lab while absent parents that didn’t ensure that Hoseok received proper language skills or hit milestones. Neglect. Even some abuse, according to him-,”

“Not sexual, right?” Yoongi blurted, inhaling what felt like a million needles into his lungs. He was nervous over this meeting, but he was absolutely petrified over what Hoseok had told her. What had been brought to light. What he had been through.

She shook her head. “He didn’t let on that anything like that had occurred.” She said and flipped the paper. “Now, I can’t say it didn’t happen. I’m not in his head and he didn’t have the words to really describe what was happening to him. He still doesn’t – he’s eight. But, at this time, it doesn’t seem like it.”

Yoongi felt Namjoon’s fingers grip his again. They were cold.

“Mostly, it seems that Hoseok is holding onto a lot of fear. Deep rooted phobias stemming from abandonment and negligence and fear of the unknown. And, I think that Hoseok might have a learning disability and he’s associating his struggles at school with this fear of being left alone. It’s causing a lot of stress in his life.”

Yoongi nodded. That wasn’t really surprising. A lot of that he had already figured out based on his own experiences. Yoongi’s own anxiety was more rooted in failure of himself and not letting anyone down. But, he also recognized that fear of the unknown, the stress of having to figure it all out all at once.

“Now, I can’t say for certain, as Hoseok’s birth records are vague.” The doctor said and pulled out a different stack of papers. “But, if he was exposed to meth – or really any drugs in utero – that could also be causing a lot of his issues.”

“What do you mean?” Namjoon was studying her face intently, making sure to catch everything she said. He leaned forward and put his elbows on his knees.

“I talked it over with a colleague in neurology and he agrees that if Hoseok’s mother was using while she was pregnant, a lot of issues may have been caused by that – his anxiety and the learning challenges. Even his petiteness could be caused by drugs.”

Yoongi sighed. “And we can’t ask her because she died last year.” He signed and said.
“Yeah, and his father is serving time in prison.” Namjoon added.

“He is one of the smallest in the class.” Yoongi said and signed. “Even though he’s the oldest.” It made a lot of sense now that Yoongi flipped it over in his head.

She nodded. “And really, psychiatry is a lot of speculation and bit of biology. It’s all chemical imbalances in the brain and Hoseok’s biology could just be altered by substances.”

“What do we do to help him?” Yoongi asked.

She pushed a paper towards the two of them. “We tested him the last visit and he seems to have dyslexia and dyscalculia. Those are pretty common learning disabilities that affects the way children process words and math. I also think he definitely has an anxiety disorder. The learning disabilities can’t be cured, but his schoolwork can be adapted to him so that he can keep up with his class.” She laced her fingers together. “With everything else,” She sighed, her eyebrows furrowing. “It’s really just going to take time.”

Yoongi looked at Hoseok as he squatted on the floor, undoing the puzzle that Jungkook just solved. He sucked in a breath as determination lit up every synapse of his being. Determination and love. Hoseok will be fine. “He had them now. Well, we have plenty of that.”

“That’s what I like to hear.” She smiled.

“Hi, baby boy.” Namjoon pulled every funny face he could physically make while he bounced Jimin in his arms around his room. “Please give me a smile. I miss it so much.”

Jimin had a disgruntled look on his face all evening – all through dinner and bath time and teeth brushing. He looked like he was annoyed by something, his eyebrows furrowed and his lips in a frown. He babbled a little, his arm waving.

“What’s wrong, baby?” Namjoon said as he brushed Jimin’s hair off of his forehead. “Does something hurt? Do you want some stretches?” He dragged the plush pad from its home against Jimin’s wall to the middle of the floor with one hand while he balanced Jimin against him with the other.

They had already tried stretching earlier. It just garnered the usual uncomfortable tears and then he went right back to looking pissed off. But, they were running out of things it could possibly be. Yoongi was convinced his stomach was upset. Namjoon had thought maybe a tooth was coming loose. He was seven now and was missing a couple of baby teeth already. And Namjoon did find a wiggly one, but nothing that would cause Jimin not to be his usually smiley self.

Jimin was starting to correlate the blue pad they bought for stretches with pain and he started to fight as he was laid down on it – his face flushing red with exertion. He rolled back and forth as he started to cry, his fists balling. He managed to wriggle so much, he rolled onto his own belly with no help. That just upset him even more because now he couldn’t see Namjoon. He pounded his arms on the pad and wailed.

The lights flashed off and on and he looked over to Yoongi in the doorway, a towel in his arm. “What’s going on?”
Namjoon glanced at Jimin losing it on the floor. “I’m trying to figure out what’s got him in a bad mood.”

“Well,” Yoongi jammed the towel under his arm to sign. “I think stretches will just ruin his mood further.”

Namjoon gently flipped Jimin onto his back and then got close so Jimin could see him. Jimin calmed down a bit, his little hands balling into his fists and his lip pouting. “Baby,” He said. “What’s wrong? Hmm? Daddy just wants to fix it and make it all better for you.”

Jimin’s eyebrows furrowed again and his eyes that were always rolled up tracked him a little. He blew a spit bubble out in a big sigh, like he was thoroughly over Namjoon. Namjoon looked back up to Yoongi. “Why don’t you just lay him down?” Yoongi suggested. “He might be tired.”

“I guess.” Namjoon sat back on his heels as he studied his baby boy. His baby boy who couldn’t communicate what was wrong with him. His baby boy who relied on Namjoon just to know. “I hate putting him to bed mad, though.”

Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed and he sighed. “I know. But, sometimes a night's sleep is what he needs.”


Suddenly, there was a smell. That smell. It was powerful. Namjoon froze and then immediately sat up and glanced at Yoongi, who signed “what’s up?” off of his chest.

Namjoon just covered his face with his hands, realizing that Jimin wasn’t mad. He wasn’t annoyed. He didn’t even have muscle pain. He was just…constipated. “Just wait for it.” He said from behind his hands.

He watched from between his fingers as the smell reached Yoongi. His face twisted up for second as he realized what it was and then he pointed and laughed at Namjoon. “Have fun cleaning that up.” He signed.

Namjoon dropped his hands and sighed at his child, whose smile stretched across his face. Jimin stuck his fingers in his mouth and gave Namjoon a little giggle. Namjoon just smiled back. “Be glad you’re cute.” He tickled Jimin’s belly.

After Namjoon cleaned Jimin up and got him into bed, he went through his routine of getting the house ready for the evening. He clicked off lights and locked the front door. He checked on Jungkook. They had gotten a projector that projected a galaxy scene on his wall and he bathed in the light of the faux Milky Way as he laid on his back on his bed. He checked on Jimin, who was sleeping with his hand tucked under his cheek. And then the elder boys. Their light was still on. Tae was sleeping, but Hoseok was still up, a book in his lap.
Namjoon waved to get his attention. “Bed time.” He signed.

Hoseok looked at him. “I have to finish my reading.” He signed and then motioned to his book.

“Do…” Namjoon started. “Do you need help?” He offered. He wasn’t completely familiar with dyslexia. He knew a classmate that had it when he was in school and it made spelling so hard that he ended up having special tests designed for him that he took on the computer. He knew it made the letters of words jumbled up and hard to read.

Hoseok shook his head. “No,” He said. “I’m almost done.” His eyebrows furrowed as they went back to his book.

Namjoon carefully walked in anyway, past Taehyung sleeping in his own bed to Hoseok’s bed. He sat down across from him and gently brushed his damp hair from his head. His hearing aids were off and his pajamas were on. His dimple popped out with concentration and his eyes looked strained and tired.

The doctor described one of Hoseok’s phobias. Abandonment. The fear of being ripped from his family again. He was certain he was the cause of him being taken from his biological parents the first time. And he was afraid he was going to be the cause of it happening again. It was an absurd fear. Namjoon or Yoongi have never once asserted that they would give Hoseok up. That they would leave him.

But, Namjoon knew that’s how mental illness worked. It didn’t matter that the fears were absurd. It didn’t matter that Namjoon and Yoongi could tell him day after day that Hoseok was their son. He would forever be their son and he would be loved for the rest of his days. The illness told him otherwise. And the illness was louder.

Namjoon waved to get his eyes. “You know,” he signed. “I don’t care what grade you get on your reading sheet. You know that, right?”

Hoseok chewed on his lower lip and glanced back at his book. “Miss Candace said that if my reading sheet isn’t complete she’s going to take a star off the board.” He signed.

“Seokie,” Namjoon removed the book from his hands and set it aside. He pulled Hoseok into his lap. “School is important. But, don’t get caught up with trying to be the best in the class, okay? Just worry about taking things at your own pace.”

Hoseok nibbled on his lower lip and he played with his shirt. “Am I stupid?” He asked, his dark eyes falling on Namjoon.


“Because I have to go to the doctor and she made me take tests that made me read little kid words and,” His shoulders fell. “I’m always last in the class and my AR score is the lowest and Melody said that I was ‘held back’ and that’s why I’m the oldest in the class and-,”

“Shhhh.” Namjoon grabbed his fingers and stopped him from signing. “You’re not stupid. Shhh.” Namjoon said and hugged him. “We’re taking you to the doctor because we want to help you with your worries. And you were a teensy,” He held up his thumb and forefinger. “Bit late to school because you learned language a bit later. It’s okay. It’s not a big deal.”

“Is it because of my old mom?”
“Well,” Namjoon shrugged. “It’s complicated. But, yes. Your mom made some decisions that are…affecting you now. And it’s not your fault, Seokie. Please don’t think it’s your fault.” Namjoon sighed. “You’re just a little bit different and need some help with reading and stuff. It’s not a big deal.”

Hoseok nodded and sighed against Namjoon’s chest, brr’ing his lips as he let out a gust of air. “Okay.” He finally signed. He looked tired.

Namjoon kissed his nose. “And you know that I love you whether you had zero stars or a million on the board.”

Hoseok smiled a little. “I love you too.” He signed back.

Namjoon gave him a big kiss on the cheek and he giggled a little. “Time for bed, okay?” He picked up his book for him and put it on the bedside table. Hoseok wiggled his way under his blankets and Namjoon hugged and kissed him goodnight.

Hoseok’s anxiety fed him lie after lie and fear after fear. But, Namjoon vowed that he was going to be right there, ready to fight for him.

Every single day.

Yoongi glanced up from his iPad as Namjoon padded his way into their bedroom. Yoongi watched as he stripped off his clothes to his undershirt and boxers and removed his hearing aids, digging the moisture out of his ear canals with his fingertips as he headed to the bathroom.

Once he was done, he crawled up from the end and settled his face against Yoongi’s shoulder, enveloping Yoongi with his large body. Yoongi combed his fingers into Namjoon’s dark hair and kissed his forehead. Joon smelled minty and oaky and like everything Yoongi loved. “Whatcha reading?” Namjoon asked, his accent thicker without his hearing aids in.

Yoongi looked at the many tabs he had open. Disney World had a pretty comprehensive guide for disabled guests, but the best advice came from actual parents of disabled children. He was currently reading a Mom-blog post of the best bathrooms in the park if you have a child in a wheelchair. “I’m trying to figure out how to make Disney World work.” He signed.

Namjoon perked up, propping himself up on his elbows. “I thought you were against Disney.” He said.

“I was.” Yoongi said truthfully. “But,” He sighed. “You’re right – I think we are in need of a vacation.” Yoongi raked back his own bangs. “I think Hoseok needs something to look forward to and I think it would be good for Tae too. Jimin, well…is Jimin, so he doesn’t really care either way and Kookie’s a little little to remember it. But,” Yoongi motioned. “You have the tickets, we…might as well.” And while it went against his greater instinct, Namjoon was right in that all the hassle, the stress, the search for accessibility would be worth the memories they created at the monster theme park.

Namjoon’s face lit up, his smile huge and dimply. “Really?” He signed, his eyebrows
Yoongi chewed on his lower lip. “Really.” He signed back.

“Oh my God.” Namjoon rolled over so he was laying on his back. “Disney World. Oh my God. The kids are going to have a blast, Yoongi.” He rolled back over, his eyes sparkling. “Oh, they’re going to have so much fun. And we can go to the beach. Oh my God.”

“Okay, shhhh.” Yoongi hushed and glanced at the baby monitor. “Don’t wake the babies.”

“Oh my God. The kids are going to have a blast, Yoongi.” He rolled back over, his eyes sparkling. “Oh, they’re going to have so much fun. And we can go to the beach. Oh my God.”

“Okay, sorry.” Namjoon said and hunched his shoulders. “I’m just excited.”

“Okay, shhhh.” Yoongi hushed and glanced at the baby monitor. “Don’t wake the babies.”

“Okay, sorry.” Namjoon said and hunched his shoulders. “I’m just excited.”

“Well,” Yoongi shot him a look. “Don’t get ahead of yourself.” He clicked to a checklist he made of things that needed to happen before they even thought about getting on airplane. “We need to work with Jungkook and get him used to big crowds and long rides. We need to take Jimin to the doctor, so he can be good to travel. I don’t want to fly until Hoseok’s adjusted on his new prescription. Tae’s cast needs to come off. We need to figure out a plan for the park and find accommodations that would hold all of us, make sure all the rides are safe and,” He looked at Namjoon. “I really want to take another adult. Like my mother or Hazel or something.”

Namjoon nodded, his eyes wide. “Absolutely. The more prepared we are, the better time we will have.”

Yoongi sighed as he clicked back to his Pinterest board of blogs. He clicked on the next one on the reading list. “And one more thing.” He signed as he peered at Namjoon over his glasses.

“What’s that?”

“Let’s have a one-hour date night in Orlando without kids. Just the two of us.”

Namjoon propped up his head on his hand. “Like dinner?”

Yoongi shrugged. “Or…I don’t care. A beer and a churro at Disney?”

“Okay,” Namjoon’s hand rested on Yoongi’s thigh and Yoongi gripped his fingers. “I’m fine with that. Your mom could handle our brood for an hour, I think.”

They lapsed into silence and Yoongi went back to reading how one parent got their severely disabled kid on the teacup ride by kind of wedging him between the parents. Yoongi took a screenshot of that blog and then glanced at Namjoon, who was staring at him, his grin wide and cheesy “What?” Yoongi asked.

“Yoongi Min-Kim,” Namjoon said into his fist like it was a microphone. “You just won the NBA championship, in front of your whole family, beating the other time in a landslide victory of a hundred and twelve points to seventy-four. What are you going to do next?” Namjoon jammed his fist in Yoongi’s face.

Yoongi smiled as he slowly clicked off the iPad and pulled off his glasses. “Well,” He rolled to his knees on the bed and fist-pumped. “I’m going to Disney World!”

Namjoon sat up to his knees too and wrapped his arms around Yoongi’s waist. His dark eyes were shiny with adoration and warmth. “We’re going to Disney World.” He whispered and kissed Yoongi.
If you guys are interested in perusing Disney World’s guide for the neurodiverse, you can find that here!

Please be sure to comment or find me on my curious cat.
Helpers

Chapter Notes

So, I totally was going to have this chapter up last night but my Word doc crashed and I lost half the chapter. I was very upset. So upset that I almost killed everyone in a freak ice cream truck accident. That’s not what’s going to happen, but I contemplated it.

Enjoy!

(also doodle is mine pls don’t steal)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I have to go to Lauv’s studio,” Yoongi announced one day during dinner. “On Wednesday night.”

Namjoon was trying to get some noodles into Jimin with some chopsticks and watch Yoongi at the same time. He ended up missing and Jimin chased the food with an open mouth like a baby bird. His arms flailed a little and he pressed out his lower lip in a pout. “Sorry, Chim.” Namjoon apologized and poked the noodles in his mouth. He chewed thoughtfully and babbled at the same time. “Wednesday? But, babe. I have a class on Wednesday night.”

Yoongi picked up his cell phone. “I can’t miss it, though. He said. “He’s going to Berlin for a show right after the meeting.” He put his cell phone down and got Jungkook to take another bite of dinner.

Namjoon’s eyebrows furrowed. “Well,” He sighed and loaded up the chopsticks again – this time to feed himself. “We can hire a babysitter for the evening.”
Yoongi’s eyes snapped to Jimin and they flashed with protectiveness that turned his dark irises into stones of onyx. “No,” He shook his head. “I can just take the kids with me.”

“Babe, there are always smokers at those meetings. I don’t really want the kids around smokers.” Namjoon argued. He hated most of Yoongi’s producer and artist colleagues because they always thought so much of themselves. And they always smoked. Namjoon didn’t want the kids around that. “Can’t you just Skype?”

Yoongi rubbed his forehead. “No, not really. It’s not just a meeting. I’m going to be recording some things too.”

Namjoon chewed on his lip. He glanced at the elder boys. Hoseok was poking at his dinner. He had been prescribed some anti-anxiety meds and they were starting to mess with his appetite. Namjoon had already reminded him that he had to eat at least half of his dinner before he could leave the table. Tae was trying to navigate his chopsticks, his tongue caught between his teeth in concentration. “I’ll just take them to class.” He finally said.

“Babe,” Yoongi rolled his eyes. “You can’t take our four kids to your college class.”

Namjoon shrugged. “Sure I can.” He said. “My students could probably use the practice with native ASL speakers, anyway.”

“What about Jungkook?” Yoongi asked.

“I can set him up with a game and headphones at an empty chair.” Namjoon said as he fed Jimin. “He’ll be okay. Wednesday is mostly a practice day for the test on Friday, anyway.”

“Are you sure?” Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed.

“Well, it’s either that or hire a babysitter.”

Yoongi’s lips flattened. “I’m not hiring a babysitter.”

“You know, there’s trained professionals who provide respite care.” Namjoon argued. “Like, it doesn’t have to be fifteen-year-old Susie looking for pocket money.”

“I don’t want any strangers touching our kids without us there.” Yoongi’s face flushed and he actually gripped the table with anger. “It takes…” He shrugged and looked at Jimin again. “Twenty seconds for something to go wrong.”

Namjoon smiled and covered Yoongi’s hand with his own. He could feel how cold they were. “Okay, then,” He said. “I’ll take them to class. It’s really not a big deal.”

Yoongi sighed, the tension blowing out of him a little. “Okay,” He said. “If you say so.”

“Chim Chim!” Yoongi sang as he arced around Jimin’s chair. It was Yoongi’s favorite time of day – school pickup. He started with Jimin at his school and then Tae and Hoseok at Oliver. It was Tuesday, as well, so Jungkook had to be picked up from the autism center he received therapy at. “Hi, baby bear.” He said.

It always took a moment for Jimin’s eyes to focus up on him and for him to recognize
Yoongi’s voice – his full lips rolled into a little ‘o.’ And then once he figured out that it was his
daddy, he would start to dance in his chair – his butt wiggling and his arms going as he made his
happy pants and cycled through every word that he knew.

Yoongi kissed his cheek and picked up his diaper bag from his cubby. Ms. Beller approached
him wearing a shirt that said *Got Goals?* “Today went well! Jimin almost has triangles down.”

“Really?” Yoongi beamed at Jimin. “That’s awesome.” Yoongi kissed his forehead and he
giggled back. Yoongi fixed Mr. Ba in his hands and wiped the drool from the corner of his mouth
with this thumb and then rubbed it on his pants. “I’m so proud of you.” He whispered and kissed his
forehead, feeling warm fondness blast through his veins.

“And next week we are taking a field trip to a tactile children’s museum downtown.” She said
and handed Yoongi a permission slip and a chaperone volunteer form. “I was wondering if you
wanted to chaperone and bring Jungkook along? We’re going with the first and second grade
classes, but if you chaperone with us, you can just hang out with the cool kids.” She gently touched
Jimin’s cheek with the back of her fingers.

“Oh,” Yoongi looked at the paper. “That sounds like fun. I’ll check my schedule.”

“Oh,” Sam said after cleaning off a table of blocks. “One more thing. He just got this down
and I’ve been waiting to show you, like, all day.” He approached Jimin’s chair. “Hey, Jimin. High-
five?” Jimin put his hand up and Sam gave him a little high-five. “Good job, Chim.”

“That’s great.” Yoongi said. “How long did it take for him to learn that?”

Sam shrugged. “Just about two weeks. We figured out that yogurt drops were a great
reinforcer.”

“Oh, yeah.” Yoongi nodded. “He loves those.” He turned to Jimin. “Jimin, high-five?”

Jimin held up his hand again and Yoongi high-fived him and then grabbed his and held it. “I’ll
see you guys tomorrow.” He said and moved to the handlebars.

Ms. Beller smiled and bent over. “Goodbye, Jimin. See you tomorrow.”

“Bye bye.” Jimin said with his tiny voice and waved.

Yoongi pushed Jimin outside, who was babbling, telling Yoongi all about his day. He carried
on even as Yoongi got him loaded into his carseat and strapped him into his harness, adjusting the
chest strap that had a sticker that warned emergency responders that Jimin was special needs.

“You’re so talkative today.” Yoongi said and pulled his shirt down.

Jimin continued to talk even when Yoongi got himself into the driver’s seat and started
towards Oliver. Jimin always talked so heated when he got going - like he was arguing. Once, his
voice sounded like he was whining about something and Yoongi watched in the rearview mirror as
his lips blew out and his fists balled up. And then when he got it out of his system, he gave a big sigh
and started to sing - high and clear - a made up tune to himself. It kind of sounded like *Baby Shark* to
Yoongi - which made him wonder how many times a day the paras listened to *Baby Shark*.

“Chim,” Yoongi said. Jimin stopped singing and turned his head towards his name, craning to
see. “Chim, can you say ‘little?’ Lit-tle?” Yoongi was trying to teach him the next couple of words of
*Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.*

Jimin didn’t answer. Instead his hand came up and mussed his own hair and then he started to
sing again, drool dripping down the side of his mouth. Yoongi just smiled at him in the rearview mirror. It wasn’t terribly often they got one-on-one time like this so Yoongi liked to take advantage.

“My angel.” He murmured and refocused on the road. “My little star.”

“Home.” Jungkook signed, the iPad in one hand and a DumDum he suckered the receptionist out of with his large doe eyes and wiggly bunny nose in his other. He leaned on Yoongi’s knee, his long hair flopping into his eyes.

“Baby,” Yoongi smoothed back his hair and cupped his face. His eyes automatically averted to the ceiling. “We have to wait for Jimin.” He said - for the fifth time since they had arrived to the exam room.

They were at their children’s hospital - specifically in the neurology department. Jimin had a set of follow-up visits after his hospital stay that last December. He had already had his medication adjusted once since then. This last set of x-rays were “inconclusive” so his neurologist wanted to do an MRI to make sure everything was okay.

And Yoongi was worried to the point of nausea over his little boy. He was worried when he got the call saying they wanted to do an MRI in the first place. He was worried when he and all of his kids passed through the threshold of the brightly-painted monster building. He was worried as he sat in the little exam room they brought them into so they could inject him with a mild sedative and change him into a hospital gown.

But, Jungkook came out of therapy tired and ready to go home. And he was proving to be an excellent distraction.


“I know this exam room is like a torture box of boredom for a four-year-old.” Yoongi chuckled. “But, you have to be patient. You’re a big boy. You can do that.”

Jungkook hopped a couple of times and flapped his hands in frustration. “Home.” He signed again.

“No, Kookie.” Yoongi shook his head.

“Hungry.” He tried, leaning on Yoongi’s knee.

“No you’re not.” Yoongi said. “You just had a snack in the car.”

Jungkook started to vocalize - groans and screams as he stomped around. His hands flapped in front of his face and shoes that squeaked sounded like dog toys every time he took a step. Yoongi pulled him by his upper arm so that he was caged between Yoongi’s thighs.

“Do you want to play on the iPad?” Yoongi pulled it out of his hand and started a shapes game.

Instead, Jungkook responded by throwing himself on the floor in a frustrated tantrum. Yoongi sucked in a deep breath and exhaled it as he watched Jungkook lose it, his face heating red and fake
tears rimming his eyelashes. Not giving into the dramatics, Yoongi turned to Hoseok who was working on a spelling sheet. Yoongi touched his arm. “Do you need help?”

Hoseok looked down at his spelling sheet. It was covered in eraser marks. “No,” He signed. “I’m okay.”

“Okay,” Yoongi rubbed his shoulder. “Did you have a good day at school?”

Hoseok nodded and smiled a little as he kicked his feet. “Yeah,” He said. “Miss Candace didn’t make me go to the board like she did last week.”

They had submitted the doctor’s file to Hoseok’s school. Oliver was a private school, so they didn’t do IEPs like Jimin’s school did. But, they still had a special education department and were working with Hoseok’s teacher to accommodate his learning disabilities.

“I went to the board.” Taehyung volunteered from Yoongi’s other side. “I got a big subtraction problem all by myself.”

“Good job, Taemyungie. I’m proud of-,”

“I got an eight out of ten on my spelling test.” Hoseok interrupted, his eyes flashing with challenge.

“Hoseok,” Yoongi started to reprimand. “Don’t interr-,”

“That’s because Miss Candace helped you.” Taehyung retorted, his eyes flashing back. “You were the only one that needed help.”

Hoseok mashed his lips into a thin line, making his dimples pop out. “I still-,”

“I got a ten out of ten.” Taehyung continued. “Without any help. And I was the second person to turn in my test.”

“Tae,” Yoongi said. “Don’t belittle Hoseok’s achievements. He worked as hard as you did.” He turned to Hoseok. “And let your brother finish his sentence before talking over him.” He signed. “It’s rude to not let someone finish.”

Tae slumped a little in his seat and Hoseok twisted so he was giving the both of them the shoulder. Yoongi sighed and glanced at Jungkook, who had quieted down as he laid like he had been murdered on the floor of the exam room, his face read and tears dribbling out of his eyes. Yoongi bent forward and picked his youngest to his feet.

“Are you done?” Yoongi asked and Jungkook just tangled his hands together and then jammed them under his chin. “Okay,” Yoongi scooped him up into his lap and turned on the iPad. Jungkook just groaned and slumped in Yoongi’s arms and Yoongi played the 3-4 age game of getting shapes into their proper slots.

After about forty-five minutes of that, the door opened and a nurse wheeled in a sleeping Jimin dressed in a little hospital gown. “He’s all done.” She whispered loudly. “He did great.”

“That’s good.” Yoongi nodded, feeling a little relieved to see him again. He put Jungkook on his feet and stood up to fetch Jimin’s clothes from the exam table.

“Your doctor will call with the results in a couple of days.” She said. “Did you need help getting out of here?”
“No,” Yoongi shook his head. “I know the way.”

“Great.” She said and bent down at the waist. “See you later, buddy.” She said to Jimin.

*See you later.* Yoongi froze as he unfolded Jimin’s t-shirt. *See you later.* The words felt like weights that Yoongi was forced to swallow, heavy and large as they made their way down his esophagus and then twisted up his guts. He knew that the nurse didn’t mean anything by it. But to Yoongi, they were a reminder. A reminder that this wasn’t Jimin’s last time in the hospital. He would, inevitably, be back when the scars of his trauma resurfaced again.

And Yoongi had no way of predicting when that would be.

“Okay, boys.” Namjoon squatted in front of Hoseok and Taehyung, who had started drawing on Namjoon’s whiteboard in his classroom with the dry erase markers. Taehyung had neatly written his name in English and then Hangul. Hoseok was drawing a smiley face with noodle arms. “I have a very important job for you, okay? I teach adults in this classroom ASL. But, they’re all hearing and they’re not very good yet. So, I need you to help them practice. Okay?”

Namjoon was a little worried over how this evening would go with his four kids in his college classroom. Jimin was asleep in his wheelchair that Namjoon parked next to his desk - passing out in the car on the ride over. Jungkook was sitting on the floor next to Namjoon’s podium, playing with the abundance of toys that Namjoon had packed him.

And instead of having the older boys stare at the ceiling bored out of their minds for two and half hours, Namjoon thought it would be good to employ them. They signed at native levels now that they were full immersed in the language and Namjoon thought that his students could benefit from that conversation practice.

As long as his kids cooperated, of course.

“If they’re hearing, why are they learning ASL?” Hoseok asked, his eyebrows furrowing.

“Dad knows ASL and he can hear.” Taehyung answered.

“Oh,” Hoseok said, his eyebrows furrowing further like this was the first time he realized that Yoongi could hear. “I guess that’s right.”

“People learn ASL for a lot of reasons.” Namjoon answered. “Maybe they have Deaf family members they want to speak to - like Nini. Or maybe they want to be interpreters. Sometimes people just want to learn the language.” Namjoon shrugged. “It is pretty cool, since it’s the only language that uses your hands.”

Hoseok smiled at that, a bit of pride flashing in his eyes. Namjoon felt his heart swell. “It is cool.” He signed.

“It is.” Namjoon nodded. “Will you be my helpers?”

“Yeah!” Tae said and hopped a little, making his sneakers light up. Hoseok just shook his fist up and down in the sign for ‘yes.’

Namjoon let them go back to drawing on the board as his students started to trickle in. He sat down on top of his desk at the front of the classroom and ticked off names from the attendance sheet.
as they entered. He explained that his kids were joining them that evening and that Hoseok and Tae were native ASL speakers and were going to help with practice for the test on Friday. “They’re seven and eight.” Namjoon said and signed at the same time. “So they’re going to be brutally honest with corrections.” He chuckled. “But, take advantage of the practice.”

Namjoon gathered the boys up and deposited one on each side of the classroom and then sat back on his desk. Jimin was starting to squirm in his chair and Namjoon tipped and locked his seat back so that he was at 45 degrees. “There you go.” He said. “Nice and comfy.” He checked in on Jungkook - who was neatly arranging all of the toys in a straight line next to his podium, a concentrated furrow in his eyebrows.

And then he looked at his classroom. Hoseok was sitting on a chair, shyly showing one of Namjoon’s students the proper way to sign the color red. Taehyung was on the other side, sitting on the desk telling an elaborate story to his audience of adult learners.

Namjoon sighed and leaned back, propping himself up on his arms as he watched, thinking maybe taking them to work wasn’t a bad idea after all.

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A wave caught Namjoon’s attention as he talked with another student in the last row and he broke eye contact to look at Taehyung.

“Daddy,” He signed from his place on top of the table. “Jimin’s crying.” He pointed.

Namjoon whipped around to Allison - this young, nice enough girl. She was barely out of high school and…her schoolwork reflected that fact. She had both hands up in a surrender position as she stood in front of Jimin, whose face was heating red with tears.


“I’m sorry,” Allison said as Namjoon undid Jimin’s lap strap and got him in his arms. “He was waking up so I thought I’d say hi and-,”

“You startled him.” Namjoon said - a little more harshly than he meant to - as he patted on Jimin’s back and bounced him. “He’s blind and if you don’t approach him from the right angle, you can scare him.”

“Oh,” She said and started to slink off, her eyes wide and meek. “I didn’t know.”

“It’s okay.” Namjoon let the anger whoosh out of him a little. “Jimin wants to be friends with everyone, but if you suddenly appear right in front of him, it scares him. Huh, Chim?” He asked his son, who was started to calm down. Namjoon turned to get Allison in Jimin’s line of sight…

…And then watched Jungkook get up and toddle towards his other student, Alex, who was wearing bright green Nike Jordans. Jungkook squatted to exam them, his fingers feeling the material.

“Kookie,” Namjoon said. “Come back please.”

Jungkook ignored him, instead straightening and giving Alex a careful sniff. When he
determined that Namjoon’s student was okay, he climbed into lap and started slapping the table.

“Jungkook,” Namjoon groaned and approached them. “You can’t just climb into people’s laps.”

Alex was laughing, however from the sudden intruder. “I think someone’s ready for college.”

“Yeah, he’s always ready for anything.” Namjoon said and grabbed Jungkook’s hand as he balanced Jimin against him. “Jungkook’s on the spectrum and personal space is something that we are still working on.” He started to pull him off but Jungkook jerked his arm out of Namjoon’s grip.

“Oh, my niece is autistic.” One of Namjoon’s other students said. “I heard it’s caused by vaccines.”

“Um, no-” Namjoon started, ready to squash that into the dirt. But, another movement caught his eye and he looked at the two eldest having an argument over the proper sign for ‘donut.’ He waved to get their attention. “No fighting.” He signed.

“Daddy,” Tae signed. “Hoseok isn’t doing the-,”

“No fighting.” Namjoon signed again. “Talk about something else.”

Tae’s square mouth pouted. “Wanna play handsies?” He offered and he and Hoseok started playing a modified version of patty-cake.

Namjoon felt a hiccup under his palm and looked at Jimin, who’s eyes were open and tracking the ceiling. He used the collar of his polo shirt to wipe Jimin’s lips and then another wave stole his attention.

“How old is he?” One of his students signed and said at the same time.

“He’s seven, same age as Tae.”

“Seven?” Allison’s eyebrows furrowed. “I thought he was…a baby.”

“He’s too big to be a baby.” Allison’s friend that was taking the class with her said.

“I don’t know.” Allison said. “I thought he was like…I don’t know, like three?”

“Well, Jimin’s small for his age.” Namjoon said. “He’s a petite guy.”

“Was he always like that?”

“Allison that’s rude.” Her friend said.

Jungkook started drumming on the table again as Alex showed him something on his phone, his hair flopping in his face. At least Jungkook knew how to pick the ones that didn’t seem to mind a kid in their lap. Namjoon turned back to Allison and her friend.

“Allison, that’s a wheelchair.”

“I don’t know.” Allison seemed to be getting flustered. “I don’t know people with disabilities.”

“You’re an idiot.” Her friend said.

“It’s okay.” Namjoon said, interrupting. “We didn’t know either until we met Jimin.” Namjoon said
as he massaged Jimin’s scalp. “But, we learned. That's that that he needed - someone willing to learn.”

“He's so-,”

But, another movement stole Namjoon’s attention and he turned back to the eldest boys arguing again in front a small audience, their signs getting bigger and bigger. He threw back his head and groaned. He glanced at the clock. He still had an hour left.

Maybe bringing them wasn’t the best idea after all.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!
Standing Up

Chapter Notes

Chapter Warnings: panic attack, violence

This chapter, honestly, got out of hand. It's pretty large. But, I didn't want to split it. So, enjoy!

Also, I am at 2K kudos! Thank you so much all! You have no idea how what every comment, kudos, and bookmark does for my motivation! It's what keeps me writing soft Namgi dads. And thank you for silent readers too! I know y'all are out there.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Before they could think about getting on an airplane, they first had to get Jungkook used to sitting in a moving vessel for long periods of time. He was pretty used to the commute of the city, but he hadn’t ever really sat inert, strapped in his car seat for more than an hour at a time. And just knowing Jungkook, Yoongi thought that would one of the highest forms of torture to his unique four-year-old next to, probably, port-a-potty scented air fresheners.

Yoongi’s mother’s birthday was coming up and Namjoon and him decided that taking a drive down to the San Diego area four hours away would be good practice for the grand voyage. It wasn’t an airplane. There wasn’t really any way to practice flying on an airplane. But, at least, they could start with a long car ride and go from there. Or, at least, that’s what Yoongi was hoping would happen. At least, if this trip didn’t end in complete disaster it would help convince Yoongi that Disney World wasn’t a thoroughly horrible idea.

It’s only four hours. Yoongi thought to himself as he strapped in Jungkook, hooking his own harness over his chest. He got his iPad set up in his hands and his Bop-It within grabbing distance and a couple of other toys that they decided to take to help ease the stress of traveling. Yoongi’s anxiety was percolating in his veins however and he met Namjoon’s eyes across the way where he was hooking in Jimin to his car seat. “We’ll be okay for four hours?” Yoongi said out loud. It sounded like a question in his own ears.

“What?” Namjoon asked as he put a little blanket over Jimin’s legs and got Mr. Ba situated in his arms. Jimin immediately put his bear into a headlock and smeared his face against his head.

“Nothing.” Yoongi said and got in the passenger seat. The car started to creak on its shocks with Jungkook’s aggressive rocking. He always rocked in the car and Yoongi hoped that maybe he would tire himself out in the first thirty minutes and then sleep the rest of the way. Buy seats in the back of the airplane. Yoongi made a mental note as he watched Jungkook’s eyebrows furrow in concentration and his hair flop in his face. All the way in the back.

With the elder boys in the third row sharing one of the kids’ tablets and the Nintendo Switch, they started off - heading south out of their town and through Los Angeles county.

“Dad?” Tae asked. “When we get to Nini’s, can I, um,” His attention was yanked by a tractor trailer of cows. “Daddy, look! Cows!” He signed, making the horns with his fingers on his head. “Seokie,” He said and shook his brother by his shoulder. “Look, it’s cows.”
Yoongi averted his attention to his husband, who had a pair of garishly-colored sunglasses on his face - an odd contrast to his weird t-shirt and even weirder patterned cardigan.

Yoongi stared at him for a second, unabashedly taking the opportunity to study him as he drummed his fingers on the steering wheel in time with the vibrations from the stereo. Yoongi started at his little details that he loved like his full bottom lip and his skin that was always perfectly tan no matter how little sun he got and his earring holes that he no longer wore earrings in because that wasn’t “professional” anymore. Even though Yoongi could remember when they were on their seventh date and both drunkenly got their ears pierced - Yoongi’s third set of piercings and Namjoon’s first - as a sort of declaration to each other. Their promise ring of sorts since they had to date long distance. And he could remember how Namjoon tasted cinnamon-y from Fireball whisky as they kissed afterwards on Yoongi’s bed and how he murmured “I love you,” into Yoongi’s lips as he held an ice cube to his earlobe. And Yoongi remembered that Yoongi glitched because it was the first time someone said “I love you” to him and meant it. Really fucking meant it. And then Yoongi called him a “pussy” and chastised him for crying at the tattoo shop and then signed “I love you” back with shaky hands and tears that were threatening to spill over in his eyes.

“What?” Namjoon groaned when he caught him staring and Yoongi was taken out of his memory.

Yoongi dropped his fingers from his earrings - three little silver loops on each ear now - and tried to stomp down the familiar feeling of butterflies in his stomach and heat in his cheeks. He shook his head. “Nothing.” He said as glanced at his phone and then the surrounding area. They weren’t out of L.A yet. Instead they were slowing with morning rush hour traffic.

Namjoon halted the car and Yoongi checked his traffic app. “There’s an accident.” He motioned to the mess in front of them.

Namjoon sighed and glanced at the tall buildings around them. “Figures.” He turned around to inspect all the babies. “Doing good back there?”

Yoongi watched in the rearview mirror as Jungkook continued to rock ferociously. Jimin was smearing moist fingers against an already smudged-up window. The elder boys were the ones that responded as they battled on tablet. Both with lazy shakes of their fists for ‘yes.’

Namjoon turned back to the windshield and painfully inched the car forward. “We should’ve taken PCH.”

“That would’ve added, like, two hours to the drive.” Yoongi argued.

“Yeah,” Namjoon said. “But, the scenery would’ve been more pleasant.”

“I don’t know.” Yoongi shrugged and then picked at his t-shirt. “I don’t mind the scenery.”

“What?”

“I’m trying to flirt with you, you big, dumb idiot.” Yoongi signed and rolled his eyes, his cheeks blushing again.

Namjoon reached across the center console and laced his hand with Yoongi’s. “I know.” He said and grinned, his dimples poking out. “I just like watching you say it over and over.”

Yoongi jerked his hand away. “You can’t…fake me out like that.” He huffed and pouted, crossing his arms. “That’s rude.”
Namjoon just laughed. “I love you, my dear, sweet husband.”

“I love you too,” Yoongi signed back. “You big, dumb idiot.”
glittered in the mid-morning light fluttered open. “Did you sleep well?” He unbuckled him and got him out of his car seat and into his wheelchair. Jimin sighed and leaned his head against his headrest and his eyes closed again.

“I have to go potty.” Tae signed once he hopped out of the SUV.

“Me too.” Hoseok signed

“Okay,” Yoongi said as he put Jungkook on his feet. “We can all go potty once we get inside.” He herded the ambulatory kids up to the house and Namjoon took the rear with Jimin.

With the whole pack at the door, Yoongi rang the doorbell and there was an indiscernible noise that Namjoon couldn’t quite put his finger on. But whatever it was, it was loud enough to cause Jimin to awaken and then the front door opened.

“There are my grandchildren!” Nini said with a big smile. “Come in, come in.”

“Nini!” Tae yelled in greeting, a big smile over his face. Hoseok signed “grandma,” and they all rushed in to give her big hugs. Jungkook bounced in like a bunny, his arms circling around his grandmother’s leg as he beamed a smile so wide that all of his little teeth showed.

A tiny, dark floof of a dog ran circles around his mother-in-law’s ankles and Namjoon realized the noise he heard was shrill barking. “Yeontan,” She scolded. “Hush.”

After getting Jimin in without tearing up the threshold of the door too bad, greetings and kisses from Nini, they all piled into the living room where Yoongi’s brother’s family was.

“Boys,” Yoongi signed and said to Hoseok and Taehyung. “I want you to meet your Uncle Jungi and Aunt Erin.” He motioned to Yoongi’s older brother who looked like a stockier, more built version of Yoongi and his wispy, ginger wife.

Hoseok waved while hanging off of Yoongi’s belt loop and Tae stuck his hand out for a handshake. “Nice to meet you.” He said and smiled. “I’m Tae.”

“This is Seokie and that’s Kookie,” Yoongi motioned to Jungkook, who was still clutching to his grandmother’s leg like it was a life preserver. “And Jimin.” He gestured to Jimin, who was tracking the ceiling with his fingers in his mouth.

“This,” Erin pointed to the kid that looked like he could be 50/50 Jungi and Erin, his hair red and freckles littering his face. “Is your cousin, Benji.”

“What?” Hoseok looked up at Yoongi.

“B-E-N-J-I.” Yoongi signed for him.

“Benji, say hi.” Erin prompted with a little push on his back.

Benji was drinking in his cousins, scrutinizing all of them with an analytical expression. Like, he was trying to figure them out or sizing up the competition or something. “I want a Capri Sun.” He said, his head tipping up to his mother.

“Halmeoni doesn’t have Capri Suns.” She said.

“Nana does.”

“Well, we’re not at Nana’s.” She said. “She has water or apple juice.”
He made a face. “I’m going to play in the other room.” He sauntered off.

Erin sighed. “Sorry about that.” She said once he disappeared. “I’m not sure where he’s picking up this attitude.”

*Attitude.* Namjoon repeated in his head. *Is that what it is?*

Jimin gave a smile as Erin rocked him in her lap as she sat on the couch. She bounced him on her knees and tried to get him to giggle while pulling funny faces. She moved her hands off of him and he tipped back and she caught him. “Got you.” She said, but Jimin’s smile faded from his face at the jerking movement.

“Daddy,” He said, his eyebrows furrowing.

“I’m right here.” Yoongi said as he sat next to his sister-in-law with his legs crossed. Jimin craned his head and then relaxed when he found Yoongi, settling against Erin’s shoulder with a little, content sigh.

“He’s so cuddly.” Erin said and rubbed up and down Jimin’s back. “You remember when Benji was this cuddly?”

Namjoon couldn’t see Jungi’s answer sitting on the other side of Yoongi, but Erin’s eyes rolled. “I know he is. I want a Jimin.” She said and hugged Jimin like a teddy bear, kissing his temple. Yoongi got a towel underneath Jimin’s face before he ruined Erin’s chiffon shirt with his drool.

Benji came out of the other room, an iPad in his hands. He dropped it and zeroed in on Jimin’s empty wheelchair that sat off to the side of the living room. He found the handbrakes and unclicked them and then started moving the foot rests.

“Honey,” Namjoon stopped him. “That’s expensive, okay? We’d prefer it if you don’t play with it.”

While maintaining eye contact with Namjoon, Benji used one foot rest to hoist himself up and into the wheelchair. Namjoon rolled his eyes and turned to his mom. “-out of there.” Erin scolded. “What did he just say?”

“Sitting in it is not playing with it.” He said, but hopped out anyway. He approached Erin. “I want to sit on your lap.” He pouted and looked at Jimin in her arms.

“I’m holding Jimin. Sit in your dad’s lap.”

“I want to sit in your lap, Mommy.” He said, and while Namjoon couldn’t hear him - he assumed it was in a whine by the way his head tipped back.

“Jimin’s sitting here right now.” She said. “Go play with your cousins.”

“I don’t want to play with them.” He stomped his feet in indignation. “One’s a baby and the other one doesn’t talk, he just makes noises like a seal.”

Namjoon felt his ears heat red and his body tense. Benji wasn’t his kid, so he felt like he
couldn’t say anything. But, he could feel that offense prickle and sting on his cheeks.

“Benji,” Erin looked exasperated. “Don’t be rude. They’re family. Go play with them.”

A dark, seething look crossed over Benji’s features. The offense of the kid’s comments that was hot on Namjoon’s cheeks suddenly turned cold enough to make him shiver. *What a creep.* Namjoon thought as he watched him trudge back to the other living area where the kids were playing.

Namjoon felt Yoongi’s low rumble and he look over to Yoongi petting Jimin’s head as he had a little seizure against Erin’s shoulder - his arm shaking and his mouth grimacing up.

Benji suddenly appeared, pointing to the other room. “Mommy,” He whined again. “Tae’s not letting me play with Yeontan.”

Yoongi and Namjoon shared a look a questioning look. Tae shared *everybody* with *everybody*. That didn’t sound like him to monopolize something.

“You stay here with Jimin,” Namjoon looked up at Jungkook, who was still wrapped around Nini’s leg as she worked over something in the kitchen, except with his Bop-It in his hand now. “And Jungkook. I’ll check on them.”

“Okay,” Yoongi said as he rubbed Jimin’s back.

Namjoon got up and found the boys stretched out on the carpeted floor of the second living area playing on their devices. Yeontan looked content in Taehyung’s lap - a dark, puffy ball of fur. Tae looked up and waved. “Hi, Daddy.”

Namjoon squatted. “Benji says that you’re not letting him play with Yeontan.”

Tae looked at the dog and then up to Namjoon. “He pulled Yeontan’s tail and Yeontan hid in my lap.” He signed back.

Namjoon sighed. That’s about what he suspected. “Are you guys getting along with your cousin?”

Tae shrugged. “He doesn’t want to play with us.” He looked at Hoseok, whose eyes were stuck on the Switch. “We offered to play MarioKarts, but he gets mad when we sign and quits.”

Benji entered the other room with his iPad - threw a glance over at the other boys and then sat down by himself on the other side of the room.

Namjoon turned back to Taehyung. “Be nice.” He signed. “Even when he isn’t. Okay?”

Tae nodded with wide eyes. “Okay.”

“I love you.” Namjoon signed and kissed his cheek and Tae smiled back his wide, boxy smile.


She waved him off as she stepped around Jungkook, who had settled to just sitting in the
middle of the kitchen floor within arm’s distance of his Nini, rocking and playing with his Bop It. “Everything is already made. I made it yesterday because I know that my baby Kookie-yah doesn’t tolerate smells well.”

Yoongi glanced at the heaping dish of bibbimmyeon that sat on her counter and sighed. “Can I do anything?”

“Just enjoy your time with your brother.” She said as she wiped her hands and stepped over Jungkook again. “I know you guys don’t see each other much anymore because you’re both family men now.”

Yoongi glanced over the counter into the family room where all of the adults were. Erin basically claimed Jimin for the afternoon and was currently giving him teddy bear kisses with Mr. Ba. Jungkook was velcroed to his grandmother’s side. The older kids were playing with their cousin. He already went through the normal conversation points when you’re catching up with a family member - how’re you doing, how the kids are doing, how’s work, etc. He had his fill of socialization for the month. “Eomma,” He protested. “Let me help.”

“Fine,” She handed over the onion she was chopping. “Finish this.”

Yoongi did and felt little hands on his leg. He looked down to Jungkook as he wrapped himself around Yoongi’s calf as he sat on the floor and rubbed his hand up and down Yoongi’s jeans. “Kookie,” He said. “Are you having fun?”

Kookie looked up at him and gave him a little scrunch smile and the pointed to Nini. “Grandma.” He signed and then smiled wider.

“Yeah,” Yoongi said. “That’s your Nini.”

Jungkook’s eyes closed and he stimmed with his hands, flapping happily and giggling. Yoongi was glad that he was having a good time.

Yoongi had another reason for coming into the kitchen. He looked at his mother. “Eomma, we’re planning on going to Disney World during spring break and have an extra park ticket. Do you want to come with us?”

She scooted down the counter to her fridge and looked at her calendar that was hanging on the front. “What dates?”

“The week of April twenty-second.” Yoongi answered and she picked up the page of the calendar to look at the next month.

“I can’t, dumpling.” She said and dropped it. “I’m going on a cruise that week.”

“A cruise?” Yoongi asked, confused. “When did you start take cruises?”

“I’m going with my friends I met from pottery class.” She said. “I told you about this. We’ve been planning for almost a year.”

Yoongi groaned. Well, the one person on his list of people to invite to Disney World was out. He wracked his brain for another person who 1) knew his kids and their needs 2) wouldn’t mind tagging along to Disney World and 3) was actually available. Unfortunately, raising 4 children didn’t allow Yoongi and Namjoon much time for things like friends. Maybe I could call Hazel? He thought as he diced the onion he was given.
A pat on his hip brought him back to earth and he looked down at Hoseok, who had tears in his eyes. “What’s wrong, baby?” Yoongi signed, concern lighting him up like a solar flare.

“Benji stole my hearing aid.” He lifted his hair to show off his naked ear.

“Benji stole your hearing aid?” Yoongi repeated out loud - at a volume that his brother could hear. Jungi stood to his feet.

“What’s going on?” Jungi asked.

“Benji asked if he could play my Switch.” Hoseok signed. “And Tae interpreted for me. And I was going let him, I promise. But, I was in the middle of a level and I wanted to finish first and when I didn’t give it to him right away he stole the Switch and pulled my hearing aid off.” Hoseok sniffed.

Yoongi suppressed the eye roll. Benji - being an only child with a pushover mom like Erin - got anything he wanted. He was an entitled brat. “Well, we can fix that. Where is he?”

Yoongi and his brother followed Hoseok down the hallway to the guest bathroom, where Benji was trying to manhandle in Hoseok’s hearing aid into his own ear. Yoongi winced, since Hoseok’s pair almost cost them about $3,000.

“Benji,” Jungi said in a booming voice, making his kid jump. “What are you doing with Hoseok’s hearing aid?”

He whipped around, his eyes wide. “Hoseok let me borrow it.”

“Hoseok said you stole it from him.”

Yoongi glanced down at Hoseok, who was holding his hand and sniffling. Yoongi rubbed his face for him.

“He can’t say stuff.” Benji argued in a snotty tone. “He doesn’t talk.”

“Give me the goddamn hearing aid, Benji.” Jungi opened his hand and Benji huffed out a sigh and dropped it in Jungi’s hand. Jungi handed it to Hoseok, who inspected it and then lowered the volume way down before fitting it back in his own ear. “You’re going to sit in the living room with us. No iPad. No phone. No hiding back here.” Jungi pointed and Benji gave him a cross look.

“March, mister or I’ll ground you for a week.”

Benji bopped his shoulder into Hoseok’s on the way out. “Snitches get stitches.” He muttered.

“I think someone needs to be changed.” Erin said, her arms still wrapped around Jimin - who had fallen asleep for an afternoon nap against his drool rag.

Yoongi had been watching college basketball on the television with his brother - arguing over whether the Bruins would win the championship that year and trying to figure out who else would be willing to go to Disney World with them. Hoseok was reclining on Namjoon’s lap, his tan, bare feet on Namjoon’s knees as he played with his Switch. Yoongi thought was a slight dig at Benji that Hoseok all of a sudden wanted to be out with everyone else. Since, Benji’s punishment was sitting on the couch without any devices. And Yoongi could feel his nephew's glare radiate off of him in
waves like heat from a space heater.

“Eomma,” Yoongi said and stood up. “Can I put Jimin on the guest bed to sleep?”

She popped her head around the corner. “Of course.” She said. “You don’t have to ask.”

Yoongi scooped up Jimin and picked up his diaper bag. “TaeTae,” He waved to get Taehyung’s attention. He was playing with Yeontan on the floor with a chewed up toy. “Will you hang out with Jimin while he naps so he doesn’t roll off the bed?”

Tae nodded. “Okay, Daddy.”

Hoseok made a noise and slid off of Namjoon’s lap. “I’ll come too.” He signed.

Yoongi changed Jimin’s diaper and put on his big hoodie before arranging the pillows and putting Jimin in the middle of the Queen sized bed that took up most of his mother’s guest bedroom. Jimin’s eyelids were at half-mast from being jostled and he chewed on his sweater sleeve as unconsciousness threatened to drag him under again. Yoongi was half-praying that sleep would help with the little seizures he was having and it wouldn’t turn into a full tonic clonic one. Tae and Hoseok took seats next to him on the bed and Hoseok let Tae take the Switch.

“Dinner will be ready soon.” Yoongi kissed Jimin’s head. “One of you come get me if Jimin starts fussing to be repositioned.”

“Okay, Daddy.” They both signed.

Yoongi went back out to the living room where Benji was trying to squirm his way onto his mom’s lap now that Jimin didn’t have claim to it anymore. “Honey you’re too big now.” She pushed him off to sit on the couch next to her. “Just sit next to me. You’ll be fine.”

“But, Mommy,” His whine was grating. “I want to sit on your lap.”

“Hey,” Jungi handed Yoongi a beer. “You think the Astros are going to do anything this next season?”

“The Astros?” Yoongi snorted. “Of course. Now, the Lakers…”

“I’m going to need you to stop right there before you drag my beloved Lakers through the mud like that.”

Yoongi put his beer down. He didn’t drink much alcohol with the babies anymore. “They do that themselves.”

“How are we even related?” Jungi shook his head. “So, I heard you’re going to Disney World?”

“Mommy, can I go to the bathroom?” Benji asked.

“You can wait until dinner. It’s like thirty minutes away.” She said.

“But, I really have to go.” He whined again.

“Okay,” She said. “But, come right back.”

“Yeah,” Yoongi turned his attention back to his brother. “Namjoon’s boss got him tickets. We’re still…trying to figure out logistics. But, we really want to go.”
“You have to stay at the Animal Kingdom hotel.” He said. “It was amazing when we went last summer.”

“Jungi,” Yoongi rolled his eyes. “That hotel costs like six hundred dollars a night. And keep it on the down low, the kids don’t know we are going yet. We don’t want to ruin the surprise.”

“Okay, but,” Jungi said. “The Animal Kingdom hotel was so worth it. And-,”

Suddenly, there was three screams - one of which was definitely Hoseok’s by the pitch and volume. Jungi and Yoongi’s heads whipped around. And all of the blood in Yoongi’s veins suddenly stopped pumping. His ears started buzzing and his peripherals turned blurry as panic shot down his spine like lightning hitting a lightning rod.

“What’s going on?” Namjoon asked and rose as well. But, Yoongi didn’t answer as he jogged through the house, his feet moving faster than his mind and stopped in his mother’s guest room doorway to a scene out of one his nightmares.

Jimin was belly-up on the ground next to the bed, his limbs rigid and splayed out like starfish. His eyes were wide with shock and his face was heating red from crying. “Ouch. Ouch. Ouch.”

Hoseok was sitting on top of Benji’s chest in front of the bed, his fist punching and punching his cousin’s face. There was blood on his knuckles and dribbling out of Benji’s nostrils.

Yoongi didn’t know where to start, so he launched himself at the closest child. He pulled Hoseok off of Benji. “Stop!” He yelled as Hoseok continued to thrash. “Stop!”

Namjoon was at Jimin’s side. “You’re okay. You’re okay.” He looked up at Tae, who was still on the bed, watching everything with gigantic eyes. Somewhere in the distance, Yoongi was vaguely aware that the dog was barking and Hoseok was still screaming and Jimin was crying. “What happened?” Namjoon demanded.

“He attacked me!” Benji said and started to push his way up, his face bloody and his finger pointing violently at Hoseok. “He jumped on me and started punching.” Tears leaked from his eyes. “Mommy!” He called. “He punched me!”

“Taehyung Kim.” Namjoon ordered in probably the biggest, growliest voice that he could muster, his narrow eyes flashing angrily as he scooped up Jimin. “What happened?”

Hoseok was still wriggling hard and Yoongi jerked his arm back so that he could get Hoseok’s eyes on him. “Hoseok,” He said. “Stop it. What has gotten into you?”

But, Hoseok’s eyes were far away - distant and glazed over like he was in a dream.

“Um, um,” Taehyung started, breathing hard. He was crying now. “Benji came in a-and he wanted to play with the tablet and we told him no that it was ours. So, he started to pull it out of Hoseok’s hands. And Hoseok didn’t like that, so Hoseok pushed him.” Taehyung sucked in a big breath. “And Benji punched him back in the chest. And Hoseok pushed him back. But, t-then, instead of pushing Hoseok, Benji pushed Jimin out of bed and Hoseok got so mad that he hurt Chim that he jumped on Benji.” He was full-on sobbing now, his words almost incoherent. “I’m sorry, Daddy. I’m sorry.” He pressed both fists into his eyes.

Yoongi turned his attention back to Hoseok in his arms. His eyes were still distant and he was still yelling. And every breath was a shallow hyperventilation. Yoongi shook him a little. “Hoseok,” He said. “Breathe. Okay?” Yoongi scooped him up and pressed Hoseok’s palm to Yoongi’s chest. Yoongi could feel his own heart pounding through Hoseok’s little hand, but Hoseok had to take a
deep breath. He wasn’t breathing. “Breathe, Hoseok.” He ordered and sucked in a big breath.

He looked up to Namjoon carefully scooping up Jimin, inspecting him for damage. “You’re okay. You’re okay. My baby boy.” Namjoon sing-songed to their most fragile child. “My sweet boy.”

“Ouch. Ouch.” Jimin said back as he wailed out big sobs.

Yoongi refocused back on Hoseok. “Hoseok,” He said and patted his cheek. “Breathe, baby.”

Finally, Hoseok did - inhaling a breath of air like he had been drowning. He let it out and then sucked in another. He held that one. “Breathe.” Yoongi ordered again and let his own breath whoosh out of him. Hoseok’s eyes focused up and took in his surroundings. His breathing picked up speed when he inspected his own hands and found them covered in Benji’s blood. And then he deep-dived head first into a panic attack when he met Yoongi’s eyes - tears streaming down his face.

“Okay,” Yoongi pulled him tight against his chest and caged him with his arms and his legs. He could feel Hoseok shake so bad, he was vibrating the both of them. He sobbed in big wails and breathed in tiny hiccupping huffs. “You’re okay. Shhh. You’re okay.”

Hoseok pulled back, his face all screwed up. “He hurt Jimin.” He signed with shaking fingers. “He hurt Jimin.”


Namjoon cradled Jimin like a baby. “Yeah,” He signed back. “Just startled is all. That was a big drop.”

Yoongi looked and found his sister-in-law and his mother pressing a rag to Benji’s obviously broken nose. He locked eyes with his brother. “I’m sorry my kid punched your kid.”

Jungi rubbed the back of his neck as he stood in the middle of all the chaos. “You know,” He said. “It was probably a long time coming.”

Namjoon and Yoongi gathered up all their kids sans Jungkook - who was staying with Yoongi’s mom - and went to the hospital to make sure Jimin was okay after his fall. Yoongi was sure he was fine. He landed on plush carpeting. But, he knew his anxiety wouldn’t be appeased until he had a doctor take a look, since Jimin already had something come up on an x-ray.

Namjoon went back with Jimin when he was called and Yoongi stayed out in the waiting room with Hoseok and Taehyung. Hoseok had glued himself to Yoongi’s lap and was still shaking and whimpering. Yoongi just wrapped him up in his hoodie and was rocking him, inspecting his bruised knuckles and kissing his head.

“Is Jimin okay?” Taehyung asked for the hundredth time in a span of an hour. He was on his knees in his chair, unnerved and worried.

“He’ll be okay, Tae.” Yoongi said and squeezed Hoseok tighter. “Just sit down.”
Tae sat back down on his butt and drummed his fingers on his cast. “Is Seokie going to get in trouble for hurting Benji?”

There was a deep, shuddering breath from Hoseok and Yoongi looked at his face to make sure he was okay - making sure his eyes were okay. The way they went distant and faraway was freaking Yoongi out a little. It was like he slipped into a PTSD flashback or a dissociated state or something. It was like he wasn’t even there.

Yoongi sighed. “You know violence is never the answer, right?” He asked and covered Hoseok with the hoodie a little more.

Tae nodded. “Hitting people is not how you show them that they did bad.” He said.

“That’s right.” Yoongi said. “But, there is a time where you have to stand up for yourself if someone else hurts you - that’s called self-defense.” Yoongi explained. “Some people - like Jimin - can’t stand up for themselves. They rely on the people they love do it for them. Hoseok was standing up for his brother.” He raked his fingers through Hoseok’s hair. “And I’m not going to punish him for standing up for his brother.”

Tae nodded and tapped his toes together. “Is Benji going to get in trouble for hurting Jimin?”

“Probably,” Yoongi said and then winced. Erin was so freaked out that Benji was bleeding that Yoongi didn’t really get to properly apologize for Hoseok beating the shit out of her child. But, Jungi apologized to Yoongi about Benji’s behavior, that he knew better, that he harbors a lot of jealousy or something. “He’ll get talked to.” Jungi promised. “Don’t worry.”


Yoongi giggled and snorted. “I can’t argue with that.”

Chapter End Notes

Please comment! <33
“Oh, wow.” Hazel said on the other line. “That’s such a nice offer. But, my sister is getting married that weekend and I’m the maid of honor and I would totally go if it weren’t for that. I’m so so so sorry and-,”

“It’s okay.” Yoongi cut her off as he drummed his fingers on the counter. “We…just have this extra ticket and we just wanted to see if you wanted to go.”

“Ah, man.” She said. “I would love to go with you and Chim Chim and all the other kiddos. But, I can’t. My sister would absolutely go Black Dahlia on me.”


Yoongi hung up his cell phone and tapped the black rectangle to his chin as he watched Jimin do a jig in his gait trainer that was parked in front of the television, his little hands tapping and his tongue out as he smiled wide. Yoongi pursed his lips as he tried to figure out who else would be a good fit to take to Florida. His mother was out. Their home-health nurse was out. He sighed and picked at a dried line of food on his counter with his fingernail as he tried to wrack his brain for another person that would be willing and able to go Disney World.

A noise brought him to earth - Jungkook’s vocal scales as he paced around the living room, trying to find the remote control. Yoongi found that Hoseok had it as he reclined on the couch and surfed channels. Yoongi waved to get his attention. “Can you put on music videos for Kookie?” He signed at him.

Hoseok pouted. “I don’t want to watch music videos.” He signed back.

“Just for a little bit?” Yoongi bargained. “And then you can go back to cartoons?”

Hoseok flipped the channel to VH1, but there was a reality show playing. He moved to MTV, but an old episode of *Beavis and Butthead* was on. Yoongi sighed. He guessed there wasn’t very much playing on a Sunday afternoon.

Yoongi moved around the counter and took the remote and flipped on YouTube. He surfed videos - skipping over all the hard rap in his playlist - and found a k-pop playlist. Jungkook immediately sat on his butt and started to rock as his chin tipped up at the screen.

“What is this?” Hoseok signed at Yoongi.

Yoongi glanced over his shoulder and shrugged. “Twice?” He shrugged again. Girls group k-pop wasn’t really at the top of his list when it came to music. He was more of an Epik High and Eminem guy…or whatever he was producing at the moment.

Hoseok’s eyes grew wide as he watched the television. Yoongi watched as well as a group of
very nice looking young ladies danced themselves across the screen. Oh, God. Yoongi thought. *Please don’t let this be Hoseok’s discovery into feelings.*

Hoseok slid off the couch to stand inches in front of the television. He put his hands on the screen and frowned. He moved to the frame of the television and put his hands there and then a little furrow formed in his eyebrows.

“Baby,” Yoongi tapped his shoulder. “What’s wrong?”

“I want to know what they’re dancing to.” Hoseok signed, his eyes going back to the screen. “I want to hear.”

Yoongi felt his lips roll into a little ‘o’ as he studied their entertainment system and the girls dancing on screen. He knew Deaf people could enjoy music. He knew that they could dance and have fun to music. And this was the first time Yoongi had ever seen his severely deaf child remotely interested in music. Yoongi felt his chest swell like it was suddenly full of helium and he was going to float to the sky.

Yoongi pulled off each speaker from their place on each side of the television and put them facedown on the floor. He found the subwoofer and put that on the floor too. “Take off your socks.” He ordered Hoseok and Hoseok obediently peeled off each sock and discarded them. He pushed Jimin back a little and Jungkook too so that they wouldn’t be so close and then he cranked the volume of the speakers up.

*Me likey. Me likey likey likey…*

Yoongi turned back to Hoseok, who was squatting with his palms on the floor. He had a big smile on his face when he looked up at Yoongi. “I can feel it.” He signed. “I can feel the music.”

“You like it?” Yoongi asked.

“Yeah,” Hoseok signed and tipped his face up to the screen, mimicking Jungkook’s open-mouth expression.

Yoongi bent over and kissed Hoseok on the head and his smile grew wider as the song picked up tempo. He bloomed and exploded from the inside out - like the first light at dawn. “I’m gonna check on Tae.”

“Okay.” He signed, his eyes never leaving the screen.

Yoongi put the remote next to him on the ground and moved down the hallway. He found Taehyung on his bed with Namjoon, taking an afternoon nap. Their hearing aids sat side-by-side on the nightstand like little guarding sentinels. Yoongi pulled Tae’s glasses off his face and put them next to them.

Yoongi cocked his head when he heard the song start over. He sighed as he picked up one of the endless piles of laundry and moved to the laundry room. Hoseok was still squatting, but his hands were mimicking the choreography of the girls’. Yoongi was halfway through going through little jean pockets and rubbing Shout into Spaghetti-Os stains when he heard the song start over.

*Me likey. Me likey likey likey…*

Yoongi was almost done folding the load from the dryer into his waiting basket when the song started over again. And then it started over again when he moved back down the hallway to put clothes away. And it played again when Yoongi stopped to pick up the Little Price toys that Jimin
seemed to have a good time chucking around his room when he was being changed. And again when he was putting away clothes. And again when Yoongi went to strip Jungkook’s bed to change his sheets.

Me likey. Me likey likey likey…

Yoongi was busy rolling socks in the elder boys’ room when he found himself deep in thought over who else would be willing to come on their trip. Namjoon didn’t have any extended family. Yoongi’s mother was out. Hazel was busy.

Maybe…Seokjin? Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed at the thought of their case manager coming along to Disney. He knew the kids. He knew their family. He was the closest thing that Namjoon and Yoongi could call a friend. He would be a good pick.

Yoongi knew that he was always busy with cases. But, he had to get vacation time sometime, right? Would he want to spend it with us, though? Yoongi thought as he folded up a tiny pair of undies and put them in their drawer. Would he want to come with? It wouldn’t hurt to ask, he presumed.

Me likey likey likey…

Yoongi blinked out of his thoughts, his hands still in the top drawer of the boys’ dresser. He was pretty sure this song was going to be stuck in his head for the next three days. He wondered for a second why Hoseok kept playing it over and over. Please don’t be feelings. Yoongi prayed as he grabbed the empty laundry basket and moved back down the hallway towards the main room.

He froze when he got to the end of the hallway, squeaked in surprise and backed up so that Hoseok couldn’t see him, since he didn’t want him to stop out of embarrassment of having your dad catch you or something.

Yoongi squeaked again and pressed his hand over his mouth as he took in the scene before him. Hoseok had pushed the coffee table up against the couch and was dancing in the middle of the living room. Dancing. Like, the full choreography to that girls group song. And he was, well, good. Yoongi was in shock over how quickly he picked it up. He must’ve only played the song about fifteen times. And he taught himself off of a music video. And he was on beat and looked, well, good doing it. And on top of that, he had the biggest, most beautiful grin on his face. He was radiating happiness as he imitate the girls group’s shimmies and pirouettes.

Yoongi felt himself choke up.

And when he noticed that Jungkook and Jimin were dancing with him and that’s when Yoongi just completely lost it. Jungkook was hopping in circles, his fingers in Ls as he mimicked his big brother and Jimin was tap-dancing in his gait trainer, his smile so wide that it hid his eyes. My babies are dancers. Yoongi felt a heat swell in his chest. My babies are dancers.

And he watched as long as he could through a haze of overjoyed tears.

Namjoon felt himself being shaken. He groaned and rolled over, his hand finding a child. He ran his fingers down Tae’s back and snuggled closer, breathing in the light scent of bar soap and Tae’s own unique smell.
But, instead of falling peacefully back to sleep, he was shaken again. He cracked his eyes open to the light streaming in from the bedroom window and then his husband’s round, pale cheeks and dark, dark eyes. He blinked and licked dry licks. “What year is it?” He asked.

Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed in confusion. “Namjoon,” He signed. “I need to talk to you.”

Namjoon looked over at Taehyung, who was curled into a little ball, sleeping hard on his side. He looked back at Yoongi. “What’s up? Is everything okay?” He sat up and rubbed his face.

“-dance.” Yoongi signed.

“Wait,” Namjoon said. “Again, please.”

“I want to get Hoseok into dance.” Yoongi signed again.

“Dance?” Namjoon signed back. “Why dance?”

“Because he’s amazing.” Yoongi’s lips blew out with the sign for emphasis and his eyes were excited. “And he looks so happy doing it. I want to get him into dance.”

“Okay,” Namjoon signed back. “If that’s what he wants to do.” He shrugged and then started rearranging his pillows.

“Wait.” Yoongi signed. “And Hazel can’t come to Disney.”

That stopped Namjoon. “Oh,” He said, a sinking feeling in his stomach. “What do you want to do?”

“I think I have one more option.” Yoongi signed and then spun his wedding ring. “What if we asked Seokjin?”

Seokjin. Their handsome case worker popped into his head. He was such a nice guy. And he met Yoongi’s parameters of someone who knew their children. Heck, Seokjin knew their children before they even did. “I like that idea.” He signed and nodded.

Yoongi pulled out his cell phone. “I’m gonna call him.” He signed. “Do you think he’ll be available?”

Namjoon shrugged. “You can always leave a message?”

Yoongi dialed his phone and held up to his ear as he paced around their bedroom. Namjoon yawned and then messed with his hair as he watched Yoongi connect with someone. He nodded and then stopped and put his hand on his hip. His face broke out into a smile and then he nodded and hung up.

“Good news?” Namjoon asked.

“Seokjin isn’t busy that week.” Yoongi said. “He’s going to see about getting his cases covered and get back to us.”

“That’s great news.” Namjoon signed and yawned again. “I’m gonna go back to sleep.”

“Namjoon,” Yoongi signed, as he shook Namjoon’s shoulder. His eyes were electric with excitement. “We can go to Disney World.”

Namjoon snaked his arms around Yoongi’s waist and pulled him onto the bed with him and
Taehyung. He kissed Yoongi’s nose. “We are going to Disney World.” He whispered as he kissed his husband.

Ben was out sick with the flu and Joey was on an extended leave from school for surgery, so the field trip group from Ms. Beller’s class consisted of Thalia, a girl with a long braid in a pink wheelchair that made her presence known by humming and groaning or squeezing a squeaky stuffed animal and Jimin.

With Jimin and his classmate and Jungkook, the paraeducators, Ms. Beller and Yoongi made up the rear of the group for the first and second grade classes of Cherry Oak Elementary.

The place was large and had different sections that focused on different aspect of science - a whole meteorology section where you could stand in the middle of a mini tornado, a table where you could play with magnetic clay or dig up fake fossils from a big sandpit. An exhibit where you had to figure out a puzzle to connect wires together and start a flow of electricity.

But, the exhibits were…inaccessible, mostly, to Jimin and Thalia. Sam and Quinn and Ms. Beller always made it a point to get Jimin and Thalia to interact in their own way with the exhibits - Jimin held a bone that Jungkook dug up from the sandpit and they attempted to get Thalia’s hand on the ball of electricity to feel the warmth. But, it wasn’t the same. Really.

And maybe Yoongi just had never paid attention, really, when he was focused on getting in and out of places. Or maybe he had never really focused on comparing Jimin to other children, because he was just Jimin in Yoongi’s eyes. But, it was a reminder that while Jimin’s peers that were running, jumping, and learning would someday grow up to dig up fossils for real or be meteorologists or use their hands to build things, Jimin would not. That Jimin’s brain was frozen in time at ten months old and would never get older because of someone’s misplaced frustration.

And that reminder caused a weight that tasted metallic in the back of Yoongi’s throat to sink and settle in his chest, attaching itself to his ribcage. He just wanted his little boy to be happy. But, how could Yoongi really know if his son was happy and fulfilled as a person living a world that wasn’t built for him?

*Play is often talked about as if it were a relief for serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning.* -Mr. Rogers. Yoongi read the big quote painted on the wall in bright colors as they sat in the large eating area for lunch. The museum provided boxed lunches of sandwiches and fruit and Sam sat next to him attempting to cut up the apple into bite-sized chunks with a plastic fork.

“I brought apples.” Yoongi said as he watched Sam’s knife break in the hard fruit. He opened Jimin’s diaper bag and fished out the containers of tupperware. With Jungkook’s sensitivities, Yoongi learned just to keep food on hand, just in case.

“You don’t have to, but can-.”

“Thalia’s more than welcome to share.” Yoongi smiled and popped the lid open and slid it to the middle of the table. Jungkook was standing next to Yoongi on the bench of the picnic table they were sitting at. He reached over and grabbed an apple slice and munched on it in his little fist. He was having a blast in the kids’ museum, as nothing was off limits to touching and everything was meant for engaging.
Quinn was feeding Thalia a meal that resembled porridge, Thalia’s cute lips parting for each bite. Yoongi gave Jimin an apple chunk and watched his full lips pursed as he chewed. He opened his mouth about halfway and started to talk. Yoongi touched his chin. “Swallow your bite, silly boy.”

“Have you been enjoying the museum?” Sam asked as he picked up his own sandwich and took a bite.

Yoongi shrugged and looked around at the different groups of kids and teachers and chaperones. “I wished it was a little more accessible for kids with disabilities.”

Sam nodded and shrugged. “Yeah,” He sighed. “I wish that about a lot of places.” He motioned to Jimin. “Jimin seemed to like the music room. He was singing his little heart out.”

Yoongi smiled and brushed his cheek. “Yeah, he likes music just like his daddy.”

“Daddy.” Jimin repeated, his head turning so that he could see out of his left eye. Yoongi wrapped his fingers around Jimin’s hand and watched him babble as he motioned into space.

“Everything okay?” Sam asked.

Yoongi glanced up at the Mr. Rogers quote on the wall again. “What got you into paraeducation, Sam?” He asked, dodging his question.

Sam dropped his sandwich and brushed crumbs from his fingers. “Well, I started as a live-in nanny.” He said. “And then the move to Cherry Oak.”

“Was paraeducation something you always wanted to do?”

He shook his head. “No. I wanted to be a famous soccer player, but RA in my knees squashed that dream pretty quick.” He said and chuckled. “No, I started in babysitting and because of my brother, I already had experience in special needs. I was a ‘manny,’” He made air-quotations. “for awhile to this little boy severe autism.” He said. “It was a struggle. Like, I would sit with him for hours trying to work with him with simple self-care stuff like using the restroom or dressing himself.” He sighed.

“And that’s when you moved to Cherry Oak?”

Sam chewed on his lip. “No,” He shook his head. “I wanted to quit. Oh, gosh. So many times I thought about quitting, I would get so frustrated. But, I couldn’t. It wasn’t his fault he wasn’t learning. It was mine. I wasn’t teaching him in the way his mind wanted to learn. And I just kept using the same methods over and over thinking I would get somewhere and then be surprised when it would fail over and over.”

Yoongi pulled Jimin closer by his wheelchair's armrest. “What happened?”

Sam shrugged. “I figured out what worked best for him,” He said. “Instead of trying to force him to learn my way. Once I figured that out, it was pretty smooth after that. I ended up leaving because he didn’t need me anymore.” He gave Yoongi a peculiar look. “Why do you ask?”

Yoongi sucked in a breath. “It’s…hard being a parent sometimes…of a special needs child. Just…” He motioned around the room. “Wanting your child to be able to be their best selves.” His eyes dropped as the weight in his chest ballooned in size. “Not knowing if you’re helping or if you’re hindering them. Not knowing if you’re doing a good job.”
“Did you know that for the first three weeks at school, Jimin cried for almost an hour everyday for you?”

Yoongi’s eyes snapped up, concern lighting every synapse on fire. “Really? Why didn’t anyone tell us?”

“Hold on,” Sam said. “I’m not done. Did you know, there’s was a study done on people with severe cognitive disabilities? And they found that while their higher intelligence impaired - while they can’t learn two plus two equals four in the traditional, logical sense - they reacted to emotion? It lights up the exact same part of the limbic system in the brain that solving mathematic formulas or learning new words do for neurotypical kids. Kids like Jimin learn better when there’s an emotional connection to what they are learning. So, you know what we did to help him? We played music because it was familiar. Because it’s what he knew his daddies did for him. Because he could tie that with the love he had for you.” Sam smiled wide and big. “And guess what he can do now?” He said. “Twinkle, twinkle…” He started to sing.

Jimin perked right up. “Twinkle, twinkle little star.” His little voice sang - the sound high and pure. “Twinkle, twinkle little star.”

“Oh my god.” Yoongi ran his fingers through Jimin’s hair. “Baby, you’re doing so well. I’m so proud of you.” He said, choking up a little. Jimin smiled wide and giggled a little.

“As long as you continue to love Jimin as much as you do,” Sam said and picked up his sandwich. “Then Jimin will thrive.”

Namjoon wasn’t having a good day.

And he, honestly, couldn’t put his finger on why. Nothing had happened to him. His day was pretty normal - he helped get the kids up and fed, he got dressed himself, he went to work. Namjoon was just feeling…melancholic. Like a stormy sky before it rained. Like the mist that surrounded green mountains. Gray and monochromatic and two-dimensional.

He wanted to blame the weather, but it was a sunny, fair early spring day. He wanted to blame it on being stuck at work, but honestly, he couldn’t even do that. Maybe he hadn’t gotten enough Vitamin D. Maybe he needed more sun or something.

He knew a sure-fire way of improving his mood was getting to watch his favorite smile erupt on his favorite person’s face. The smile that was all gums and teeth. The smile that was half snark and half joy and all his. The smile of the love of his life.

Before Namjoon went home, he stopped at the flower shop. Yoongi like roses that were like sunsets in color - red that faded to orange at the tips of the petals. He said they were the prettiest because they evolved as they bloomed - like tiny, living works of art. Their wedding reception was dripping in these roses. Namjoon picked up a dozen and drove home with his fingers on his sternum, trying to pinpoint where this weird sudden emptiness was coming from. He had everything he wanted - a beautiful husband, a houseful of kids, a good job.

“Baby,” He said as he came in through the garage. “Baby?”

Yoongi’s head popped around the corner. “Kitchen.” He signed and then disappeared again.
Namjoon followed him into the kitchen. The kids were in the living room - playing and roughhousing. Jimin was in his floor sitter, clapping. Namjoon sucked in a big breath as he watched them. His family.

There was a touch on his arm and he looked down to Yoongi. His t-shirt was covered in a red stain that looked like it could be strawberry and his hair was a mess. His eyes were soft pools of melted chocolate and Namjoon felt a little warmer than he did a moment ago. “How was your day?” He signed.

Namjoon turned and thrust out the flowers. “I got these for you.”

Yoongi’s knobbled fingers came up and took the bouquet. “Sunset roses.” He sighed and smiled Namjoon’s favorite smile. The smile that felt like a warm day. The smile that rose goosebumps on Namjoon’s skin. The smile that banished away the gray. “My favorite. What’s the occasion?”

Namjoon shrugged and rubbed Yoongi’s upper arms. “Just want to appreciate my husband.” He said. “That’s all.”

Yoongi rose on his tip-toes and kissed Namjoon. “I’ll get these in some water.” He turned and squatted to fish a vase out from under the sink.

Namjoon looked out the back door at the pool that was glittering in the sun. “Hey, baby?” He asked aloud and turned to Yoongi raising with a vase in his arms. “What day is it?”

Yoongi put down his vase to check his phone. “March twenty-eighth. Why?”

Namjoon sucked in a little breath, realizing what day it was. It was such a faded memory now that Namjoon couldn’t even distinguish anymore. It was just an abstract concept. Lights and sounds in the background. An emotion more than an actual event that had occurred.

It was the day his parents died. The day his life changed forever.

“No reason.” He whispered as he stared at the clouds.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!<33
Namjoon felt his jaw drop open as he watched Jimin’s neurologist - a Western Asian guy named Dr. Patel - uncurl a long, slender finger towards an image of Jimin’s brain. The MRI looked like a black and white photograph of the inside - one side of it looking down at it and the other a cross section. Namjoon could see the lobes…and the damage. Dips and imperfections that didn’t make the sides symmetrical anymore.

He moved his eyes to the doctor’s face to lip-read. However, he wasn’t getting anything the doctor was saying - probably using words that Namjoon didn’t know. He looked at Yoongi for interpretation, but his husband was stone still and had his dark eyes frozen on the doctor. “What…” Yoongi gulped and Namjoon watched his adam’s apple bob. “What’s the treatment?” His lips barely moved. He wasn’t moving. He wasn’t breathing.

Namjoon felt a weight flip-flop in his middle. “Yoongi-,” He started lowly.

“…at this time.”

“Wait,” Namjoon stopped him, fidgeting in his chair. “I’m missing all of this. Jimin has an aneurysm?”

The doctor nodded and pointed to a indistinguishable spot on the MRI. “Jimin has a lot of weak blood vessels in his brain from the intense swelling he endured when he was a baby. Aneurysms happen when a wall of one of those weak blood vessels balloons out and starts to pool with blood and it appears that we have one forming on this artery here.” The doctor spoke slowly for Namjoon’s sake. “It’s nothing to be worried about at the moment, however I would like to get in and clip it before it bursts.”

“The doctor shrugged. “Surgery?” Namjoon asked, making sure he was getting that right. “You want to do surgery?”

“It…” The doctor shrugged. “Yes, it’s a craniotomy-,” Namjoon looked at Yoongi, who spelled that for him. “So we will have go through the skull. But, we try to be as minimally invasive as possible.”

Namjoon started game planning in his head, squashing down the panic that was starting to
flame up like kerosene thrown on a bonfire inside of him. Jimin was front and center. They were
going to handle this. Front and center. He rubbed his hands together and looked at Yoongi.

“There isn’t any other treatment options?” Yoongi asked.

Dr. Patel tapped his pen on his finger. “Surgery would that we get it the first time.” He said.

Namjoon and Yoongi exchanged a look. Yoongi was so still. So still that Namjoon could see
his pulse fluttering in his pale throat. The only movement was from his nostrils that were flaring with
his long, deep breath and his eyes that were roaming with panic.

He moved his eyes back to Jimin. He watched Hoseok brush Jimin’s silky over his face,
causing his nose to scrunch and his smile to widen. Front and center. Jimin was front and center.

Namjoon laced his fingers with his husband’s and turned back to the doctor. “When?”

The doctor shrugged again. For a guy who just recommended opening up Namjoon’s child’s
skull to perform surgery on his brain, he was very nonchalant. “Again, it looks like it isn’t in a rush.”

“We’re going…we were going to Disney World…” Yoongi started and shifted. “In a couple
of weeks…”

The doctor sat down at his desk and smiled a little. “Don’t worry.” He said pointedly.
“Aneurysms sound scary, but we caught this one early. Go to Disney World. Enjoy yourself and
when you guys get back,” He looked at Jimin. “We’ll get it taken care of.”

“What are you doing today after Hoseok’s appointment?”

Yoongi was jarred from his thoughts as he mindlessly picked at his In-N-Out burger. He
looked up to Namjoon, who was wiping Jungkook’s face off with a napkin. Jungkook had his little
hamburger in both hands and was chewing with a scrunched up nose. Yoongi glanced at Jimin, who
had his tray insert snapped into his chair in front of him and was feeding himself french fries. Hoseok
had one of his long, tan legs pulled up to his chest as he ate his own meal.

Yoongi felt like he was caught in a wind tunnel - all of his fears and panic whooshing around
his ears. It deafened him. It jumbled every thought in his head. It wound around his throat and
strangled him until he couldn’t inhale air.

“Baby?”

Yoongi put his eyes back on Namjoon, who was looking at him with concern. “I have
Hoseok’s appointment.” He murmured as he pulverized his hamburger bun into crumbs with his
fingers.

“Okay,” Namjoon said. “After that?”

Jimin needed surgery. Yoongi didn’t know why he was so surprised over that news. He knew
that hospital visits were going to be normal with their child. But, it still was like a slap to his face.
The heat still smarting right on top of his cheeks.
“Yoongi,” Namjoon said, closing the distance between them. “It’s going to be okay. You heard what the doctor said.”

The noise, the roaring in Yoongi’s head increased in volume. “But, there’s risks.” He inhaled a deep breath. “They want to open his skull.”

“But,” Namjoon said. “If they don’t operate now, then it might burst down the line. And that’s when those bleeds become life-threatening.”

Yoongi dropped his sandwich and dug his fingers into his eye sockets. He rubbed until he saw fireworks. “Why him?” He said.

“What?”

Yoongi looked up. “Why does it have to be our Jimin? Why does…” He balled his fists up. “Why can’t the world just leave him alone?”

Namjoon scooted around the circular picnic table they were sitting at on In-N-Out’s patio. He wrapped his arms around Yoongi’s shoulders, caging him. Yoongi felt a little better in his husband’s warm embrace. “It’s not ideal.” Namjoon said. “And the surgery is going to have to risks. But,” He said and cupped Yoongi’s face. “We are his daddies and we have to be strong for him.”

Yoongi looked at Jimin, who was contently munching on a french fry. He waved it around in his fist. “Ho.” He said as he craned his head, trying to get Hoseok’s attention. He pitched the french fry onto the ground. “Uh-oh.”

Yoongi felt himself smile at their angel. He turned and snuggled his face in Namjoon’s chest, the roaring in his head dying out. “I love you so much.” He said against his husband. “I’m so glad I’m in this together with you.”

“What?” Namjoon pulled away to look at his face.

“I said,” Yoongi pulled away to sign. “That your unadulterated optimism is irritating.” He lied.

Namjoon grinned wide, his dimples poking out. “It’s not optimism. It’s realism.” He argued and laced their fingers together. “We’re going to go to-,” He glanced at Hoseok. They were going to surprise the elder boys the day of. “D-I-S-N-E-Y,” He spelled aloud. “And then when we get back, Jimin will have surgery. He’ll be a little sore for a couple of days. We’ll have to wash some stitches. But, he’ll be okay in the end.”

Yoongi sighed. “You promise?” He looked up at Namjoon, feeling like a child himself almost.

“Of course.” Namjoon kissed Yoongi’s temple. “Now, what are you doing after Hoseok’s appointment?”

Yoongi glanced at Hoseok and ran his fingers through their eldest’s hair. “I’m going to go see if I can sign up Fred Astaire here at a dance studio and then do some shopping for travel things before picking up Taehyung.”

“And what are you not going to do?” Namjoon put on his teacher-face.

Yoongi shot him a look and then rolled his eyes. “Worry over Jimin.”

Namjoon patted Yoongi on his head. “That’s right.” He picked up a french fry and Yoongi took a bite of it before Namjoon got it to his mouth, giggling the whole time.
Yoongi made the psych appointment after Hoseok’s incident with his cousin. Dr. Greene assured Yoongi after the visit that she didn’t think Hoseok was experiencing post-traumatic flashbacks, but she was going to some more “digging” with Hoseok over the next couple of appointments to see exactly what happened there to cause him blank out like he did.

After the appointment, Yoongi stopped by the dance studio that was in their town to sign Hoseok up for dance lessons.

Yoongi leaned on the handle of Jimin’s wheelchair and scanned the board that was in the tiny lobby, advertising different classes with their time slots. He examined ballet and tap, but he didn’t think Hoseok would be too interested in either of those. He found hip-hop and contemporary. Those seemed more up his alley.

“Hi, sorry.” A breathless voice said and Yoongi turned to a girl in a tracksuit. She walked behind the counter of the front lobby. “Just finished up with practice. Can I help you with something?”

“Um,” Yoongi pointed to the board. “I’m looking to sign up my son for this contemporary dance class on Mondays and Wednesdays?”

The girl pulled out a clipboard. “What’s his skill level?”

“Beginner.” Yoongi said and moved to the counter. He glanced behind him, finding Jungkook sitting crosslegged on the ground as he played with his Bop-It, rocking himself as he hit it, twisted it, and pulled it. The sign up sheet was slid to him. Yoongi picked up the attached pen and started filling out Hoseok’s basic information.

He paused at the ‘medical conditions’ section of the sheet. “Hoseok is deaf. Is that going to affect anything?”

The girl’s eyebrows furrowed. “Deaf? As in…”

“As in can’t hear.” Yoongi finished for her. He felt a hand on his hip and he looked down at Hoseok. “Dad, I want to win a trophy.” He signed and pointed to their trophy case.

The girl’s eyes widened as she watched Hoseok. “Well, um…” She started as she jammed her fists into her sweatshirt pockets. “You have to, like, hear music to dance.”

Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed. “No you don’t. Hoseok just needs to feel the beat in the floor.”

The girl ran her lip between her teeth. “Hold on.” She said. “Let me, um, let me get the owner.” She turned around and disappeared behind the door, her ponytail swinging behind her.

Yoongi sighed, thanking every higher power that Namjoon had a class this afternoon and wasn’t around to witness this. If there was anything that got his gentle giant husband upset, it was being told that his Deafness was an inhibition. And it was doubly, triply so for his Deaf children. Yoongi rubbed Hoseok’s shoulder as he waited for…the owner. Or whoever.

A man with deep, dark complexion and muscles that rippled down his arms exited with the girl. “Hello,” He said, his voice light. “How can I help you?”
“My son is interested in dancing.” Yoongi said and looked at the girl. “But, he is deaf.”

The guy crossed his arm. “Can he dance?”

Yoongi looked down at Hoseok, who was beaming his radiant smile and then back up at this guy. He nodded. “Yeah, he can, actually.”

“Well,” The guy shrugged and the motioned. “Come on in. Let’s see.”

Yoongi gathered Jungkook and Jimin and followed the owner into a large dance studio. There were two walls that were covered in mirrors and the floor was glossy wood. Yoongi parked Jungkook and Jimin off to the side.

The guy approached the sound system in the corner. “What are we dancing to?”

“Uh, can you put on Likey by Twice?” Yoongi turned to Hoseok and cupped his face with both hands, squishing his cheeks up. Hoseok’s eyes suddenly filled with anxiety. Yoongi kissed his nose. “This guy wants to see you dance because he doesn’t believe that Deaf people can dance.” Yoongi signed quickly. “You have to prove him wrong, okay?”

Hoseok nodded and then grinned, the anxiety leaving his eyes. “Okay, Dad.” He signed. “I'll show him.” Hoseok pulled off both of his sneakers and then his socks.

Hoseok turned around and moved to the center of the floor on his tiptoes. He stopped and turned towards one of the mirrors and Yoongi watched his toes flex and his fingers fiddle with the edge of his t-shirt.

The owner started the music and the high lilt of Twice filled the dance studio. Yoongi watched Hoseok turn with a frown on his face. “Is the music on?” He asked. “I can’t feel it.”

Yoongi glanced over at the sound system. The speakers were on poles in the corner of the room, high off the ground. “Excuse me,” Yoongi said to the owner. “Can you, um, lower the speaker to the ground?”

The owner looked at the speakers as well. He lifted one off the pole and placed it on the ground.

“Can he turned the music up too?” Hoseok asked and Yoongi relayed that. The owner turned up the music and even Yoongi could feel the thrum of the bass in his feet and his chest. Hoseok smiled as he twisted back around to face the mirror.

Hoseok started to dance the choreography, picking it up right in the middle of the song where it was playing. Yoongi watched him smile, but also his chin tip up and his eyes flash with fire, with passion.

Yoongi felt his hand wiggle and looked down to Jungkook jumping up and down as he watched his older brother with a big smile over his face. He looked up at Yoongi and beamed with his wide smile. And Jimin was singing his own tune along with the music.

Yoongi glanced at the owner of the dance studio. He didn’t look…disappointed. But, he also didn’t look happy. He was watching Hoseok like he was appraising him - gears turning behind his eyes. Yoongi couldn’t figure out if that was a good thing or a bad thing yet.

The song ended and Hoseok paused and turned around to face Yoongi. “Did I do good?” He signed.
“You did wonderful baby.” Yoongi signed back and opened his arms. Hoseok scampered across the wood into

“Well,” The owner said and gave a little smile. “That was cute.”

“He taught it himself.” Yoongi said as he rubbed both of Hoseok’s shoulders. “In an afternoon, by watching the music video, like, six times.” It was a little more than that, but not by much.

The owner’s eyebrows rose in surprise. “Really?”

Yoongi nodded. “He’s talented.”

The owner turned around to face his sound system that was now partially dismantled. He turned back to Yoongi. “And he has no formal dance training?”

Yoongi shook his head. “None.”

The owner continued to look back and forth, indecision in his eyes. “How…” He made a noise. “How fast do you think he could learn a routine?”

Yoongi shrugged. “Pretty fast, I assume.”

The owner clapped his hands together. “So, I want to bring him on for lessons-,”

“That’s great.”

“Wait,” He said. “I want to bring him on for lessons, but I also want him to join the team… maybe get him into competition dance? It’s not the season yet for that, but we’re going to be doing an exhibition in a couple of weeks.” The owner looked at Hoseok. “If he’s serious about dance, I think he could go far with it. Especially being deaf.”

Yoongi narrowed his eyes and his fingers tightened on his son’s shoulders in defense. “His deafness isn’t a gimmick.”

“It’s not.” The owner said. “I never said it was. But,” He shrugged. “It would definitely perk up music video producers or casting agents or even colleges for scholarships later on down the line.”

“Scholarships?” Yoongi repeated, his eyebrows furrowing. “Really?”

“You’d be surprised.”

Yoongi looked down at Hoseok and squatted. “Seokie,” He started. “You’re an amazing dancer and this teacher wants you to join their team. Are you interested in dancing here? You would be with other kids who can dance as well and maybe get into competitions? How does that sound? Do you want to do that?”

Hoseok fiddled with his shirt. “Competitions?”

Yoongi nodded. “Yeah, baby.” He smoothed his hair down. “But, I only want to do what you are comfortable with.” He signed. “If you just want to take lessons and that’s it, then we can do that.”

Hoseok’s lips quirked out and he glanced at his own reflection. “I want to win a trophy.” He signed with a little nod. “I want to dance.”

Yoongi smiled. “Okay, baby. You can dance.” And Hoseok beamed his great big smile at
that. Yoongi rose to his feet and turned towards the owner. “I think he wants to dance here.” He said.

“Great.” The owner said with a smile that showed off a row of incredibly white teeth. “We’ll start tomorrow.”

“Oh my God,” Namjoon said and held up a tiny t-shirt against his own chest. “This is adorable.” The design on the front was a Mickey Mouse head filled with puzzle pieces.

“I read on a blog that a mom with three boys on the spectrum had an easier time with crowds when they were wearing autism awareness shirts.” Yoongi signed from the other side of the bed as he folded laundry. “You know, it was easier to wear the shirt instead of explaining over and over that her son wasn’t a spoiled brat, he was just neurodiverse.”

Namjoon let out a sigh and then folded the t-shirt. “Like the general public has any right to judge.”

Yoongi shrugged as he folded up a pair of shorts and added them to a pile. “They’re going to judge no matter what.” He signed. “It’s our jobs as parents to make sure that they don’t ruin Kookie’s fun during his vacation, you know.”

Namjoon smiled at the thought of Kookie meeting a Disney princess, showing them his light up toy, giving them a big hug. He couldn’t wait. He couldn’t wait to give them everything he never had. “He’s going to love those rollercoasters.”

Yoongi stopped folding. They had piles of clothes - some new with the price tags still on them, some old - that they were slowly gathering up to be packed. Namjoon had divided them into piles on their bed. “I just hope he as a good time. I don’t want to overstimulate him.”

“Well,” Namjoon signed. “We’re going to be prepared.”

Yoongi nodded, his jaw setting a little. “We will be prepared. For anything. A diaper blowout. A meltdown. War. The apocalypse.” He signed with a straight face. “Mary Poppins doesn’t have anything on Min Yoongi.”

Namjoon chuckled. “Does Seokjin know that he needs to suit up?”

Yoongi grinned. “Yeah, he knows.”

“I’m glad he was able to come.”

“Me too.” Yoongi said. “He told me today through text that this was his first real vacation in, like, eight years. Eight years, Namjoon.” Yoongi’s cheeks puffed for effect. “Can you believe that?”

“Can we just adopt him too?” Namjoon suggested with a chuckle.

Yoongi’s head whipped towards the door and his eyebrows furrowed. He dropped the shirt he was holding and then picked up his cell phone that was sitting on the bed.

“Everything okay?” Namjoon asked.

“Our doorbell rang?”
Namjoon glanced at his alarm clock on his nightstand. “At almost midnight?” He moved around the bed and down the hallway. Their doorbell rang again - and this time Namjoon knew by the way the living room lights flashed.

He peeked through the peephole of the front door. There was a girl in a dark hoodie outside. She was leaning heavily on the side of their garage and massaging her temple. Namjoon turned to Yoongi. “There’s a girl?”

“A girl?” Yoongi stood back, the baby monitor in his hand.

He shrugged and looked out the peephole again. “She’s Asian. Maybe…our age?”

“Don’t answer it.” Yoongi signed.

Suddenly the lights flashed again and Namjoon watched her hit the doorbell a bunch of times. He turned back around to Yoongi.

“Fuck,” He said. “She’s going to wake the kids.”

Namjoon cracked the door open, a light breeze hitting in him in the face. A couple of bugs danced around their porch light. “Can I help you?” He asked.

She straightened and then teetered. “Is this…” Her words were slurring and it really took all of Namjoon’s concentration to lip-read her. “Is this…” She swayed again. She was definitely drunk.

“Honey,” Namjoon opened the door wider. “Are you okay? Is there someone I can call for you? Uber or something?”

A scowl passed over her features and she grimaced and tensed up. Her eyes met Namjoon’s - a look of anger in them. “Taehyung.” She said.

Namjoon felt his forehead crumple in confusion. “What did you say?”

“Where is Taehyung?” She demanded, pushing her hair out of her face. She swayed again. “I want to see Taehyung.”

A bunch of alarms went off in Namjoon and he glanced over his shoulder at Yoongi, locking eyes with him for a second. Yoongi’s were full of questions. Namjoon felt a flash of protectiveness. But, it was more than holding his hand when he crossed the street or protecting him from bullies at school. This was protection in its basest form. A bear protecting its cubs. A lion protecting its kittens. Namjoon squared his shoulders up and rose to his full height.

“I’m sorry, honey.” Namjoon said as softly, but as firmly as possible. “I don’t know who that is. I think you have the wrong house.”

“Bullshit!” Actual spit flew out of her mouth with her words. She started to heat red in the face. “I-I have connections. I know people in the courts. Fuck.” She rubbed her forehead. “I have connections. And she told me who adopted my fucking son.” She tapped her chest. “Well, I’m out of jail now. So, thank you for your services, but I would like my child back.” She stomped her foot.

Namjoon flexed his jaw. “You have,” He said slowly. “The wrong house. Now, if you would kindly leave-,”

“Bullshit!” She screamed again, her hair flying. “Bullshit. You have my son.” She tried leaning around Namjoon’s shoulder. “Taehyung!” She yelled.
Namjoon placed his hand on her shoulder to gently push her out of his doorway. She whipped her arm back and almost staggered off of her feet. “I’ll call the cops.” Namjoon said.

“Don’t fucking touch me!” Her face was red and flushed with anger and probably alcohol. She smelled like she was on a drinking bender - like liquor and stale beer.

“I don’t want to do it, but I will call the cops if you don’t leave my property.” Namjoon said. “I can call someone for you, if you want.”

She wheeled around in a little circle. “I am Taehyung’s mother and you have my son. And I’ll get him back.”

Namjoon rolled his eyes. This was getting old. “Honey, please. It’s late. You’re tired. I’m tired. Let me call you a ride home.”

“I don’t have a fucking home.” She said and fisted her own hair. She launched into what Namjoon assumed was Korean, as he couldn’t lip-read her anymore. She started crying and pacing on the veranda, pulling at her own hair and tugging at her hoodie. “He’s my home.” She ended, her lip quivering.

“Why don’t we discuss this in the morn-,”

Namjoon couldn’t finish his sentence. Not over the blood that started to pound like a drum in his head. Not over the sound of his own heartbeat that was loud in his deaf ears. Not over the screaming of every alarm in his head that cried at him to protect his children, protect his husband, protect himself as he watched the girl’s hand disappear into her hoodie and reappear holding a black gun.

She shakily held it up, the firearm looking heavy in her small hand and aimed it at Namjoon’s chest. Namjoon stared at it - at the barrel that was at point blank range, at her finger that was dancing over the trigger - and then put his eyes on her face - the only movement his body allowed him to do as he froze with adrenaline. “Where’s,” She said, her eyes full of a piercing darkness. “Taehyung?”

Chapter End Notes

don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me don't hate me

(I promise I'll have the next update very, very soon)
“Where’s Taehyung?”

Yoongi heard that part as he stood eight feet behind his husband in their entryway. He didn’t get the whole conversation, but he knew that some drunk girl was losing it on their porch. And it had something to do with Tae.

He watched Namjoon’s hand move behind the door like he was going to grip it. Instead he started to sign out of view of the person that was standing on their front porch. G-U-N he fingerspelled and the formed his hand into a gun shape.

Yoongi froze for a nanosecond as he computed that.

And then in the next second, all of Yoongi’s hair stood up on end. Every nerve suddenly became alive. Every single synapse fired off at one time in complete and utter fear. There was someone holding his husband at gunpoint?

He glanced down the hallway where four beautiful little souls were sleeping in their beds. There was a gun near his children? All of a sudden his head was filled with white noise as he started to panic, his breaths heaving in his chest.

Namjoon’s hand started moving again behind the door. C-O-P-S.

Police. That’s right. Yoongi had to call the police. Oh, God. There had been what? Fifteen seconds wasted? He could hear Namjoon talking to this psychopath in their doorway - soft and low. Yoongi couldn’t hear it, though. Not over the gonging between his ears. Not over the way every bone was rattling in his body as he shook.

Yoongi’s hand fished for his cell phone in his pants pocket and he stepped to the side out of direct view of the door. He was pretty certain that this girl hadn’t seen him. He hit his home button too many times and it pulled up the emergency call screen. He dialed 9-1-1 and forced his hand to his face.

“What’s your emergency?” The 911 operator answered.

“M-my husband is being held at gunpoint.” His own breaths sounded loud in the receiver. He glanced down the hallway again. Jungkook’s room was the first door on the left. Protect the kids. Yoongi tried calculating how fast he could get down the hallway. How fast he could hide the kids in their walk-in closet or bathroom or something and then get back to his husband.
He glanced back at Namjoon, who was talking again - low and soft - to this psychopath with a gun.

“What’s your address?”

“Twelve-fifty Redwood circle.” Yoongi answered as his feet started to move before his brain decided what he needed to do. “Altadena.”

“Dispatching police.” The operator said. “Is anyone hurt?”

“Not yet.” Yoongi managed in a whisper, his heart beating so loud in his ribcage he thought it was going to bust through. He hung up the phone as he turned into Jungkook’s room and pulled the child off the bed, swinging him up into his arms. He ran out and into Tae and Hoseok’s room next door and shook each boy awake. “Wake up.” He said and started pulling Tae out of bed by his arm. “I need you guys to follow me.”

“What’s going on?” Hoseok signed sleepily as he sat up.

“I need you guys to follow me.” Yoongi signed while he held Jungkook with one arm. “Okay? Hurry.”

Both boys slid out of bed and followed Yoongi into the master bedroom and then into the bathroom. That was the room that was the farthest away from the front door. At least, if Yoongi and Namjoon were both shot, they were hidden in here. He put Jungkook in Taehyung’s lap and then turned around and ran across the hallway to get Jimin.

“Hi, sweetheart.” Yoongi said as he gathered up Jimin - startling him awake accidentally. He started to cry and Yoongi felt like joining him. “I know. I know.” He said as he held him against his chest and jogged back across the hallway into his room. He set Jimin in Hoseok’s arm. “Watch his neck.” Yoongi signed. He was vaguely aware over the white hot panic coursing through his veins his kids’ wide, frightened eyes as they watched him from their place huddled on the floor of their bathroom. “It’s okay.” He breathed, not even sounding remotely convincing. “Just stay here and don’t move.”

There hadn’t been any gun shots yet and Yoongi assumed that was a good thing as he jogged back down the hallway towards his husband, trying to decide if punching her in the face would be enough to incapacitate her. And wondering why his hallway seemed like it grew five miles wide and was slowly closing in on him.

Bang!

The sound was piercing and shrill. Louder than he anticipated. He had heard gunshots in movies, but it wasn’t anything close to real life. His ears automatically started to ring and the shock of the noise caused whole seismic waves to course through his whole body. His knees gave out and he skidded onto the floor, his hands automatically raising to his head to protect himself.

But, even as he sat on his elbows and knees, suddenly staring at his hardwood, there was only one thought running through his head. This thought louder than any gunshot.

Namjoon.
Namjoon thought the whole ‘life flashing before your eyes’ thing was complete bullshit. Like, were you really going to remember the grade you got when you were 10 or your first crush or the way your spouse’s eyes lit up when you proposed to them as you stared down death? No. Of course not. You were going to be trying to figure out a way to get out the situation and protect yourself.

His theory was definitely being tested as he stared at the barrel of the gun. And he realized that he was both right and wrong. Yeah, he was trying to figure out the best way to break this girl’s wrist without making the pistol go off in her hand, trying to figure out if an open-handed punch to the nose would crush it into her skull, trying to figure out if the desperation in her eyes was substance-induced, lunacy, or just a soul that was in too far deep now to really stop now.

But, he was also…reflecting. The same question inch-worming its way around his head - if I die would my family be okay? And not even in the face of this immediate danger. Just, in general. Would they be okay without me? He wasn’t sure. He didn’t want to think about it.

“What’s Taehyung?” She repeated again when he didn’t answer.

“Let’s…” He started, swallowing down the panic that was making his throat swell. “Let’s be reasonable.” He managed.

“I just want Taehyung.” She said, the gun shaking in her hand. “That’s it.”

“I-I can’t do that.” Namjoon said. “You know I can’t.”

“Why not?” She screeched, tears making lines down her face. “He’s all I’m living for now. He’s all that I have.” The gun started to tip down.

“But,” Namjoon said. “He isn’t yours anymore.”

“Yes he is!” She re-aimed the gun in the middle of Namjoon’s chest and he sucked in a short breath and held it. “He’s mine. I gave birth to him. I’m his mother.”

Namjoon stared into her eyes again. He stared at the desperation there. She was as terrified as he was. He could see it. “Is this what you want him to see, though? His mother holding his dad at gunpoint?” Namjoon asked, trying to reason. Honestly, he didn’t know where any of this was coming from. He didn’t know how he was even getting his mouth to move. But, the words were coming and he couldn’t stop them now. “Look around you. Taehyung has a life with us. He has love and a bed and a family now. A roof over his head. And you want to rip him away from all of that?”

Her face crumpled a little. “What am I supposed to do?” She asked as she held the gun. “I can’t live without him.”

“Maybe you can start with putting this down.” Namjoon’s hand reached out to push the pistol down in her hand.

“No!” She screeched. “Don’t move!”

Namjoon held his hands in a surrender position - palm out next to his ears. “I’m not. I’m not.” He said. “I’m just saying that you don’t have to do this.”

She started to cry and dropped the gun. And her chin. She was talking, mumbling but Namjoon couldn’t understand her. Her empty hand came up and smeared snot from her nostrils across her cheek and she swayed. She looked up. “We were homeless.” She said. “And I tried to
steal some food from a grocery store for him.” She sobbed. “And the store caught me and pressed charges. He was nine months old.”

“You did what you had to do.” Namjoon said gently.

“I got him back.” She continued to cry. “When he was three. But, I was in a drug deal gone wrong and-,” She started to mumble again and sob.

“Honey, why don’t you-,”

The mumbling grew fevered and she picked up the gun again. “I just need him back.” She said, her other hand pulling back the slide. Namjoon froze. “You understand-,”

Suddenly, red and blue lights flashed into Namjoon’s view and a cop car pulled up into their driveway. He had never been so thankful for Yoongi than he did in his whole life.

“Cops!” She said, panic on her face now. Namjoon took the opportunity - not even thinking about it, just letting adrenaline take over - to disarm her. He wrapped his hand around her wrist and wrenched her arm back. She pulled the trigger and there was a banging sound of the gunshot and a flash. And then to his left, a hole exploded into the garage wall.

Namjoon felt hot, hot, hot bites in his bicep and shoulder, like bee stings that were a million degrees in temperature. He dropped her hand as two cops ran up the front lawn and moved to cover the pain in his arm. “Fuck!” He cursed as his hearing aids started two loops of feedback from the loud noise.

Taehyung’s mother was forced onto the ground by the cops. Namjoon could see the cop was talking to him. He could see his mouth moving, but he couldn’t focus enough to lip-read. He was too busy trying to piece together the fact that a gun had went off and that he was okay. He was alive. His kids were okay. His Yoongi was okay. They all were alive.

“Sir, are you okay?” A cop was in his face now, yelling. Namjoon couldn’t help but lip-read now. He

“Yeah,” Namjoon uncovered his upper arm, revealing stripes and dots where shrapnel had gotten him. He could see a little piece of gray embedded in his skin. Blood was starting to drip. But, that was okay. Because his family was okay. And that’s all that mattered. “I’m okay.”

“Don’t move, okay?”

Namjoon was definitely going to shock a little bit. His whole body was shaking and while he could still hear his hearing aids whining with feedback, he could will his arms to raise to adjust the volume. All he could focus on was his breathing as he inhaled big, lungfuls of air and let them out in gusts.

Namjoon nodded at the cop as he was gently pushed into the house and then sat down on a dining room chair. His arm was still bleeding. Probably onto the rug. But, he was shaking so bad that he couldn’t lean over to see. He was afraid he would tip over onto the floor.
He did manage to connect a couple of wires together to form a word. A name. “Yoongi.”
He said and turned. “Where is my husband?”

There was a touch on his shoulder and Namjoon almost jumped out of his skin as he wheeled around to Yoongi. *His* Yoongi. His Yoongi that looked like he was going to absolutely lose it - his breaths heaving between clenched teeth and his angular eyes wide and crazed. “Are you okay?”
Yoongi signed.

Namjoon just touched Yoongi, feeling how warm he was compared to Namjoon’s ice cold hands. “I’m okay.” He breathed and nodded. “I’m okay.”

“You’re bleeding.” Yoongi said, his hand finding Namjoon’s shoulder. “Were you shot?”

“The, um, the bullet went into the wall but I got a bit of shrapnel in my arm.” Namjoon said as he inhaled big breaths. A thought occurred to him and he gripped Yoongi’s hand. “The kids. They’re alright?”

Yoongi nodded. “I hid them in our bathroom.”

They both stared into each other’s eyes, shaking fiercely, unable to comprehend what they just went through. Namjoon was in shock. But, he was relieved and glad and so, so thankful. He was safe. They were safe. *They were safe.* “I’m so glad you’re okay.” He gripped both of Yoongi’s hands. “All I could think about was losing you guys.” He felt himself choke up.

He watched Yoongi’s eyes mist over and his mouth popped open, but then he looked up towards the door. Namjoon turned to an EMT dressed in all blue carrying a kit of some sort. “I’m here to take a look at that wound you got there.”

Namjoon glanced at his shoulder. His t-shirt sleeve was soaked in blood now. It didn’t hurt anymore. It stopped hurting awhile go, probably from the shock. He gave a wan smile to the EMT. “I got a bit of shrapnel in my arm.”

He started to dab it with some gauze. “I see.” He said and shined a light in Namjoon’s eyes. “How are you feeling?”

Namjoon looked back and Yoongi, who looked like he was still on the brink of a breakdown. He laced his fingers with his. “I’m alive.”

While Namjoon was getting the bits of bullet pulled out of his arm, Yoongi went back to gather the kids and put them back to bed. He was a bundle of fried nerves - his hands shaking and his vision still fuzzy around the edges. He kept having to remind himself to take regular breaths. But, Namjoon was alive. *He was alive.* Yoongi never felt more relieved in his life.

He opened the door the bathroom to his children piled in the corner where he had left them. Jungkook was rocking in a little ball. Hoseok and Jimin were crying. Taehyung was just white like he had seen a ghost.

“Daddy!” Taehyung cried. “What was that noise?” He demanded.

Yoongi sucked in a deep breath and dropped to his knees. Taehyung scrambled on his knees
into Yoongi’s arms. Jungkook followed him, digging his face into Yoongi’s shoulder with a grunt. Yoongi took a selfish moment to hold his boys, breathe them in, calm himself a little. He pulled away. “It’s okay.” He said and pushed Taehyung’s hair out of his eyes. “There was a scary person at the door, but they’re gone now. So, there’s no need to worry.”

“A scary person?” Hoseok signed as Jimin reclined against him. His face was tear-streaked and red and he looked to be in about the same shape as Yoongi felt.

Yoongi nodded. “The police has taken them away. So, there’s nothing to worry about anymore.” He signed and then moved to pick up Jimin. Jimin was crying too - probably startled by the gunshot. He cradled him as he sat cross-legged on the floor of his bathroom. Hoseok dug his face into Yoongi’s shoulder and gripped on his t-shirt. Taehyung moved to comfort Jimin by rubbing his head. Jungkook started edging onto Yoongi’s lap. “Nothing to worry about.” He whispered. “Anymore.”

And Yoongi was a bundle of fried nerves. His hands were still shaking. His vision was still fuzzy around the edges. He still kept having to tell himself to inhale and exhale. But, Namjoon was alive. He was alive. And his children were fine.

And Yoongi never felt more relieved in his life.

The police officer took both Yoongi and Namjoon’s statements as they sat on the couch together, Namjoon’s arms wrapped around Yoongi’s shoulders. Sitting in his embrace, with his ear pressed up against Namjoon’s chest so he could hear his heartbeat, Yoongi was finally able to take in full lungfuls of air.

“So,” The police officer sighed. “Have you ever seen or met this woman before?”

Namjoon ran his hands up and down Yoongi’s back. His bicep was now wrapped in tight gauze. Thankfully, the injuries he sustained were all cosmetic. He shook his head. “No.” He said. “Never. But, she said that she was the mother of our adopted son, Taehyung.”

He nodded as he jotted that down. “We ran her in the system.” He said. “She has a track record a mile long. Most of it small drug charges and stuff like that. But, there was a restraining order put on her from a couple of foster families ago for stalking your son.” He said. “She’s definitely earned herself a one-way ticket back to jail.”

Yoongi felt Namjoon shift underneath him. “Don’t,” He sucked in a breath. “Don’t be too harsh on her. She seems…not well.”

Yoongi pulled his head back in confusion. This was the same girl that held him at gunpoint. Obviously, the shock had gone to his head.

“We won’t be too rough.” The officer assured and the closed his notepad. “I’ll call you if we need anything additional for your statement.”

“Thank you, officer.” Namjoon said and they let themselves out of the door.
Yoongi jumped to his feet and locked the front door, hitting the door lock, the deadbolt and the special Jungkook-proof lock in the ceiling. When the tumblers finished falling, he was left in complete silence. And for the first time that evening, he let all the fears and horrors that he had kept dammed up in his mind free.

And he broke down, pressing both palms over his mouth as tears flooded down his face.

“Hey, hey, hey.” Namjoon said and Yoongi let himself get pulled by the elbow into his embrace. “It’s okay now. We’re okay.”

“I know.” Yoongi cried, shaking in Namjoon’s arm. “I’m just so happy everyone’s okay.”

Namjoon started to push him back, but Yoongi didn’t allow him to. He fisted his shirt to hold him there. He tried to fight off the panic attack, but the wave washed over him anyway and he started to heave breaths and fight through the static in his ears.

“Shhhh.” Namjoon rubbed between his shoulder blades. “You’re okay.”

“I don’t know why,” Yoongi pushed him back. “You’re comforting me. You’re the one who got shot.” He signed.

Namjoon cupped his face and rubbed his tears away. “It’s going to be a really interesting story to tell at the Christmas party.” He said with a little smile. “Nobody’s going to believe that I got shot.”

Yoongi felt himself giggle despite the tears. He sucked in a deep breath. “You definitely are tougher than me now.”

Namjoon’s eyes widened in surprise. “Me tougher than rapper Yoongi?”

“You have street cred now.” Yoongi sniffled and gripped both of Namjoon’s hands. “I’m so glad you’re okay.” He said. “I just…I don’t know what I would do if something had-,” He broke down again, unable to speak it out loud. He couldn’t even fathom that it got that close. That he almost lost his husband.

Namjoon pulled him back into a hug. “Everything’s fine now. We’re all fine.”

Yoongi sniffed and composed himself. He pulled away again. “Can I ask a favor?”

“What’s that?” Namjoon asked.

“Never ever leave me.” Yoongi breathed.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!<3
Chapter Notes

So, I was going to get this chapter up yesterday but then I got wine drunk and wrote smut. (That’ll come up later lol) Sorry. However, I am not sorry for the long-ass chapter and the fact that we are FINALLY IN FLORIDA

Also, as someone who lives in Florida now (Go Jaguars!) I totally can talk trash about my own state lol

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Yoongi set his alarm for 3:30am.

When it went off, he groaned and stuffed his head underneath his pillow – not really believing that they had made it to this day. The day they were going to go to Disney World. After months of planning and packing and researching, they were finally going. Today was the day. He felt a hand on the small of his back and unburied his head to Namjoon’s bright white smile shining in the dark as he propped himself up. “Are you ready?” Namjoon asked as he grinned.

“Not in the slightest.” Yoongi muttered back, but pushed himself up to a sitting position anyway, cracking his neck and affixing his glasses to his face. He checked his phone, squinting at the sudden light and turned off his alarm. He sighed and checked their flights – two of them – LAX to Dallas-Fort Worth and then Dallas-Fort Worth to Orlando. They were both about four hours long with a nice, comfy three-hour layover in-between. They were both on time and the weather was good in all three destinations.

Yoongi was not looking forward to flying.

And it wasn’t just because he was traveling with a whole herd of people all with hyperspecific needs this time around. He hated flying in general. Airports. The general public. TSA. Checking luggage. The stress of getting to your gate on time. The ear popping. Turbulence. Tiny airplane bathrooms. The shitty selection of the Office episodes on the in-flight screens. He hated all of it.

But…

But, he was travel with his children. And he was trying to look at it through their eyes. They were going on an adventure. The whole trip was a new experience for them. And when they got there, they’d be at the most magical place on earth for any child. He wanted to feel that electricity through them. That excitement, that bliss.

At the moment, however he just felt a little queasy. Definitely no magic yet.

Namjoon was already there, however. He hopped right up. “We’re going to Disney World.” He sang with no particular tune, way off-key as he started the shower. “We’re going to Disney World.” He popped back out and held out his hand like he wanted Yoongi to grab it and start dancing to Singing in the Rain with him.
Yoongi shook his head as he got off the bed and started to undress, peeling off his t-shirt and his shorts. He showered with Namjoon, feeling a better as his deaf husband continued to sing “we’re going to Disney World,” while scrubbing Yoongi’s back with a loofah. He felt a bit better when he dressed in an autism awareness t-shirt and comfy sweats because screw anyone that says that you should arrive at the airport in anything but your pajamas, and checked his phone to a text from Seokjin.

-Seokin: I have coffee and homemade muffins! :D-

“God bless him.” Yoongi said as he crossed the hallway into Jimin’s room. Since he hated flying, Yoongi always over-prepared to ensure that the trip to the airport would go as smoothly as possible. It was his only source of comfort, knowing that he had every possible minute scheduled out.

The first task was getting Jimin up and ready so that he could get his medication in him. Yoongi rubbed his baby boy’s back as he watched Jimin slowly surface to consciousness. He hated waking Jimin up when he was deep asleep, because he knew he didn’t get deep sleep very often. But, they were going to Disney World. And Yoongi hoped that Jimin could catch some rest on the airplane.

Jemin’s eyelids fluttered opened and he started to track, his eyes scanning around like little radars. “Daddy?” He squeaked, his fists opening and closing.

“I’m right here, sweetheart.”

It took him a couple of extra moments for him to grasp where he was and who he was with. Yoongi loved watching the recognition pass over Jimin’s face because it was always chased with the pure love and joy that illuminated him from the inside out. He smiled big and wide and let out a little giggle. “Daddy.”

“There he is.” Yoongi picked him up and moved to the changing table. “Good morning, Chim.” He rubbed dried drool off of his cheek with a baby wipe.

“Chim.” Jimin responded with a big smile.

“Don’t tell your brothers,” Yoongi said as he changed him. “But, we’re going to Disney World. We’re surprising them when we get to the airport.”

Jemin responded with a big yawn and his eyelids fell to half-mast even when Yoongi got him sat up to put his onesie on him. Yoongi kissed his cheek and hoisted him back up with a little groan.

“Oh, my son,” Yoongi said as he carried Jimin down the hallway. “You’re getting so big.”

Namjoon had been tasked with getting Jungkook up. Yoongi could hear him in the bathroom cheering Kookie on as he moved through each step of washing his hands. “Okay, buddy...you gotta rub those hands together under the water. There you go! What a champ! Aren’t you excited! It’s okay. I’m excited for you…”

Yoongi got Jimin set up and was feeding him his medicated apple sauce when Namjoon emerged with a freshly clean Jungkook hoisted against him.

“He’s getting so good at washing his hands.” Namjoon said with a big smile as he sat Jungkook down in his booster. “He doesn’t even need me anymore. He just looked at me like ‘Dad, you’re distracting me. Go away.’”
Jungkook had a little furrow in his eyebrows. He glanced at Jimin and then flapped his hands, humming while he did so.

“We’re a little grumpy, though.” Namjoon said as he moved into the kitchen and loaded the toaster up. “Hopefully that’ll change with some carbohydrates.” He pulled the apple juice from the fridge. “You want me to start a cup of coffee?”

“No,” Yoongi signed with one hand as he spooned some apple sauce into Jimin’s mouth with the other. “Seokjin’s coming over with coffee and muffins.”

“God bless him.” Namjoon cracked his neck as he buttered and jellied the toast and set that down in front of Kookie. “Eat your toast, okay? We have a big, big day.”

Jimin smacked his lips as he ate his applesauce. He gave another big yawn and stretched his arms, sighing once he was done with a little perturbed expression on his face. Yoongi rubbed his leg and spooned more apple sauce in his mouth. “Jimin’s a little grumpy too.” Yoongi signed. “It’s early.” He glanced at Jungkook. “I can take care of these two if you want to get Seokie and TaeTae up.”

Namjoon nodded. “Okay,” He said and kissed Jungkook’s head. “We’re going to Disney World.” He sang off-key as he started down the hallway.

Namjoon made a quick stop in the home office to pick up the scavenger hunt sheets that Yoongi found online. Their game plan was to make the airport an adventure. They were hoping if the older boys were provided with enough distraction, they wouldn’t get fussy or bored or – in Hoseok’s case – anxious about flying.

They also wanted to surprise them with Disney World. Taehyung, being the observant, too-mature-for-his age boy that he was, had already figured out that they were going somewhere just based on the stuff that they had been buying the last couple of days in preparation for the flight. The questions were relentless, but they managed to dodge them with vague, nonspecific answers.

He clicked on the lights of their bedroom and then shook Tae and Hoseok a little to wake them up. “Guys,” It really took all of Namjoon’s self-control to not bounce like a giddy child. “Wake up.”

Hoseok sat bolt upright, his face full of confusion and his eyes squinting. “Okay? Everything okay?” He signed off of his chest and started to rip the blankets away from his body.

“You’re okay. You’re okay.” Namjoon cupped his face with both hands to stop him. “You’re okay.”

After the incident with Taehyung’s mother, it took a couple of days to calm Hoseok back down enough that he could sleep in his own bed alone again. It was the second time in Hoseok’s short life where he had been jarred awake and forced to sit in the bathroom while your parents dealt with cops. The first time he ended up never seeing his biological parents again. Namjoon understood how traumatizing that was for him. And then for it to happen again. Namjoon was just thankful that they got Hoseok back in his own bed at all.
Taehyung was slower to wake. He dug a tiny fist into his eye socket - his arm sporting a funky tan line from where his cast was - and blinked. “Daddy?” He said. “What’s going on?”

Namjoon sat on Hoseok’s bed and pulled the eldest into his lap. “We’re going to go somewhere.” He explained to the two, large sets of eyes that were regarding him with confusion and wonder. “To get there, we have to take an airplane.”

“Where are we going?” Hoseok eyebrows furrowed.

“That’s the thing,” Namjoon signed. “It’s a secret.” He said. “But, I promise that it’s going to magical and full of fun.” He tickled Hoseok’s ribs, eliciting his big, toothy smile. “But, I have a job for the both of you, okay?”

Taehyung moved to sit on the edge of the bed. “A job?”

Namjoon handed both of them the scavenger hunt sheets. They were cute, printed from a Pinterest post that Yoongi found and had items like ‘something with a letter G,’ and ‘Starbucks’ and ‘person wearing sunglasses.’ They had pictures for Hoseok too. “You guys have to find everything on this sheet once we get to the airport.” Namjoon explained. “Once you do that, it’ll unlock a clue about where we are going.”

Taehyung’s face ripped into a big smile. “So, it’s a puzzle?” He asked.

Namjoon grinned and nodded. “Yep.” He tapped Hoseok’s leg to hop off. “Now, you guys have to get your shoes on. Wear comfy shoes that can come off easy, like slippers and don’t forget your hearing aids.”

“What about our clothes?”

“Your pajamas are fine.” Namjoon said and motioned to the set of sweats and t-shirt he was wearing. “See, I’m in pajamas too.”

The boys looked at each other, confusion crossing both of their faces. But, Namjoon watched the excitement grow too. They were going on an airplane in the middle of the night to an unknown destination in pajamas. And their dads were in pajamas too?

It really was an adventure.

“Seokjin,” Namjoon greeted their ex-case manager as he finished the last-minute loading of the SUV. “Good morning.”

“Morning.” Seokjin said and handed him a softball-sized muffin. “I, uh, was too excited to sleep. So, I baked muffins last night.” He said, his full lips covered in crumbs already. He pulled his duffle bag out of the back of his car.

“Yeah, same.” Namjoon said as he bit into the muffin and then set it on the roof of the car. They were good.

Seokjin smiled. He was wearing a set of pajamas with little Mickeys on them, as instructed. “Do you need help with anything?”
Namjoon sighed as he looked at the trunk of their SUV that was filled to the brim with luggage. Jimin had not only his wheelchair, his FAA-approved car seat for the airplane and their rental car, and his booster seat for eating in. Jungkook had duffle carry-on of equipment that included his ear defenders and a weighted vest. “I don’t think so.” He said.

A movement stole Namjoon’s attention and he turned to Yoongi carrying Jimin. “All fed and changed and ready to go.” Yoongi signed with one hand. “One down, three to go.”

Namjoon reflexively held out his arms for Jimin.


Jimin looked to be on the verge of passing out, however. He stuffed his fingers in his mouth and settled against Seokjin’s shoulder.

“Well,” Seokjin said as he watched Jimin fall asleep on him. “If I bore your kids to sleep, then maybe I’m not the one who should be tagging along.”

Namjoon giggled and patted Jimin’s back. “You’re going to be great for the airplane ride. Sleeping through the whole thing is basically the ideal.”

Seokjin smiled. “Thanks for buying my ticket by the way.”

“I mean,” Namjoon shrugged. “You’re doing us a favor by coming along really. We could’ve probably done it just the two of us, but,” Namjoon glanced towards the house. “I knew Yoongi wouldn’t be able to relax and it’s a vacation for him as much as it is for the kids. You’re doing us the favor.”

“I just want to let you know,” Seokjin as he started to bounce Jimin, his eyes widening. “I’m very high maintenance. I only eat the finest lobster tails and steaks. I scream all night long. And I only bathe in water blessed by the Pope.”

“I’ll make sure to let the resort know.” Namjoon said with a laugh and closed the trunk.

Yoongi came out with Jungkook by the wrist and the older boys trailing behind. Taehyung was wearing his bunny slippers and Hoseok had his Crocs on. “Here’s the rest of the pack.” Yoongi signed. “I just have to grab a couple of last minute things,” He checked his watch. “And we should be able to leave.”

Namjoon grabbed his muffin from the roof of the SUV. “Let’s get this show on the road.” He sang.

Yoongi ticked off the checklist he had built in his phone as Namjoon pulled out luggage from the trunk of the car. Yoongi tried to help and then was shooed away, even though nothing was over fifty pounds – they had weighed everything last night. Instead he focused on making sure all of his bases were covered and then started unloading the kids.
“Seokie,” Taehyung said when they were out of the car. “Do you see any blue suitcases?”

“Hold hands.” Yoongi ordered as he got Jimin out of his car seat and into his wheelchair that Namjoon had pulled out for him. Taehyung and Hoseok immediately linked hands together.

“Oof.” Seokjin said and Yoongi looked over his shoulder to Jungkook happily boxing Seokjin’s hip. Yoongi opened his mouth to call Jungkook back, but Seokjin squatted and parried back gently. “You got some moves, kid.” Seokjin said as he pretended to duck and weave. Jungkook let out a happy squeal and socked him in the chest.

Yoongi smoothed out Jimin’s hair as he squirmed in his chair, his face pinching in discomfort. His arms flailed a little before he settled. “I know you’re tired.” Yoongi tipped his seat back and locked it. “I promise it’ll be over soon.”

“All loaded up!” Namjoon sang and closed the trunk to the SUV.

With one eye on the elder boys as they walked hand-in-hand – frankly looking so cute in their PJs that Yoongi couldn’t help but snap a picture with his phone – and the other on Jungkook, they entered the hellhole known as LAX.

“Seokie,” Tae said and signed as they stepped into the line to check-in. “Look, a person talking on their phone.” He marked that off the scavenger hunt sheet.

“Daddy.” Yoongi heard a voice and snapped around automatically. But, it wasn’t one of his. It was a family behind them. “They’re using sign language. That’s so cool.” The little boy said.

“Shhh.” The parent said. “Don’t point. That’s rude.”

“Hoseok,” Yoongi signed and waved to get his son’s attention. “That little boy saw you using sign. He thinks it’s cool.”

Hoseok shyly dug his face into Yoongi’s hip and waved at the kid behind them, offering a little smile. “I like your shirt.” Hoseok signed, clinging hard to Yoongi’s leg. The boy looked at his mom for interpretation.

“He says he likes your shirt.” Taehyung said. “I like it too.”

“Thanks.” He said and signed off of his chin, looking proud that he did so.

“Where are you going? Because we are going on an adventure and-,” Tae started, automatically simcomming.

“Okay, Tae.” Yoongi cut him off once the next desk was open. “We gotta go, okay?”

“Okay,” Tae nodded. He and Hoseok waved goodbye.

Yoongi checked the box on his phone that said ‘check luggage,’ on his phone once they were done. He scrolled through the long list of stuff that still needed to be checked off and almost audibly groaned. It wasn’t even seven in the morning yet and Yoongi knew that it was going to be a very, very long day.
They made it onto the airplane without anyone crying – way before everyone was called to board with the ‘those who need extra time and small children’ group. And they needed every extra minute they could get with getting Jimin out of his wheelchair at the end of the jetway and carried onto the plane. However, Yoongi kept his ‘keep sane’ item unchecked on his phone. This was only the first leg of the journey, after all.

“So grumpy.” Yoongi said as he held Jimin, listening to all of his exasperated sighs as he watched Seokjin and Namjoon figure out how to set up the FAA-approved car seat. They got seats all the way in the back of the airplane so Jungkook could rock all he wanted and not disturb anyone.

Jungkook used his arms to get into his own seat next to Taehyung, sitting on his knees and stimming as he tried to look at Taehyung’s paper.

“Daddy,” Taehyung said. “We only found these things.” He pouted and held up the scavenger hunt sheet.

“Well,” Yoongi said back. “We have another airport to go through. You’ll find them all.”

“But, I want the hint.” He whined and tapped his toes together.

Hoseok slid onto the seat next to Taehyung.

“No, Seokie.” Yoongi said. “You’re going to sit with me on this side of the aisle.” Seating arrangements were divided up so that no one parent had both Hoseok and Jungkook.

“But, I want to sit next to Taehyung.”

“I know.” Yoongi said. “But, we’re going to have Dad sit there so he can help Jungkook if he needs it.”

Hoseok gave a big, huffy sigh and slid off the chair and crossed the aisle. Yoongi just used Jimin’s fist to punch himself in the forehead. It’ll all be okay. He kept reminding himself. All be over soon and then we’ll be at Disney.

“Finished!” Namjoon said and high-fived Seokjin. “We figured out the quagmire that is this car seat.” He motioned like Vanna White showing off the Wheel of Fortune board.

“Greatest news I’ve heard all day.” Yoongi smiled as he passed the child off.

He sat down in the middle seat with Hoseok on his right next to the window and Jimin finally situated in his car seat. Namjoon took the aisle seat on the other side so he could stretch one long, long leg out and put Jungkook’s weighted vest on him. Jungkook didn’t seem to mind sitting for more than a couple of hours if he had his weighted vest on – his hands running over the smooth material. And then the freshly washed fidget blanket and his Bop-It came out and Jungkook was in Kookie heaven, his tongue out as he started unbuckling one of the activities on the blanket.

Yoongi put a neck pillow around Jimin’s neck and then put his own on. Whenever he flew in the past, he would pop a huge Xanax and then fall asleep. But, he knew that wasn’t going to be possible this time around. He pulled up a book on his iPad and waited until a child needed him.

It took twenty seconds.

“Daddy?” Hoseok said with his voice. He pointed out the window. “I can see our suitcases.”
“Yeah?” Yoongi leaned over and looked – catching tarmac worker tossing Jimin’s two-thousand-dollar wheelchair onto the conveyor belt. He winced and decided he didn’t want to watch anymore.

“Are we going to be up the sky?” Hoseok asked, turning his tiny hand into an airplane with his signs.

“Yep.” Yoongi nodded. “Take off can be a little scary but flying isn’t scary.”

Hoseok beamed his radiant smile and kicked his legs. “I’m not scared.” He signed. “I’m excited.” He looked around. “Are we going to see space?”

“No,” Yoongi said. “But, we’ll fly through the clouds.”

Seokjin was sitting directly in front of Hoseok. He turned around and offered a bag of what looked to be homemade trail mix. “Thank you.” Hoseok signed and took the bag, opening it and hunting for the M&Ms.

“Are you a vending machine?” Yoongi asked seriously. “With the muffins and now trail mix?”

“Airlines never have good snacks.” Seokjin said and grinned. “You have to bring your own.”

Hoseok touched Yoongi’s arm. “What’s Seokjin’s name sign?”

“He doesn’t have one yet.”

Hoseok’s eyes widened suddenly and he started to undo his seatbelt.

“Where are you going?”

“We have to make a name sign for Seokjin.” He slid out of his seat and then climbed over Yoongi’s legs, dodged Jimin’s feet to cross the aisle. He patted Namjoon’s shoulder and started signing super fast. Yoongi watched as Tae’s head popped out to lean over so he could get in on the conversation.

“What’s going on?” Seokjin asked.

Yoongi smiled and petted Jimin’s hand. “You’re witnessing the very important and sacred ritual of forming a name sign. See,” He pointed. “Hoseok can’t consult me because I’m a hearie. They have to be formed by those in the community only.” He smiled with warm fondness as he watched his husband communicate with their sons in their own special way.

When they were finished, Hoseok crossed back over the aisle and took back his seat. He got himself clicked in a settled before turning to Jin. “Your name sign is J-I-N.” He signed with the ‘n’ and the ‘j’ at the same time – combining all three letters into the same sign.

“A name sign for me?” Seokjin said and signed his name sign back. “I’m honored. Thank you.” He signed

Hoseok grinned. “That means you’re a part of the family now.” He signed and Seokjin looked at Yoongi for interpretation.

“He says that you’re a part of the family now that you have a name sign.” Yoongi said for him.
Seokjin’s large lips pouted a little. “Aw. Don’t say stuff like that.” He whined. “I don’t want to cry on an airplane.” He produced another muffin and stuffed a big bite in his mouth. “I’m going to face this way now.” He said, spraying crumbs everywhere. “And not cry.” He said, his voice thick with tears.

The first kid to cry was Taehyung once they reached the airport in Dallas.

Honestly, Namjoon was so happy they made it this far without tears. Especially with the flight from LA being their first. Jimin slept the whole way, drool dripping down his chin. Hoseok was so excited to to be in an airplane, passing through the clouds and didn't say he was scared once. And Jungkook – while looking like he could model for autism equipment with his ear defenders, weighted vest and fidget blanket – was perfectly content in his airplane seat rocking and playing with his toys.

So, when Tae - their easy-going, go with the flow kid - burst into tears at their next gate, it really caught Namjoon off-guard.

“Baby,” Namjoon said and pulled Taehyung so that he was caged between his thighs. “What’s wrong?”

Taehyung showed him the scavenger hunt paper – now crinkled and covered in a nonspecific stain. “I can’t find a moving sidewalk because I don’t know what that is.” He wailed, his face red.

Namjoon glanced at Jungkook to make sure he was okay. He was playing with the handlebar of the carry-on suitcase. He slapped the handlebar down and then laced his fingers up in front of his face. Yoongi was in the bathroom with Hoseok and Jimin.

“It’s okay, baby,” Namjoon rubbed Tae’s tears away with his thumb. “Not all airports have those.”

“But, it’s the last thing I-I have to find to get the hint.” He sniffled and then coughed. “I have to find the hint.”

“Okay,” Namjoon breathed. Tae was just overtired and in a bad mood. That would make Namjoon cry. He petted Tae’s hair down and removed the snot from his nose. “We won’t worry about that one.” He reached for the suitcase Jungkook was playing with and opened the top. He produced two stuffed animals – a Mickey Mouse and a Donald Duck. “These are your hints.”

“Is he okay?” Seokjin said as he came back with coffee.

Taehyung gently took Donald Duck and clutched him to his chest as he composed himself. Jungkook toddled over and smashed his face into the stuffed animal – but it didn’t smell like laundry detergent, so he didn’t care. He went back to playing with the suitcase. “This is the hint?” Tae asked as he slid into the black, vinyl chair next to Namjoon’s.

“Feel better?” Namjoon asked.

Taehyung’s face pinched up. “No.” He said finally. “I can’t figure out the hint.”
“That’s okay,” Namjoon said. “You will-.”

Suddenly, a college-age kid wearing big headphones and a backpack walked through the pathway between benches while his eyes were on his cell phone. His foot collided with the suitcase that Jungkook was playing with and tripped. The suitcase bumped into Jungkook and he started to teeter off of his feet. “Watch out.” The kid muttered. “Stupid kids.”

Namjoon was up and straightening Jungkook before he ended up on his butt and opened his mouth to say something, but Taehyung hopped off the bench himself. “Excuse me,” Tae said, his face flushing red again. “Stupid is a bad word and you shouldn’t say that because it’s a bad word.”

The kid looked surprised that Taehyung was telling him off. Namjoon was surprised – so surprised he froze up watching him.

“Don’t say mean things.” Taehyung continued, new tears in his eyes. “Be nice or don’t say stuff at all. And Kookie isn’t stupid. He has the autism and he’s actually super smart and will beat you at any game. Any game and-,”

“Oh, God.” Yoongi said as he felt his hoodie automatically adhere to his skin like cling wrap as the 100% humidity in the air invaded and soaked every article of clothing he was wearing. “Who would actually choose to live in humidity like this?” He mumbled mostly to himself as he pushed Jimin’s wheelchair out of the monster building that was Orlando International Airport.

“Alligators.” Seokjin answered with a chuckle, Jungkook situated on top of his shoulders. “Oh, and meth heads.”

Hoseok had his hand in Namjoon’s pocket as he clung hard to his leg, the Mickey Mouse stuffed animal in his arms. Taehyung was trailing along with his Donald Duck tucked in his backpack. Both kids looked tired and very, very over traveling. Taehyung even looking pissed off as he was still trying to figure out the hint – even though they arrived to Orlando and was basically bombarded with Disney World on every wall as soon as they exited to the jetway.
Jimin was the only one that was happy and well-rested – using both flights to sleep. He sang a made up tune from his wheelchair at the top of his lungs punctuated with breathy giggles.

It was when they approached Disney’s Magical Express outside the baggage claim area – this gigantic bus that was going to shuttle them to the resort they were staying at, did the older kids understand what was happening.

“Disney World?” Taehyung shouted. “We’re going to Disney World?”

Hoseok wheeled around, his eyes wide and full of stars. “Disney?” He fingerspelled.

“Yes, babies.” Namjoon said and signed. “That’s the secret – we’re going to Disney World.”

The change in mood was overwhelming. The boys suddenly blossomed with excitement. It radiated off of them in waves. Taehyung started jumping around in circles, his mop flying. “We’re going to Disney World!” He chanted. “Disney World!” Hoseok had his big, big smile on as he waved his Mickey and laughed hysterically.

And after a long, long day of traveling, Yoongi finally felt it. He finally felt the magic.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!<3

And you can find me on twt
Moon & the Waves

Chapter Notes

chapter warnings: vomit

OMFG this turned into such a monster chapter (almost 6500 words!) But, we're in Disney World and we are switching it up!

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Seokjin woke up, felt the sheets that weren’t his and the pillow that was way too soft to be his and then stared ceiling that had an ornately carved wooden ceiling fan as he figured out where he was on the floating space rock that was earth. Florida. He thought to himself. He was in Florida at Disney World.

Disney World.

Seokjin sat all the way up and checked the clock. God, it was five in the morning. But, he was still on West Coast time and this would be about when he would wake up back home.

He got out of bed – he got his own room in this insanely huge hotel room at this insanely huge resort that overlooked the savannah of the Animal Kingdom park – and peeked his head out into the main living area. By how silent it was, Seokjin assumed that he was the first one up. He headed to the little kitchenette and started coffee using the pre-measured coffee kit.

He tapped his finger on the counter as he watched the coffee maker drip. Apparently, Yoongi and Namjoon were going to get an actual practical hotel somewhere off the park grounds, but this hotel not only was wheelchair-accessible, it was built for the hearing impaired. So, they splurged. And when Seokjin Googled the room rates, he found out they splurged a lot.

Seokjin was mixing cream and sugar into his coffee when a sound caught his attention. He craned his head and found the sliding glass door to their patio was open and Namjoon was outside holding Jimin. He paced back and forth and bounced Jimin.

Seokjin poured another cup of coffee and grabbed a handful of cream and sugar and headed for the patio. The sun was just starting to rise and what was a better way to watch it than watching it rise over a fake African savannah in the middle of Disney World? There was no better way.

“Good morning.” Seokjin whispered as he let himself out.

Namjoon had to do a double-take, as he didn’t see Seokjin at first. But, once he did, he smiled. He had a big, easy smile that revealed two dimples on either side of his mouth. Good morning.” He said back. He had an accent which made him sound like he was talking through his nose, like he was fighting a bad cold.

“I brought coffee.” Seokjin offered and then realized that both of Namjoon’s hands were linked under Jimin’s bottom, propping him up. He set it down the patio table. “You the first one up?”
Namjoon nodded. “Well,” he said and looked at Jimin. “He was the first one up. I decided to get up with him so Yoongi could sleep some more.” He grinned again. “Yoongi defends his sleep with his whole life.”

Seokjin rubbed Jimin’s back. “Hi, buddy.” He greeted what was at one time, his hardest case to manage, moving his head around to get into Jimin’s line of sight.

Jimin offered him a little open-mouthed smile as a greeting back. “Hi,” Jimin said – his voice high and delicate and his hand up with his fingers splayed. Seokjin remembered when he first took on Jimin’s case when Jimin was still a toddler. When Jimin only knew one word and that was his name. He’s come so far in the last couple of years.

Seokjin watched the first bit of sun start to peak over the horizon, illuminating the sky in stripes of purple and pink. The sunrise wasn’t as intense as the West Coast ones. The colors more muted and pastel, but that made it even lovelier, in Seokjin’s opinion.

“You ready for the Magic Kingdom?” Namjoon asked.

Seokjin grinned at him. “You bet. Although, I don’t really ride roller coasters.” He patted his belly. “You know, unless I’m prepping for an all you can eat buffet and need to cleanse beforehand.”

Namjoon nodded. “Yoongi isn’t a roller coaster person either. We’re pretty sure Hoseok wouldn’t dig them. But, I’m going to see if I can coax both of them on Splash Mountain.”

“Can we do one of those pictures where we’re all playing chess or something?”

“Or bring a whole table and look like we’re having a spaghetti dinner?” Namjoon chuckled and started to adjust his arms around Jimin.

Seokjin held his hands out and Jimin was transferred into his hold. Jimin had gotten a lot bigger since Seokjin took in his case. When he first met him, Seokjin was convinced they got his age wrong, he was so tiny. He was still so petite – like a really large toddler more than a seven-year-old – but Seokjin could see what a handsome boy he was turning into.

“Hey,” Namjoon all of a sudden sounded apologetic. Seokjin’s eyebrows furrowed. “I have a small favor to ask.” His face blazed with blush.

“What’s going on?” Seokjin asked.

“Um, so Yoongi has this weird thing where doesn’t let anyone touch Jimin-,”

“Oh, sorry.” Seokjin started to hand Jimin back.

“Oh, no.” Namjoon said. “You’re okay. It’s just, with his past and Hoseok’s past and even Tae’s past, we’re really hesitant about hiring babysitters and stuff at home.”

“Oh.” Seokjin said and looked down.

“Hi, sweetheart.” Seokjin greeted one of his newer cases, Jimin. He had already been informed that Jimin was disabled. He didn’t realize how profound, though as he stared at the little boy with large eyes that were set in full cheeks. “Good evening.” He rubbed his knee.

“I’m so sorry.” He heard Jimin’s last foster mother say to Pat, the case manager he was training under – the case manager he was replacing. “I swear, I had no idea when I took him on. Really. It was such a surprise.”
“No, no.” Pat said. “We understand. We’ll get him placed again.”

The foster parent left, leaving the three of them in Pat’s cramped and messy office. Seokjin kept trying to engage Jimin – get a reaction or a smile or something. But, he sat in a little stroller, his hair falling over his forehead in a fan and his fist in his mouth. His eyes were on the ceiling.

“I wouldn’t really bother.” Pat said. “He’s not really…responsive.”

“Oh?” Seokjin asked and squatted. It was a challenge now – trying to get something out of him. Seokjin felt the heat in his chest.

“Yeah,” She said and Seokjin heard her office chair creak back. “Have you read his file?”

“Not yet.” Seokjin said and started pulling funny faces.

“Shaken baby syndrome.” She said.

Seokjin stopped and turned, unsure if he heard that one right. “What?”

Pat – a middle-aged lady with box-dyed red hair leaned back in her chair. “His…” She flipped open a manila folder. “Mother’s boyfriend?” She said it like a question as she read it. “Shook him, slammed his head against a counter top and then put him in his pack-and-play and left him when he was ten-months-old. His mother came home, found him unresponsive and covered his own vomit and rushed him to the hospital. He was in a coma for weeks.”

“What the fuck?” Seokjin breathed, feeling the warmth slowly seep from his knees and the joints in his fingers and his feet. He stared at Jimin as he chewed on his own fist – this teeny, tiny innocent human – and felt like gravity had been turned up. How could anyone do that? “What the fuck?” He breathed again.

“I know.” Pat said.

Seokjin couldn’t respond. He just let his body fall from a squat-position onto his knees. “That’s horrible.” He sat up so he could get close to Jimin’s face. He ran his fingers through his hair and stopped when his fingers brushed uneven skin – a dip. Seokjin’s skin burst into flames.

“That’s humanity.” Pat said simply. “They’re monsters.”

Jimin took his fist out of his mouth and offered Seokjin a smile – big and wide. It squeezed his cheeks up and made his eyes squint. Seokjin’s heart melted and he felt tears burn in his eyes. “Not all humans are like that.” He whispered back.

“So,” Namjoon continued, his eyes on the sunrise now. “We were hoping…I was hoping…if you don’t mind taking the kids just for an evening? Like, an hour, maybe two tops. We don’t get much alone time for dates…” Namjoon’s neck was flushing red with embarrassment. “Or other adult time, really. And we trust you so much-,”

Seokjin felt himself blush as he realized what Namjoon was asking. He nodded fiercely. “Of course, I’ll take the kids.” He started to giggle as the tops of his ears felt like they were burning. “Of course. We can watch Disney movies or something. I bet they’ll all be tired after a day at the park.”

“Would you,” Namjoon stammered, his eyes down. “Would you mind taking them downstairs to that Lion King playground or maybe do the s’mores thing so um, Yoongi and I-,”

“Yep.” Seokjin nodded again, not wanting him go any farther into that sentence. He got it.
“Will do, boss.”

“Sorry.” Namjoon’s eyebrows furrowed. “This is super awkward and I feel like a horrible parent for even asking my ex-case manager to watch my children for me.” He huffed.

Seokjin shook his head fiercely. “You’re not a horrible parent, Namjoon.” He assured. “Trust me. I’m in the business of horrible parents. You are a top-notch dad to a slew of children who needed good parents and you deserve a break.”

Namjoon sighed, smiling genuinely. “Thanks, Jin. That means a lot.” He looked out onto the savannah. “Oh, look,” He said and pointed. “There are giraffes.”

Seokjin whipped his head around. Sure enough, a small family of giraffes were grazing on some outlying trees. “Well, that’s definitely not a normal part of my morning routine.”

“I have one more favor.” Namjoon said and Seokjin looked at him. “And I promise that this is it.” He grinned. “Can you, um, not tell Yoongi? I kind of want to surprise him with a nice romantic date night.”

Seokjin inhaled and let it out in a sigh. “Yes,” He nodded. “But, I hope you know how incredibly single you’re making me feel right now.” He giggled, feeling only slightly jealous over the fact that he was literally on vacation with the perfect couple.

Namjoon chuckled. “I’m sorry.” He picked up the coffee that Seokjin had brought for him and sipped it black. “I appreciate it, though. Really.”

“Don’t mention it.” Seokjin said as Jimin sighed against him. He rubbed his back. “You lightened my work load.” He grinned teasingly. “It’s only fair that I return the favor.”

The first day was for, of course, Magic Kingdom.

“We have three-day passes.” Yoongi said as he rubbed sunscreen on his children production-line style right inside of the gate. “So we don’t have to cram everything in in one day. We can leave and head back to the hotel for naps and pool time, if you get tired.”

Seokjin was dodging Jungkook’s blows as they sparred next to a gigantic lawn that was cut into Mickey Mouse heads. He had a Camelbak of water that he used when he went hiking on and a fanny pack of mostly snacks. He knew how expensive Disney World food was and his trail mix was legendary, so he thought he’d come prepared.

Jungkook didn’t get sunscreen because the smell was too much for him, but he was wearing a cute bucket hat that was Monster’s Inc-themed and his shoes were purposefully squeaky. Paired with his smile that was missing a couple of teeth and scrunched up his nose, Seokjin thought he was pretty cute…when he wasn’t trying to punch Seokjin in the crotch.

“Do you want to ride on my shoulders?”

Jungkook flapped his hands, his eyes on the sky. He fingers twisted up and his elbows went out and he hummed as he deliberated. He finally nodded and Seokjin dropped to his knee and let Jungkook climb on.

Jungkook continued to stim, wapping Seokjin on the top of his head. He grunted a lot –
slightly nervous noises as he sat up higher than everyone else.

Namjoon was taking care of Jimin, rubbing sunscreen onto his chubby cheeks. When he was done, he put Jimin’s hat on him and gave him a little kiss.

Yoongi – dressed head-to-toe in black despite the blazing Florida sun – crossed his legs from where he sat on the edge of the landscaping. He was wearing a bucket hat too, pressed low over his face. Yoongi had this air about him that screamed quiet wisdom. Like Yoda or Gandhi. All of his movements were slow and methodical.

Hoseok was dancing as he got his arms covered in sunscreen by Yoongi, his dark hair flopping over his face with his movements. Taehyung went to Jimin and was showing his brother the map. “We’re gonna go on the Dumbo ride, Chim.” Tae said as he leaned on Jimin’s armrest. “You’ll like the Dumbo ride because you’ll be able to fly!”

“Okay,” Yoongi said with a groan as he rose to his feet. “Let’s go. Where to first?” He said out loud – probably for Seokjin’s sake – and signed at the same time.

They walked down Main Street and Seokjin took the rear with Jungkook, holding onto his ankles as he rode Jin's shoulders. Hoseok was clinging to Yoongi’s hand and Tae was skipping next to Jimin’s wheelchair. Seokjin kept his eyes open for easter eggs – his Pinterest board full of hidden stuff that you can find in Disney World. He thought about counting all the Mickey heads cut into the landscaping or emblazoned on the walls, but he decided against it when he saw just how many there were.

“Daddy,” Tae turned around. “Can we get Mickey ears?”

“Yes,” Yoongi said and moved his hand so they were around Hoseok’s shoulders. “But, later, okay. After Splash Mountain so you guys don’t get them wet.”

Hoseok made a noise and pointed to the famous statue of Walt and Mickey, pulling on Yoongi’s hand.

“I can take a picture of you all in front of Walt.” Seokjin volunteered and hoisted Jungkook off of his shoulders and placed him on his feet. Jungkook pouted his lower lip out and he stomped around, his shoes squeaking with his steps.

“That would be nice. Thanks, Jin.” Yoongi pulled out his cell phone and handed it off. Seokjin watched them gather in front of the railing that separated the landscaping from the pathway. Namjoon had Jungkook by the shoulder and was pointing at the camera, but Jungkook’s face was tipped to the sky.

Seokjin took a couple of pictures of the happy family as they cheesed for the camera.

“Come in and take one with us.” Namjoon said.

Seokjin walked over and held out the cell phone as everyone piled in for a selfie – Walt slightly obscured by Hoseok’s head as he stood on his tip-toes to get into the shot.

“Ohkay,” Yoongi said and opened his map. “Do we want to go to Adventureland or Tomorrowland?

“Tomorrowland!” Taehyung sang.

They headed to the right into Tomorrowland and Seokjin watched the architecture turn
modern and chrome. “Do we want to do the Stitch thing?” He offered.

Yoongi shook his head as he walked next to Seokjin, Jungkook’s wrist in his hand. “No, that ride has smells. We can’t do smells.”

“Ah.”

“Space Mountain!” Namjoon cried as he pushed Jimin’s wheelchair. “We have to go on Space Mountain. It’s a classic.” He turned to Taehyung. “Do you want to go on Space Mountain? The wait doesn’t look too long.”

“Yeah!” Taehyung pumped both fists. “Space Mountain.”

“What about you, Seokie?” Yoongi asked and signed.

Hoseok looked up at the large spaceship-shaped building. He signed at Yoongi, his eyebrows raising in question.

“It’s a rollercoaster,” Yoongi said and signed. “In the dark.”

Hoseok looked hesitant as he held onto Yoongi’s hand with both of his. He was an inch or two shorter than Taehyung, but he looked very small as he stared up at his dad with wide eyes.

“You don’t have to.” Yoongi said and signed. “I’m not going to go on. Neither is Chim or Seokjin.”

“I want to.” Hoseok signed. Seokjin knew that sign – ‘want.’ In his very basic ASL course he took when he first became a social worker.

“It’s okay, Seokie.” Taehyung grabbed his hand. “We can sit next to each other.” He grinned his wide, square smile. “It won’t be scary.”

“I promise that if he starts panicking, I’ll take him out of the line.” Namjoon said and signed to Yoongi.

Yoongi sighed as he watched Namjoon, Hoseok, Tae and Kookie walk off towards the ride. He looked up at Seokjin. “I try to let them make their own decisions.” Yoongi said. “Try new things, you know? But, I have a bad feeling about this.” He grabbed onto Jimin’s wheelchair handle.

“He might like it.” Seokjin tried to sound optimistic.

Yoongi’s dark, angular eyes regarded him for a second. He sighed again. “Hoseok cried when we swung him too high on the playground.” He chewed on his lip. “They’re going to be in line for awhile. Let’s go find something to do.”

They found something to do – a comedy show put on one of the characters from *Monster’s Inc.* The wait was super short and the show itself was pretty entertaining, even though most of the jokes were meant for little kids. Jimin giggled when everyone else did, laughing along with the crowd.

Afterwards, they parked themselves on a bench outside of the Space Mountain exit and waited for the others. The park was filling up to capacity now that it was mid-morning – people wandering around and eating and playing with blow-up swords and lightsabers.

“What got you into social work, Seokjin?” Yoongi asked, his low voice almost deadpan.
Seokjin smiled and leaned back. “Altruism.”

Yooongi was reapplying sunscreen onto Jimin’s face as he talked. “Well, I assumed altruism was a part of it. Was there a reason you went into foster care specifically?”

Seokjin shrugged. “I knew I probably wouldn’t have kids…biologically. And while I thought about adopting,” He rubbed his legs. “I just decided I would rather get in the business of helping families find their kids.”

“Is adopting something you are still thinking about?”

Seokjin shrugged. “Maybe.” He said. “My job works me about seventy hours a week. So, it would be hard to raise a family and be a case manager at the same time.”

“Seventy hours.” Yooongi breathed. “That’s a lot.”


“Well,” Yooongi finished and replaced Jimin’s hat on his head and then smoothed his shirt down. “I have to say that without you, we wouldn’t be here right now. If that’s any consolation.”

Seokjin grinned, feeling warmth fill his chest up. “I just love to do what I do.”

“‘Altruism part comes in.” He squinted towards Space Mountain. “I just love to do what I do.”

“‘Aw,” Seokjin whined. “You leave me hanging like that! I-,”

Seokjin’s words were cut off, however when he heard a familiar cry. He looked up to Namjoon carrying Hoseok. Taehyung had Jungkook by the wrist and was dragging him along. Yooongi was on his feet immediately.

“What happened?” Yooongi asked, but Seokjin could’ve guessed what happened. Roller coasters are what happened. He could wholeheartedly empathize.

“We were going to get on.” Namjoon said as he set Hoseok on his feet. “Hoseok was doing great the whole time we were in line. And then as soon as the harness went on, he panicked.” His face looked apologetic.

Yooongi sat down and pulled Hoseok closer to him. “You’re okay.” He said and signed. But, Hoseok wasn’t watching him. He had one hand wrapped around the collar of his t-shirt and the other was jammed in his eye. He was breathing really hard. Concerningly hard. And making noises. “Shhh. Baby, breathe.”

“The associate said we could go through the exit and wouldn’t have to wait in line again.”

“Go ahead.” Yooongi said and nodded. “I got him.” He turned back to Hoseok once Namjoon, Tae and Kookie disappeared again. “Shhh.” He turned Hoseok so that his side was facing Yooongi. Yooongi put one hand on his chest and the other on his back and rubbed slow circles. “Breathe, Seokie.”
Hoseok’s knees gave out and Yoongi caught him under the armpits.

“No, no.” Yoongi said with a grunt and Seokjin moved to help him. “None of that. Breathe.” He inhaled a big, deep breath. “In and out.”

Hoseok did and then screamed, making Seokjin and Yoongi both wince. He was loud – sounds rocketing out of him. He inhaled a big breath and then screamed again. Bystanders turned their heads to see what was happening. Hoseok’s hands started moving with signs. He was so pale and his eyes were so wide and frightened.

Seokjin stepped through the door of a dilapidated single-wide trailer. The whole place reeked of decaying food and some sort of chemical smell that Seokjin assumed was meth. The place looked like it had been flipped over and and then put back right side up.

In the tiny living room there was a television and a futon that was sagging in the middle. In the middle of sagging futon sat a little boy that was shaking so badly, Seokjin could hear the metal squeak underneath him and was making muted, whimpering noises through his nose.

That was Hoseok. The reason he came. The reason he was called at ten o’clock at night. A child was found. CPS was here, but it looked like it was going to be awhile before any family would be found for him. So, Seokjin was then called to have him placed in a foster home.

Seokjin pulled the baggie of homemade cookies he brought and tried to put on his friendliest face. “Hi, honey.” He said as gently as possible as he approached the child that was watching policemen walk through his house. He pulled his knees to his chest and hugged them.

Hoseok’s eyes snapped to him and the whimpering increased as he recoiled against the couch. As Seokjin got closer he could see how malnourished this child was. The police said he was five, maybe six, but Seokjin knew he wasn’t anywhere near that on the growth chart. His elbows and his jawline were too pointy for a kid his age. He was dirty and his outfit looked like it was fished out of a lost and found.

The police also said that he was responding to English. That’s another reason Seokjin was called specifically. They thought maybe he only spoke Korean or some other language.

“Hi,” Seokjin squatted in front of him. “My name is Seokjin.” He tried in English and then in Korean.

The boy didn’t move, however. He just stared with his dark eyes as wide as discs. Jung was a Korean name, but maybe he spoke a different language. Seokjin cycled through the little bit of Japanese and Chinese he knew. He even tried Spanish. Nothing.

“Do you want a cookie?” Seokjin switched back to English. Maybe the kid was just frightened so bad, he was frozen. He pulled out a chocolate chip cookie.

Hoseok’s eyes snapped to the cookie and he uncurled a little bit. Seokjin smiled. Cookies made everything better. “Do you want it?” Seokjin asked and held it out for him. “You can have it.”

Hoseok’s tiny hand came out and snatched the cookie. He made some more noises as he examined it and then bit into it. He closed his eyes as he ate it holding it with both hands.

“Do you want the other one?” Seokjin fished out the other one.

Hoseok made a noise and then put his tiny hand over his heart and rubbed it in circle. Seokjin knew that was sign language for ‘please.’ Seokjin cocked his head. Are you…deaf? He
wondered and looked up to an officer taking pictures of the crime scene. “Hey, real quick.” Seokjin said. “Did he flinch when the sirens went off?”

The police officer looked at Hoseok and shrugged. “I’m not sure.”

Seokjin looked back at Hoseok, who was crawling off the couch into Seokjin’s arms. He plucked the second cookie out of his hand and with a couple of noises bit into that one as he settled his head against Seokjin’s chest. Seokjin rubbed his back. What language do you speak? He wondered.

“Okay,” Yoongi said and rubbed his back. “I know. I know.” Yoongi turned his eyes to Seokjin. “I think we are the anti-roller coaster team now.”

“Fine by me.” Seokjin felt his own stomach turn. “Roller coasters are of the devil.”

Hoseok’s body popped and Seokjin watched Yoongi move dexterously, getting Hoseok off of his lap and back onto his feet, facing away from him. Seokjin had barely any time to comprehend what was happening, before he was witnessing it – Hoseok vomiting his breakfast onto the concrete. He hit his sneaker and nailed both of his hands.

“Well,” Yoongi said, his voice still low and unbothered. “Now, it’s a real vacation.” He reached into the backpack that was hanging off the back of Jimin’s wheelchair. He pulled out a travel pack of Wet Ones and a water bottle. Yoongi spun Hoseok around, handed him the water and started to clean him up. “Do you want to go back to the hotel room?” Yoongi asked out loud and in sign. “We can go back if you want?”

Hoseok just shook his head.

“Are we no longer going to ride roller coasters?”

Hoseok nodded and sniffed.

Yoongi pressed his lips to Hoseok’s forehead. “I love you.” He signed and Hoseok’s little hand shakily signed it back.

Now that everyone knew their limits to rides, the next couple of hours went by pretty smooth – you know, as it could with four kids. Taehyung and Hoseok started bickering at one point over who was going to spin the wheel on the teacups, but that ended quickly when Namjoon pointed out that they could both spin it. They managed to get Jimin on the Dumbo ride, sitting in Namjoon’s lap and he laughed the whole time. They met Cinderella and Taehyung asked if her least favorite chore was taking out the trash because that was his least favorite chore in his previous house. They avoided the Haunted Mansion ride like the plague. Yoongi vehemently opposed going on it’s a Small World as the song ‘ruined the sanctity of music.’

It was after lunchtime – after a go around on the Peter Pan ride -- when Jungkook was started to take a downshift in mood.

“Baby,” Namjoon said as he sat on one knee in front of Jungkook. They were in the part of
the park that looked like old revolutionary Philadelphia, off to the side under some shade. “Do you want some water?” Namjoon offered his water bottle.

Jungkook’s face was pinched and frustrated and he was stimming his hands, his fingers writhing next to his ears.

“Do you think it’s the boat?” Yoongi asked as he leaned on Jimin’s wheelchair and eyeballed the steamboat that was slowly making its way down the river.

Seokjin looked at it too. He sniffed the air, but didn’t smell anything but…funnel cakes? He glanced over at the restaurant. “It might by the food smells over there.” He pointed.

Jungkook’s face twisted harder and he grunted. Seokjin reflexively stepped forward in concern. That was his little buddy, his boxing partner. He didn’t want to see him upset.

“Okay,” Namjoon picked him up and Yoongi pulled out a little blanket from his bag and handed it to him. “Why don’t we go into the Hall of the Presidents? It’s nice and quiet? No smells there, huh?”

That’s what they did – stopping first at the accessibility kiosk for handheld captioning devices for Hoseok, Tae and Namjoon – these little red screens with lanyards that displayed the text of what was saying. There was almost no wait at all into the attraction and Seokjin let himself sink into a seat under the air conditioning as he stared at the creepily accurate animatronics of the presidents.

They started the attraction and while it was good if you were a history buff, Seokjin guessed. But, a little boring. The air conditioning was nice on the hot, humid day.

Jungkook started sobbing about halfway through and Seokjin’s heart clenched. He looked over to Jungkook rocking in his chair, his fingers twisted in front of his face and his elbows up. Namjoon started to get up to take Jungkook out.

“I can take him.” Seokjin volunteered. “So you guys don’t miss the show.”

“It’s okay.” Namjoon said back. “I got him.”

Seokjin watched Jungkook go red in the face and his crying pick up. He grabbed the blanket that Yoongi gave him earlier and followed him out into the lobby. There were a couple of people milling, looking at displays on the wall. But, it was mostly empty. Namjoon found a quiet corner and set Jungkook down. He immediately fell to his butt and rocked, crying loudly


“I brought his blanket.” Seokjin squatted.

“Thanks,” Namjoon said and handed it to Jungkook, who immediately threw the whole thing over his head and rocked. “I was hoping to avoid a meltdown, but,” Namjoon rubbed his back. “I guess even Disney World isn’t that magical.”

Seokjin sighed as he watched him. “You guys are very patient with him.”

Namjoon smiled. “It gets rough, sometimes.”

“He has autism.” The daycare worker said. “And he’s non-verbal. He doesn’t react to questions like a typical child would. He also…” She looked Seokjin up and down. “doesn’t react to strangers the same either.”
Seokjin looked around the daycare – one specifically for special education children. The floors were covered in squishy padding and there were bean bag chairs everywhere. And then down at Jungkook who was sitting on the floor with both arms wrapped around the daycare worker’s leg, his eyes on Bop-It.

He had come with a police officer and a packet of papers that said that Jungkook’s grandmother had passed away suddenly. That Jungkook didn’t have immediate family. That CPS was called because the hospital couldn’t find anyone to call for them. That he was now alone in this world.

“I’m not a stranger.” Seokjin smiled. He had his baggie of cookies – fresh-baked and ready to be used to bridge that gap. “I’m a friend.” He squatted. “Hi, Jungkook.” He said. “My name is Seokjin.”

Jungkook ignored him – his eyes on his Bop-It.

“I have to take you somewhere, okay?” Seokjin said gently and then handed the baggie of cookies to Jungkook. Jungkook stopped playing with his Bop-It to look at the sweets. He looked up at Seokjin’s face and then turned his eyes to the ceiling, his hands twisting up in front of his face. He made a grunt. “Would you like a cookie?” Seokjin set them on his lap.

Jungkook grunted again and his hands flapped in front of his face. Seokjin had taken some basic courses on ASD, so he knew all of this movement was self-stimulatory behavior. Jungkook picked up the baggie and open it, taking a careful sniff of the contents.

For the first time Seokjin’s life, he watched someone completely reject his perfect chocolate chunk cookie recipe. Jungkook threw the bag down and glared at it for a second before flapping his arms again, grunting and vocalizing.

Seokjin looked up to the daycare worker, who had a face that said I told you so. “He doesn’t like smells.” She said simply.

Namjoon picked up Jungkook and they migrated to a bench before a cast member came over and asked them to get up. Jungkook rocked with his blanket over his head, his crying getting slower as he calmed himself down.

“Bad moments happen to everyone.” Namjoon said. “Jungkook just…” He looked at the crowd and shrugged. “Feels those bad moments harder, you know? His reaction to them is stronger. It’s harder for him to keep it in.” Namjoon looked at his son. “It’s just our jobs as parents to help him through them. They’re easier to deal with when you remind yourself that fact.”

Seokjin stretched out his legs. “Can I tell you a secret?” He asked.

Namjoon looked at him. “What’s that?”

“I didn’t really give a crap about the Hall of the Presidents anyway.”

Namjoon snorted. “Me neither.” He giggled and patted Jungkook’s back.
They finally – after Namjoon whining like a little kid all day long – made it to Splash Mountain. It was the last ride of the evening before they called it a day and headed back to the resort.

They stood in line – not bothering with the Fast Pass, since it was their last ride – with the rest of the herd of people waiting to get on. Yoongi had taken over pushing Jimin’s wheelchair and Namjoon was squatting with Hoseok, telling him that Splash Mountain wasn’t a rollercoaster, that it was fun and slow, that he would have a good time on it.

Jungkook was back to his regular self after getting away from the smells and getting over his meltdown in the Hall of the Presidents. He sat on Seokjin’s shoulders again, his heels tapping on Seokjin’s chest.

“Hey, Mister?”

Seokjin looked down to Taehyung, his wide eyes on Seokjin. “Honey, you can just call me Jin.” He said.

“Oh, yeah.” Taehyung grinned. But then his smile faded. “I had a question but I forgot it.”

“That’s okay.” Seokjin said. “I do that all the time. Are you having fun?” Seokjin asked.

“What has your favorite part been so far?”

Taehyung’s eyes squinted – his glasses in Yoongi’s backpack now after he said that he almost lost them on the teacup ride. “Mmm.” He hummed as he thought about it. “I liked it when Princess Belle was talking to Chim and Chim sang for her.”

Seokjin smiled. They had run into Belle and the Beast near the castle and stopped to take pictures with her. She had dropped to her knees to talk to Jimin and Yoongi started humming *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*, prompting Jimin to belt out the first line at the top of his lungs. His voice was clear and high and everyone teared up a bit. Well, maybe not everybody but Seokjin did.

“Yeah, that was real cool.”

“I liked that Hoseok and I got on the teacups and we got them spinning really fast, even though Hoseok said he was scared and didn’t want to spin them that fast.” Taehyung giggled. “And,” He threw his arms in the air. “I liked that Kookie had fun on the Winnie the Pooh ride, especially when we were bouncing up and down as he was screeching like a monkey!”

They moved up in the line as they talked.

“What did you *like*, Taehyung?” Seokjin prompted.

Taehyung looked confused. “I just told you.”

“I know.” Seokjin said. “But, you just said what everyone else liked.”

Taehyung’s eyebrows furrowed. “But, that’s what I liked.” He said. “Those things that I told you.”

“Come on, TaeTae.” Yoongi held out his hand and Taehyung scampered up to Yoongi’s side. He wrapped both of his arms around Yoongi’s waist. Yoongi rubbed his back and then smoothed down his hair.

“Hi, Taehyung.” Seokjin greeted as he sat down with Taehyung – his newest case. Tae looked scared, his fingers wrapped around a bendable action figure of Iron Man and his lower lip
caught in his teeth. “My name is Seokjin. I’m your case manager. Do you know what that is?”

Taehyung shook his head, his eyes darting to the kitchen. They were in the dining room together, sitting and chatting. Seokjin did an inspection, as per usual when cases got reassigned. And he found the house that Taehyung was living in clean. Suspiciously clean. Like, catalog-ready clean. And to Seokjin, that raised a lot of red flags. Houses with kids should be lived in. Most foster parents picked up before an agency visit, but he expected to see life. Love. Evidence of imagination and creativity. And he saw none of that in this house.

His agency called them Cinderella cases – fosters that were basically little slaves for their foster parents. And he had a sneaking suspicion that this was one of them.

“Well, basically, I’m assigned to make sure you are put in good homes with good mommies and daddies.” Seokjin said. “I’m your protector and as your protector, I want to know if you’re happy here in this house with your current foster parents.”

Taehyung looked to be chewing on those words, flipping them around in his head. “Mr. Jensen,” Another red flag. Seokjin wrote that down. “Says that nobody can give me happiness but myself.”

“Well, basically, I’m assigned to make sure you are put in good homes with good mommies and daddies.” Seokjin said. “I’m your protector and as your protector, I want to know if you’re happy here in this house with your current foster parents.”

“Okay,” Seokjin went a different direction. “What makes you happy, Taehyung?”

Taehyung took his time thinking that one over as well. “I like…” His eyes darted to his toy. “I like drawing a lot. I drew a flower for Cassidy and she liked it a lot. She hung it up on her wall.”

“Yeah?” Seokjin prompted. “What else makes you happy?”

“When Mrs. Jensen says that I’ve done a good job.” Taehyung said.

“When does she do that?”

“When I get my chores all done and she inspects my work.” Taehyung said. “And then she tells me if I do a good job or a bad job. If I do a good job, I get playtime.”

“What kind of chores do you have, Taehyung?” Seokjin said, a weight sinking in his gut.

Seokjin, now taking the rear of the pack with Jungkook, hung back a little to watch all of the kids that were, at one time, under his watch and protection. And he watched the parents that found them, that loved them, and gave them a home.

And he watched how when Namjoon went one way – bending over to take care of Jimin, squatting to talk to Hoseok at his eye-level – then Yoongi went the other – holding Tae’s hand and giving his shoulders a squeeze or glancing over his shoulder to check on Jungkook. They moved with their own gravity, their own energy. Namjoon was the moon and Yoongi was the waves, pushing and pulling each other with the love they held for their kids that were their whole world.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment! <3

And you can find me on twt
chapter warnings: smut

There's a good amount of smut in this chapter. If smut's not your thing, you can just stop at the 4th line break.

Enjoy!

“There he is.” Namjoon said as he brr’d his lips against Jimin’s cheek, trying to coax giggles out of him. He moved to the other side of his face, dotting kisses all over his little boy’s cheek, tasting the salt of tears. “Peek-a-boo.” Namjoon sang as he sat nose-to-nose with him.

They were on the ground in the living room/Seokjin’s room of their hotel accommodations. Unfortunately, while vacations meant putting life on hold for a little bit to most people, it did not mean that for Jimin. He still had to have his muscles flexed out daily, an unhappy part of his routine. Namjoon had it down pat now. He went as fast as he could, racing the tears.

“Boo.” Jimin said back, his smile a little thin and shaky on his face. He was always such a trooper. Namjoon’s strong little boy.

Namjoon picked up his foot and pretended to eat his toes. “I’m going to eat you all up.” He said and made big munching sounds. “Starting with your toes. Om nom nom nom.”

“Tae.” Jimin said, his arm going out and his head turning. “Tae.”

Taehyung popped out of the back room, his shorts on but his shirt off, his bellybutton a tiny nub on his tan skin. He had aloe vera lotion on his shoulders and arms – Yoongi very concerned over how much sun all the boys were getting – and it made him glisten a little under the overhead lights.

“Taehyung,” Namjoon called and waved. “Jimin is asking for you.”

Taehyung put on a big smile and sat down next to Jimin on his blanket, getting into Jimin’s face. Jimin finally smiled – big and wide – when he found his favorite person in the whole world. “Tae.” Chim said.

Taehyung patted Jimin’s head. “What are you doing, you silly baby?” Tae asked and grabbed his hand. Chim just giggled in response, pain forgotten.

Namjoon got up and found Yoongi rubbing Hoseok’s back down as he sat on the edge of the large, white plush bed with one of his legs folded underneath him. Hoseok was like Namjoon in that there was no burn phase, they just went right to tanning - Hoseok’s skin now almost a caramel color. “So, the boys are going to go down with Seokjin for that s’mores activity.” He started, keeping himself nonchalant even though his insides had started fluttering with anticipation.

Yoongi rubbed the excess aloe vera lotion into his hands. His eyebrows furrowed. “…okay?”
“So, um,” Namjoon glanced at his hands. “We could go out.”

Yoongi’s lips turned up in a little smile. “Okay.”

“Okay,” Namjoon smiled back, the fluttering picking up speed. He started to walk out to pick Jimin up from the floor and put him back in his chair. He stopped in the doorway. “Um,” He turned back around, feeling himself blush. “I booked reservations at…a nice place. It’s a surprise but…dress up?”

“Okay.” Yoongi nodded. “I will.”

“Great.” Why did this feel like a first date all of a sudden? Namjoon chewed on his lip. They were married. Namjoon slept with his arm around Yoongi’s waist every night. But, the butterflies made it feel like a first date. The surprise he had for Yoongi made it feel like a first date.

Yoongi’s smiled widened a little, but his eyes flashed with mischief. Namjoon wasn’t sure what that meant. “Great.”

Yoongi wasn’t sure what Namjoon was planning, but by the way he all of a sudden became a nervous, bumbling glitching sim of a person that bumped into things and couldn’t figure out what to do with hands, he assumed it was something…nice.

Yoongi was excited for his evening out as he got ready in the bathroom. He had said a ‘churro and a beer’ but knowing Namjoon, it was going to be way more than that. He always went so above and beyond. He always was set on impressing Yoongi. Even though he could do that just by smiling his dimply grin and wrapping his large hands around Yoongi’s waist.

His own stomach fluttered with nerves however as he pulled out his toiletry kit and fished out a little surprise for Namjoon – a black silicone butt plug that was slightly curved. He stared at it for a second. Seokjin was taking the kids out. That meant they had the hotel room to themselves after dinner. But…what if something happened and the kids needed them? Or had to come back because something bad happened?

Yoongi didn’t think about that. He didn’t want to think about that. He was going to have a nice evening out. They had a sitter that was perfect for their kids. They were in motherfucking Disney World. He was going to get laid tonight, dammit.

He fished the bottle of lube out and washed the plug under the sink before lubing it up and working it into himself. He twisted it until the curved part was sitting on his prostate. He accidentally tapped it, clenched and then gasped – seeing stars a little from the sudden rush of sensation. He gripped the sink as he willed away the half-boner and breathed.

God, he needed to get laid tonight.

He checked his backside in the mirror to make sure the the plug was all the way in and ran his fingertips down his naked body. He had gained weight since taking on four kids that only seemed to want to sustain on baked chicken nuggets and mac n’ cheese and grimaced at his own reflection before slipping on his clothes.

He brushed his teeth and shaved and mussed with his hair until he was semi-decent for an
evening out. He kept clenching on the butt plug – the toy teasing his prostate. It made him feel a little slutty, a little dirty. A little dangerous. A little wild. And a lot horny. A lot horny.

He came out to a quiet and empty hotel room and his husband looking like a Korean Adonis in a button down that was fitted tight to his chest and his hair pushed off of his forehead. He was clicking his wristwatch on, his eyes turned down so he didn’t notice Yoongi right away. Yoongi waved and he looked up, grinning when he spotted Yoongi. “You look beautiful.” He signed, blowing through his lips for emphasis.

Yoongi felt his neck heat. “Thanks.” He signed back. “You too.” Clench. Yoongi caught his breath at the little jolt. He maintained a good poker face. “Where are we going?”


“Sounds good.” Yoongi picked up his jacket from the chair in the corner of the room and started towards the door

Yoongi felt fingers wrap around his wrist and he stopped and turned into Namjoon’s waiting lips. He kissed Namjoon back and really prayed hard that the boner in his pants would go away before dinner. “You do look so beautiful.” Namjoon murmured.

Yeah. Yoongi thought as he stared into his husband’s eyes, clenching on his little secret. I’m getting laid tonight.

They walked through the park – which wasn’t as crowded as Magic Kingdom was – their arms around each other. Epcot wasn’t as crowded as Magic Kingdom, but that didn’t mean isn’t wasn’t empty either. But, Yoongi didn’t see anyone but the man that smelled like light soap that had his arm wound around Yoongi’s waist as his full, beautiful lips that were pressed into his hair above his ear. The man that had a matching silver band on his left ring finger. The man that was all his through better or for worse, for sickness or in health as long as they both lived.

He didn’t even really notice the restaurant that they entered until Namjoon said something. “What do you think?” Namjoon signed with his hand that wasn’t holding Yoongi’s.

Yoongi glanced around the restaurant before looking back up at his husband. “It’s nice.”

“Look though.” Namjoon pointed and Yoongi followed his finger to a grand piano tucked in the corner of the room. There was a player sitting at it playing slow, stripped down versions of Disney tunes.


“Right?” Namjoon grinned. “I saw that on the website. I thought you would like it.”

“I was fine with a churro and a beer.” Yoongi rolled his eyes.

Namjoon glided his fingertips down Yoongi’s arm and laced their fingers together. “I know.” He said, his eyes sparkling. “But, you deserve more.”

Yoongi felt his neck heat and his stomach flipped. He clenched on his butt plug and really
struggled on keeping himself composed. “I don’t deserve you.” He murmured, but Namjoon’s eyes were on the waiter, getting their table arranged.

They sat down at a table that was in the same room as the piano, near a little dance floor where an elderly couple was slowly rocking to Colors of the Wind. Yoongi watched them for a second as they danced, their faces blissed out and serene.

“What are you smiling at?” Namjoon asked.

Yoongi motioned to the couple. “Can you imagine us that old?” He asked. “Old and retired and just…” He sighed. “Just happy?”

Namjoon glanced at the couple. “Well, I can’t dance to save my life.” He said with a snort, but grinned. “But, I can imagine us as empty nesters, dressed head to toe in whatever school colors they decide to go to.”

Yoongi smiled. “Watching their graduation.”

“You know Kookie’s gonna graduate summa cum laude and go on to win a Nobel prize in science or something.”

“No doubt.” Yoongi said. “If his MMA career doesn’t take off first.”

“Or he doesn’t become the first president on the spectrum.”

“He’s going to do so well at anything he puts his mind to.” Yoongi sighed as Hoseok popped in to his mind, his smile fading a little. “I think with our eldest, academics needs to be taken one step at a time.”

Namjoon chewed on his lip. “Whatever he decides to do we’ll support him.” He pouted a little. “I was hoping to have at least one legacy at Gal, though.”

“There’s Taehyung.” Yoongi pointed out. “Although, don’t be surprised if he majors in philosophy or something.”


They broke eye contact as their last child popped into their heads. Namjoon looked down at the menu and Yoongi stared at his straw wrapper as he wound it around his finger. Jimin’s future was hard to imagine, since Yoongi and Namjoon couldn’t ever keep a step ahead of his own body. Yoongi tried, however. He tried imagining him at 18, accepting a high school diploma. At 21, as they celebrated his birthday with cake that had twenty-one candles. At 25, as his new niece or nephew was placed in his arms and he beamed and sang Twinkle Twinkle Little Star to them. And then...

Namjoon’s hand gripped his hand. “Jimin will be just fine.” Namjoon said and Yoongi stared at the contrast between their skin tones. “He has us and his brothers. He’ll be fine.”

Yoongi smiled at Namjoon, but it didn’t really settle the churning in his stomach. “He’ll be fine.” He echoed and turned his eyes to his menu, scanning the very expensive, very fancy sounding dishes.

They got their drink orders in and Namjoon nibbled on a bread roll as they tried to come up with a conversation topic that wasn’t their children. That’s where they always defaulted to. And
Yoongi guessed when your world revolved around your family, then that’s what you talked about. And his family was his everything.

“How’s, um, work goin-,” Yoongi started to sign when suddenly there was a person standing at their table that wasn’t their waiter. He stopped and looked up at a young man in a Giants t-shirt with an awkward expression. “Can I…help you?” Yoongi said and signed at the same time.

“I’m really sorry to bother you.” He said. “But, um, are you…Suga?”

Yoongi felt his face erupt with heat at that name. He hadn’t heard that name in what felt like a millennium. He swallowed back a grimace at his past life of hustling music on the streets of Brooklyn, pushing his mixtape and trying to make it big as a rapper. “I am.” He said and signed back.

The man smiled. “Oh, great. I am a huge fan. Like, I followed you when you were a rapper, but even now as a producer, you’re an inspiration.” He said and pulled out his phone. “Could, I, um, get a picture with you?”

Yoongi suppressed another grimace, but stood up and smiled anyway as this guy took a selfie with him. Yoongi graciously accepted his fan’s mixtape and a “my friends will never believe this! Thanks!” before he walked off and Yoongi was able to sit down again.

“You know, that doesn’t happen to often anymore.” Namjoon signed at Yoongi with a chuckle.

Yoongi rolled his eyes. “Yeah, nobody really notices you when you’re being orbited by four children like moons around Saturn.”

“That’s not true.” Namjoon signed back. “You’re cuter than Saturn.”

“My ass is as big as Saturn with all the weight I’ve gained.”

“You’re ridiculous.” Namjoon signed with a headshake. “But, I love you.”

Namjoon waited until the end of the meal for his little surprise. He waited specifically until Yoongi had two and a half glasses of wine and was starting to turn a beautiful rosy color in the face and was smiling a lot. He waited until he knew that he would elicit the best reaction from his normally very temperate and mild husband.

They were in the middle of giggling over all of the faces Taehyung were making while they were taking pictures that day at Epcot – Yoongi’s beautiful smile full on his face – when Namjoon decided to change the subject.

“So,” Namjoon started as he pulled the box from his trouser pocket. “I have a-,”

Yoongi’s eyes tore from his to his phone that was sitting on the table. Namjoon’s went off a second later and he looked down to a text in the group chat from Seokjin. He picked up his phone and opened it to a picture of Jungkook and Jimin sitting side by side with matching rings of chocolate around their lips. Jungkook’s hair was hanging in his eyes and Jimin was beaming. Namjoon sighed at the photo. His boys.
“They’re so cute.” Yoongi signed as he made the picture his background.

“I know.” Namjoon said and looked around. “It’s weird not having them here.”

Yoongi sighed and placed his cheek on his palm. “The rug would be a mess from Jimin chucking food off of his tray.”

Namjoon laughed. “Seokie and Tae would be fighting over the red crayon.”

“Jungkook would be rocking in his chair.”

Namjoon grabbed his hand. “I’m glad we did this.” He said. “I’m glad we went out. Just us. No kids. We needed this night.”

Yoongi leaned back, his fingertips and his eyes on Namjoon’s hand as he played with his fingers. He snapped his eyes up – and they flashed with a fire that Namjoon knew was lust. He felt his own skin erupt in heat, but he calmed himself down. He had a mission.

“Wait.” Namjoon groaned. “I have something for you.” He pulled out the box and set it on the table – decorated with a cute, red bow. “I was waiting until after dessert to give you this.”

Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed. “Why are you giving me a gift? You don’t have to give me anything. That wasn’t a part of the deal.” He started to argue.

“I got you this because I love and appreciate you as my husband and the love of my life.” He half-groaned in a joke and pushed the box further towards Yoongi. “Just open it.”

Yoongi picked up the little box and pulled the ribbon off. He pulled out the out box. He opened that to the little ring box that was covered in green velvet.

“Namjoon.” Namjoon couldn’t hear Yoongi’s inflection, but by the way his chin tipped up, he assumed it was in a groan.

“Just open it.” Namjoon’s insides started to flutter again - butterflies dancing in a mosh pit right in his gut.

Yoongi did. Inside was ring that Namjoon found the other day on Main Street. A ring that he bought and secretly had made while they spent the day exploring Epcot and Animal Kingdom. “I probably paid way too much for it. But, I couldn’t resist.” Namjoon started to explain as Yoongi examined it. “It has all the kids’ birthstones.” He pointed to the line of jewels on top. A purple amethyst for Hoseok, a white opal for Jimin, a blue zircon for Taehyung, and an indigo sapphire for Jungkook. “You could wear the jewels you have as children on your finger.” Seokjin gave him that pun to use earlier.

Yoongi had a slightly open-mouthed, shocked look on his face as he stared at the velvet box in his hand.

“Yoongi?” Namjoon asked, the nerves in his middle increasing. “Do you like it?”

Yoongi’s lower lip shook a little and his eyes rimmed with tears. “Fuck you, Namjoon.” Yoongi’s hand smacked the under palm for the loud version of ‘fuck’ so loud that their table neighbors looked over. “For making me cry.”

Namjoon smiled wide and big, the nerves evaporating. “So you do like it?”
Yoongi nodded. “I do.” He pulled it out of the box and slipped it on his finger – on top of his wedding ring. “I do.” He glanced over at the elderly couple that had been moving on the dance floor their entire dinner. Yoongi rose to his feet and came to Namjoon’s side of the table. “Come dance with me.” Yoongi signed.

Namjoon made a face but rose anyway. “I’m not a dancer.” He signed as Yoongi turned around in his arms.

“Neither am I.” Yoongi signed back as he circled Namjoon’s hands around his waist. Namjoon’s gut clenched slightly as he gave a cursory glance around the room. Two gay men dancing in a nice club or restaurant in California was one thing. Here in a state he didn’t know, he wasn’t so sure. But, everyone had their eyes on their table mates and Namjoon turned his attention back on his husband.

He let Yoongi lead and they swayed back and forth, Yoongi’s around his shoulders and his nose buried in Namjoon’s neck as they danced like two high schoolers at prom. Like the elderly couple celebrating their fortieth anniversary. Like two husbands in love.

“I have a bit of a surprise for you too.” Yoongi had pushed away as Namjoon was trying to get his Mickey armband thing that was the keycard to their room and slot his tongue into Yoongi’s mouth at the same time.

“Yeah?” Namjoon said as he desperately his his wrist against the doorway, his mind hazy like trying to see through a warm, hard fog.

“Yeah.” Yoongi smiled, his dark eyes flashing again. He grabbed Namjoon’s wrist and rose it and they both stumbled into their hotel at the same time. Namjoon ran his hand down Yoongi’s back, and felt his own cock start to harden.

Yoongi pulled Namjoon’s shirt out of his pants and then started to undo his buttons. Namjoon worked on Yoongi’s own shirt and they undressed each other until they were bare chested. Namjoon ran his fingers down Yoongi’s front, finding a nipple and twisting a little. Yoongi undid his jeans and he sprung out, revealing that he wasn’t wearing any underwear and his cock was fully hard. His cock was cute and rosy at the head like his kissed, red lips.

And then he twisted and stepped a knee onto the edge of the bed one at a time, revealing his pale, beautiful legs and his ivory thighs and his gorgeous, blemish-free ass. And that would’ve been a nice surprise on its own. But, situated in the asshole of that gorgeous, blemish-free ass was a black butt plug.

Namjoon felt a buzz of electricity course through as his cock bobbed in his own pants. “This is a…” Namjoon felt his jaw slacken as he unzipped his own pants and let himself loose. He wrapped his fingers around his cock and stroked as he took in his husband. “This is a nice surprise.” He gulped.

Yoongi flipped back over so that sitting on the edge of the bed. He reached forward and
pulled Namjoon’s belt loop by the fingertip until Namjoon walked forward and stood in front of Yoongi, his cock inches from Yoongi’s face. Yoongi gave Namjoon a knowing smirk before running his tongue over Namjoon’s head and then a long stripe from base to tip.

Namjoon felt his heat course under his skin. Heat and electricity centering right in his groin. He grabbed Yoongi’s hair and pulled lightly as Yoongi ran and swirled his tongue over Namjoon’s cock. He could feel Yoongi hum around him and he groaned as he let his head fall back on his neck.

Namjoon pulled Yoongi off when he started to feel the pressure build. He signed for him to get on his hands and knees and Yoongi flipped over and put his ass back in the air. Namjoon carefully removed the butt plug and watched Yoongi’s asshole gape open before fluttering closed and Namjoon moaned as he stroked himself at the sight. He needed to lick it. He needed to taste it. He needed to run his tongue in it. “Sit on my face.” He said. “I need you to sit on my face.”

Yoongi felt his knees tremble at Namjoon’s low, turned on voice say he needed him to sit on his face. He sat back up, his butt feeling empty without the butt plug and let Namjoon pull him to the head of the bed where he settled on a pillow. Yoongi stepped one of his thighs over Namjoon’s head and felt Namjoon’s tongue run on the underside of Yoongi’s cock, licking the precum off the head. He patted Yoongi’s bottom, signaling to move forward and Yoongi scooched with one hand wrapped around the headboard.

Namjoon licked and sucked at Yoongi’s perineum before finding his hole. Yoongi moaned and bucked as Namjoon licked circles in and around Yoongi’s hole. He sucked at the skin around it. He rubbed his tongue in full broad stripes.

Namjoon speared his tongue inside and Yoongi whined, his fingernails digging into the wood of the head board. With Namjoon guiding him, he rose up and down on his knees, riding Namjoon’s tongue, his body tightening and glowing and blazing with every thrust.

Yoongi’s whines grew desperate and he dripped precum on Namjoon’s forehead as Namjoon’s tongue felt so good, but it wasn’t what he needed. He needed it deeper and wetter and hotter. “Namjoon.” He moaned and pulled his hands off of his hips. “Fuck me.”

Yoongi backed up and Namjoon helped with the guiding as Yoongi sat back on Namjoon’s cock – his cherry lubed and ready hole taking him easily after the butt plug – and Yoongi moaned as he felt himself fill up, his body adjusting to Namjoon’s length and girth. He slowly rocked forward and then back. He let himself melt with each inch.

“Fuck, Yoongi.” Namjoon’s eyes squeezed shut. “You’re so fucking tight. Taking it so well.”

Yoongi felt himself flush with heat. His cock was so hard and tight, it was standing tall against his stomach. He grabbed it and moaned. He didn’t bother with the dirty talk. Namjoon lost the ability to read lips once his face went slack and his eyes glazed over with arousal. Yoongi just focused on the build up that felt like a fiery volcano building inside of his gut, swirling around, tightening his balls to his body.

He was interrupted when Namjoon sat up suddenly and gripped him by his shoulders, pulling him down into a kiss. It was wet and lazy – both their brains focused on Yoongi as he rocked up and...
down, but Namjoon was moaning, low and growly and Yoongi knew that Namjoon could feel his broken whines as he found his own prostate, rubbing right against it. He knew he could feel the way Yoongi’s hand sped up on himself and the way his skin burst with goosebumps.

“I’m gonna cum.” Yoongi said as he fucked himself hard on Namjoon’s cock. “I’m gonna cum.”

“Cum for me.” Namjoon said in a huff.

Yoongi let himself go, heat radiating under his skin as he shot cum hard onto Namjoon’s stomach.

“I’m gonna-,” Namjoon cried and then he thrusted up hard and they both cried out as Namjoon orgasmed himself – his lower lip open and slack and his eyes squeezed shut. Yoongi could feel each pulse inside and he clenched hard as he road him.

And then it was over and they both laid for a second, reveling in the afterglow. They panted and collected their thoughts, floating down from their highs.

He felt Namjoon’s hand on the small of his back, rubbing as he sighed. Yoongi jumped with little pulses of aftershock and kissed Namjoon long and slow, just cupping his face and enjoying his heat.

“I love you.” Yoongi whispered against his lips.

“I love you too.” Namjoon whispered back, his eyes shining. He pushed Yoongi’s bangs off of his face. Yoongi put his head on Namjoon’s chest and listened to his heartbeat as they laid together. Yoongi would compose a song in his head to the beat of Namjoon’s heartbeat – his favorite song. The music organic and pure and full of love. He laid there, composing and wondering how he got so lucky. Wondering how he became the lucky winner of a man that looked at him like he was the prize.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!<3

And you can find me on twt
The next day was for the resort pool that looked like an oasis in the middle of the Sahara. It was salt water – another reason why they chose this hotel – so no harsh chlorine to mess with Jungkook’s sensitivities. And there were big rock formations that kids could climb and jump off of. Slides. Waterfalls. There were cabanas that were covered. They went early to snag one of those.

Namjoon and Yoongi and Seokjin blew up water wings in a production line and got the little ones in lifejackets.

“Dad,” Hoseok signed as Namjoon rubbed sunscreen on him. Namjoon fingered a suspiciously round scar on the back of Hoseok’s neck. It was faded and almost gone now, but it as big as a dime…or the end of a cigarette. Namjoon shuddered. “I’m gonna do a cannonball!”

“Are you going to make the biggest splash?” Namjoon signed with a smile as he finished making sure Hoseok was protected from the sun. Hoseok looked small in his water wings. Not as small as when he first got to them – he had shot up a couple of inches and put some weight on. But, he was still so slight – his ribs poking through his chest and movements light and floaty like a dandelion seed.

Jimin was the opposite. He was still tiny, but was all cankles and chubby cheeks. Namjoon gave him big kisses as he snapped his vest over his chest. “You ready to go swimming, Chim?”

“He has his swimmer diaper on?” Yoongi asked as he lotioned up Taehyung.

“He does.” Namjoon said as he pulled Jimin out of his chair and settled him on his hip. Namjoon placed his bucket hat on his head and watched his full lips purse out in a little beak. “This duckling is ready to swim.”

Yoongi released Taehyung and he darted off like a bullet towards the water, jumping right into the pool. Namjoon pulled off his hearing aids and handed them to Yoongi, who put them in their case and stacked it up with other boys’ and headed for the steps of the water. He settled back on the multi-person lounge chair – still dressed head-to-toe in black – and opened his iPad. “I’ll be here if you need me.”

Namjoon scanned around for a second, finding their ex-case manager in the water, beckoning Jungkook to jump in. He watched their youngest ball his fists and hop into the water – right into Seokjin’s waiting arms. He was glad those two seemed to hit it off.

“This is your first pool time with us,” Namjoon said to Jimin as he waded through the shallow end towards a quiet corner where Jimin wouldn’t accidentally get splashed in the face. The
pool was nice and warm, but Jimin made a little shiver anyway when Namjoon bent his legs and settled in the water. “Is it cold?” Namjoon detached Jimin and held him underneath his arms, letting him float on his own.

Jimin made an unsure noise as his arms rose. “Daddy.” He said and splashed a little, hitting himself. His face screwed up like he wanted to cry.


Jimin’s arms slapped the water. And then again. And then he gave a little, hesitant giggle once he figured out that he was okay, revealing a smile that was missing a tooth in the front.

“You like that?” Namjoon twisted him around so that they could move together, but Jimin thrashed his arms. Namjoon stopped and turned him back around. Jimin’s face was heating with tears and he was repeating, “Daddy. Daddy. Daddy.”


“Daddy.” Jimin’s fingers found Namjoon’s shoulder and he blew a kiss with his other hand. “Kiss!”

“I love you too.” Namjoon nosed his cheek. “Can you say that? Can you say ‘love you?’” He bounced him a little in the water, letting him kick his own legs and enjoying the weightlessness. “Can you say ‘wa-ter?’”

Jimin’s fingers grabbed his hat as he spoke his own language, his face tipping towards the sky and his eyes squinting a little.

“Do you see the sun?” Namjoon said and bounced with him. “I know you can feel it. You can feel how warm it is.” Namjoon let him go, hovering his hands right above his waist so he could float on his own. “And you can feel the water and hear it when it splashes? Lots of things going on for Jimin right now.” Namjoon continued to talk as he let Jimin enjoy the pool. “New experiences and-,”

Jimin interrupted him by splashing wildly with his arms, churning the water around him. He hooted and sang with a big smile over his face. Namjoon turned his head to avoid getting splashed in the eyes and let him go until he was breathless and beaming.

“I love it when you have fun.” Namjoon grabbed him and pulled him close. “Your smile is my everything.” He kissed his cheek.

Yoongi kept one eye on his book, reading the same sentence over and over and one eye on his kids. Jimin and Jungkook both had an adult with them, but Seokie and Tae were running around the pool – jumping in and climbing out to jump in again.

Hoseok stopped jumping in to catch his breath – instead he sat at the edge and kicked his feet
in the water.

Yoongi watched as a little girl around Hoseok’s age take a seat next to him. Hoseok didn’t notice her right away and it seemed like she was trying to talk to him. Hoseok had his eyes on his feet, however and didn’t see her. Yoongi almost started to get up to signal to Hoseok that someone was trying to get his attention. But, Hoseok happened to look over and jumped, startled at the sudden presence of another person next to him.

She gave a friendly smile and started to talk. Hoseok pointed to his ear and shook his head. Her eyes widened and her mouth rolled into a little ‘o.’ She then recovered and got up and disappeared. Hoseok went back to kicking his feet in the water.

The girl reappeared with an iPad swiped from her mother. While dangling the device precariously over the edge of the pool, she typed out what she wanted to say and gave it to Hoseok. Hoseok smiled and typed something back, his fingers wringing nervously afterwards.

Yoongi felt his own lips turn up at the edges as he watched this interaction. It reminded him a lot of when he first started dating Namjoon. Namjoon was sure that it wasn’t going to work out. And Yoongi went on a mission to prove that if you truly cared about someone, that shouldn’t matter if they didn’t speak the same language. They spent many first dates communicating by pushing a notebook back and forth until Namjoon got used to lip-reading Yoongi. And then Yoongi started to learn sign language and they connected even more.

Seokjin squealed and Yoongi turned his attention to his youngest as he used Jin’s face as a springboard into the pool. Seokjin wiped his eyes of water and then jammed a hand into the pool and pulled Jungkook up by his life vest. Jungkook’s smile was so huge across his face, all of his teeth were showing. “Again.” He signed and started to scramble up Seokjin’s shoulder again. “Again. Again.” He started to climb up Seokjin’s shoulder again.

Namjoon seemed to be in his own world as he gently twirled Jimin in a circle in the shallow end. Jimin was giggling his contagious laugh and Yoongi hoped that the pool provided him some relief of his pain.

Yoongi sighed as he scanned around for Taehyung – but he was on his way up the rock formation again, having fun on the little waterslide. Everyone seemed to be okay, so Yoongi turned back towards his book he was only five pages into.

He managed to get a whole chapter in before he heard panting and looked up to Taehyung pouting. “Daddy, Seokie isn’t playing with me anymore.” He said and folded his slick, chilly body over Yoongi’s lap.

Yoongi ran his fingers through Tae’s hair that was jet black with moisture. “Well, what’s he doing?”

“He’s playing with his new friend, Claire,” Taehyung pointed behind him. “In the waterfall.”

“And what have you been doing?”

“Going down the slide.”

“Well, why don’t you play with Claire and Hoseok in the waterfall?” Yoongi suggested.

“Because,” He sighed. “They’re just sitting there. It’s boring. I want him to go down the slide with me.”
“Well, don’t push him, okay?” Yoongi said as he picked up a towel and rubbed some water off of his son’s back. “If Seokie doesn’t want to climb the rocks, don’t force him.”

Taehyung straightened. “I know.” He nodded. “He gets scared.”

“Why don’t you suggest something you all can do? Or why don’t you play with Jin and Jungkook?” He pointed towards the pool. “They’re having a ton of fun.”

Tae looked over his shoulder and gave a big sigh. “Okay.” He said and padded out of their cabana towards the pool again.

Yoongi poked his head out of the cabana, finding Hoseok and Claire standing in the water at the splash pad side of the pool. He couldn’t hear them, but it looked like Hoseok was talking to her as they skipped around underneath the waterfall. He looked like he was enjoying himself.

Yoongi was so, so glad.

“I think we created a monster.” Namjoon said as he came back into the cabana, sitting on the end of Yoongi’s seat. “Jungkook doesn’t want to get out of the water.”

Yoongi looked up from his book to his husband with their fairest child as red as a lobster in his arms. “Namjoon,” He groaned. “Look at Jimin.”

Namjoon’s eyes were on the pool, however, as he giggled at Seokjin and Jungkook playing. Yoongi used his bare foot to push on Namjoon’s shoulder. He turned to look at Yoongi. “What?”

Yoongi ditched his iPad on the cabana seat and sat up. “Did you put sunscreen on Jimin?” He signed, sharp and angry.

Namjoon looked at Jimin. “He was wearing a hat.” He argued.

Yoongi pulled the hat off of Jimin’s head, revealing a line of red on his cheeks. “The water reflects light up.” He picked up his bag and started to rummage through it, pulling out the afterburn cream. “He’s so pale that he’s just going to cook under the sun. You have to be more careful.”

“It’s not even that bad.” Namjoon said. “Jimin tans like the rest of us.”

“It’s still not good for him.” Yoongi argued. “And he doesn’t know that his skin going all achy and itchy just means he’s sunburnt. He’s going to be all fussy later during bath time.”

Namjoon removed Jimin’s life vest and handed him over to Yoongi, who cradled him in his lap belly-down so he could rub afterburn cream on his back. Against the blue of his hat and life vest, the red looked worse than it actually was. Yoongi sighed. “It’s not that bad.” He conceded.

“See?” Namjoon put his chin in the air. “I’m not completely oblivious, Yoon.”

“You still have to be careful.” Yoongi flipped Jimin back over in his arms and wrapped him in a couple of towels until he was a just a round face peaking out of a pile of white. “No sunburns for our Chim.”
“Chim.” He repeated from his towel burrito with a smile and then a yawn, freeing his arms with the stretch. He placed his damp head on Yoongi’s shoulder and sighed.

“I can watch him.” Yoongi volunteered. “If you want to go play-,”

Suddenly, there was a scream – high and shrill and unmistakably Hoseok’s. Yoongi felt his stomach drop as a million horrible scenarios flashed through his head at once like a fucked up flipbook. He jerked, but couldn’t really move with forty pounds of Jimin in his arms.

“What is it?” Namjoon asked.

“Hoseok’s screaming.”

“Oh, sh-,” Namjoon was on his feet, out of the cabana before he could finish his sentence.

Namjoon hurried out of their little pool hut, meeting Seokjin and Jungkook as they scrambled up the steps of the shallow end “Did you hear that?” Namjoon asked Seokjin.

“Yeah,” Seokjin said, his hand around Jungkook’s wrist. “He’s on the slide, I think.” Seokjin pointed.

Following Seokjin’s directions, Namjoon jogged around the big rock formation thing, the concrete hot under his bare feet and up the stairs of the slide. He found Taehyung jogging down, one hand on the handlebar. “What’s going on?” Namjoon asked.

“Seokie’s stuck at the top.” Tae signed apologetically. “Claire was trying to get him to jump, but he didn’t want to. She started to push him and he freaked out.”

Namjoon’s stomach settled a little. Just a little. At least Hoseok didn’t crack his head open on something and was bleeding out. He was just frightened. He could deal with that. He jogged the rest of the steps, finding Hoseok with his hand around the handle bar you use to pitch yourself down the slide with, his knees to his chest. His eyes widened when he found Namjoon. “Dad.” He signed and held up both of his arms.

“Baby,” Namjoon said as he sat down at the top of the slide. “You’re okay. Shhh. You’re okay.”

“I want to get down.” Hoseok signed.

Namjoon peered over the edge of the rock formation into the water. “Seokie,” He signed slowly. “It’s okay. Look. It’s like the slide in the park, but instead of hitting the ground, you hit the pool. It’s super fun!”

“It’s too high.” Hoseok argued, his mouth turned down in a frown. “I want to get down.”

Namjoon glanced over his shoulder at the line that was starting to form. Pushing past everyone would be a hassle. “Why don’t I go down with you?” He suggested. “Like we do on the jungle gym?”
Hoseok glanced down the slide and looked back up at Namjoon. He did that a couple of times as he deliberated. “Okay,” He signed shakily. “But, you have to go down with me.”

“Okay,” Namjoon said and got himself set up on the slide. Hoseok sat down on his lap and with a “one, two, three!” he pushed himself down.

The slide was a lot faster than Namjoon thought. At least, it was a lot faster than the slide in the park. Fast enough that Namjoon lost his grip on Hoseok when they hit pool at the end. Fast enough that he shot towards the bottom, hit it with his feet and pushed back up.

Namjoon broke the surface and wiped the water from his eyes. He treaded around in a circle. “Hoseok?” He asked out loud, pitching his hair and spinning. “Fuck.” He cursed when he didn’t find him, fear knotting up his insides. He didn’t surface. He didn’t surface. Fuck, Hoseok didn’t surface.

Namjoon immediately dove under the water again towards the slide. Somehow, Hoseok had gotten his water wing stuck on some tubing and was currently thrashing around trying to get out of it – panicking and inhaling water and…drowning. He was drowning.

As Namjoon held his own breath, he tried to rip the water wing away from wherever it was stuck. But, there were kids going down the slide after them and every time a someone hit the water, it would cause a ripple and Namjoon would lose his grip.

Finally, Namjoon just gripped Hoseok’s arm and jerked it out of the water wing, ditching it and pushing him and his child up, breaking the surface. He inhaled a big breath of air. “Hoseok?” He said out loud as he gripped his son, who was currently panicking so bad, that he wasn’t coughing up the water he inhaled. “Hoseok, you’re okay.”

Namjoon wasn’t wearing his hearing aids. And he could hear in the 80 decibel range without them. That was a freight train if he was standing pretty close to the tracks. Nothing softer than that.

Hoseok was screaming. And Namjoon could hear it. He could hear the fear and the distress and the horror. He could hear his son’s screams as he clawed his little fingernails into Namjoon’s shoulder and tried to use him as a life raft to climb out of the water.

And while the screaming was concerning, what was more alarming was the way Hoseok’s lips were starting to blue. He wasn’t breathing. He had water in his lungs that needed to come out and he wasn’t coughing it up. He was going to pass out.

Namjoon pulled him and Hoseok – with one hand – out of the water. He sat Hoseok down on the edge of the pool and started to bang on his back. “You have to cough it up, Hoseok.” Namjoon ordered, panic lacing through him. Don’t pass out. Namjoon chanted in his head. Cough it up. “Hoseok,” He pleaded. “Cough it up.” Cough it up.

Finally, Hoseok doubled over, catching himself on his hands and coughed up the water he inhaled. Namjoon continued patting on his back until he coughed himself dry and started to heave in big breaths of air.

“Okay,” Namjoon pulled him into his lap. “Okay. You’re okay.” He signed as he cradled one of his most prized possessions to his chest. He was screaming again and breathing way, way too hard. His hands were going, but he wasn’t signing anything coherent. Namjoon just rocked him and held him. “Okay. You’re okay.”

There was a touch on Namjoon’s shoulder and he looked up to a hotel worker and Seokjin – Jungkook standing off to the side. “Is everything okay?” Seokjin asked, his face concerned.
“He got stuck underwater.” Namjoon explained. “He panicked and inhaled some water.”

“Poor baby.” Seokjin said and suddenly the hotel worker was producing a stack of fluffy white towels. Namjoon grabbed a couple and wrapped them around Hoseok, patting him dry and rubbing his back.

“You’re okay.” Namjoon glanced across the way where their cabana was. Yoongi was better at handling stuff like this because he knew what they were like. To Namjoon, it looked like Hoseok was...dying or something by how hard he was freaking out.

Suddenly the screaming ceased and Namjoon looked down to Hoseok’s hands going slack and his head pitching back as his eyes emptied and glazed over. “Okay,” Namjoon stood up, pulling him up with him as panic made his heart skip three beats and every nerve ending fire off at once. “Come on, baby.” Namjoon carried a limp and quiet Hoseok around the pool into their tent.

“What’s going on?” Yoongi was standing up, clicking Jimin’s lap strap on. Tae was already under the cabana tent, eating watermelon. “Was that him screaming?”

“Hoseok got stuck underwater.” Namjoon said as he sat him down on the big lounge chair. “He had a panic attack and now he’s doing that thing he did at your mom’s.”

“Disassociating?” Yoongi sat down next to Hoseok. “Seokie?” He wrapped his arm around his small shoulders and patted his cheek. “Hey, Seokie?”

“Should we go to the hospital?” Namjoon glanced at Seokjin, who had entered carrying Jungkook. “He coughed up all the water he accidentally breathed in.”

Yoongi wrapped his towel tighter around him and tip his head back so his eyes were on Yoongi’s face. “Hoseok, baby. I know that was so scary. But, you’re okay. You’re safe. We will let nothing happen to you. Ever.”

Namjoon shifted, feeling so helpless just watching. Fearing so inadequate for him. He ran his fingers through his wet hair as he regretted just not picking him up and walking down the stairs with him. He just felt like he was…hurting him. More than he was already hurt.

Right when Namjoon was going to suggested the hospital again, Hoseok’s hands rose to cover his face and he started crying. Yoongi picked him up and held him. “You’re okay.” Yoongi said and kissed his head. "You're okay."

“I’m sorry.” Namjoon said and rubbed his fist over his chest.

“It’s not your fault.” Yoongi said as he patted Hoseok’s back.

*It feels like it.* Namjoon thought and glanced at Seokjin, who gave him an apologetic smile. “I guess pool time’s over?”

Yoongi glanced into their hotel room from where he sat on the balcony with the other grown-ups, finding Jungkook standing in front of the television and Taehyung playing puppets with Donald
Duck and Mickey Mouse from the couch.

“You have to tell me.” Seokjin said as he held Jimin in his lap and fed him fruit from his plate with his fork. “Now, that I have you both here.”

“Tell you what?” Yoongi squinted. The sun was starting to go down over the fake savannah. He squinted as a pack of impalas made their way over the grass.

“How you guys met?”

“What did he ask?” Namjoon asked Yoongi. He had Hoseok in his lap – freshly changed in comfy pajamas with both arms wrapped around Namjoon’s neck and his head on his shoulder. Every once in awhile he would give a little fluttering sigh through his lips.

“How we met.” Yoongi signed.

Namjoon’s lips turned up in a smile. “Do you want to tell the story or should I?”

Yoongi sighed and grabbed his wine glass from the table they were sitting around. “I guess you can tell it.” He signed with one hand.

“Okay,” Namjoon said and shifted Hoseok to his other arm. “While I was a graduate student at Gallaudet, I went with some friends to up to New York for a weekend. I went into a gay bar alone while my friends checked out some club and Yoongi tried to…strike up a conversation.” He giggled.

“It didn’t go well, I presume?” Seokjin seemed highly entertained.

“He ended up getting mad that I wasn’t responding.” Namjoon started to giggle. “He thought I was giving him the cold shoulder.” Namjoon looked at Yoongi. “What did you say again?”

Yoongi felt his face flush. “I think ‘rude bastard’ was thrown around.” He looked at Jimin, who had been changed and rewrapped in a blanket. He sat content in Seokjin’s arm. “Don’t repeat that.” Yoongi said to his son.

Namjoon giggled, his big, dimply smile over his face. “That’s right.”

“In my defense,” Yoongi said. “You weren’t wearing your hearing aids. How was I supposed to know that you were deaf?”

“I don’t know why you got so mad, though.” Namjoon said as he patted on Hoseok’s back. “You ended up getting what you wanted in the end.”

“I mean,” Seokjin shrugged as he grinned. “‘Sexual frustration’ might be the answer to your question.”

“That’s the answer to every question.”

Yoongi felt his face heat up more. He imagined he was a shade that rivaled the raspberries that Seokjin was popping into Jimin’s mouth. “Language.” He scolded the both of them and then sipped his wine.

“Anyway,” Namjoon said. “We started talking after our two-night stand. Yoongi was trying to hustle his mixtape on the streets of New York and I was trying to survive graduate school and we just…fell together.” He shrugged.

“There’s a bit more to it than that.” Yoongi said. “I spent the last two-hundred dollars in my
“You did.” Namjoon said. “I remember driving at three in the morning in the snow after you texted me that you were ‘hitting rock bottom’ and freaked me out.”

“Yeah,” Yoongi rubbed his forehead. “Brooklyn was rough.”

“You remember when you surprised me in DC?” Namjoon grinned.

“I had to beg like six different people to drive me down.” Yoongi said. “And even then, they could only get me to, like, Philadelphia and then I had to take the train the rest of the way.”

“I was so happy, though.” Namjoon’s eyebrows furrowed. “You were there for my graduation. Seeing your face in the crowd made it,” He sighed. “Just worthwhile.”

“I was so out of my depths.” Yoongi grumbled. “Wandering around a campus of a college made for Deaf people? I got so lost.”

“I figured out that I wanted to marry you that night.”

Yoongi looked at him, surprised. “You did? I never knew that.”

“Yeah,” Namjoon said. “After you said ‘fuck you, Namjoon Kim. Be happy you’re so cute. It took me forever to get down here.’” Namjoon giggled – hard enough that Hoseok raised his head to frown at him. Namjoon pecked his nose. “Hi, sleepy.” He used one hand to sign. “Are you feeling better?”

Hoseok looked at Namjoon for a long moment before he shook his head. “I’m sad.” He signed back.

“Why are you sad?” Namjoon

Hoseok gave a big sigh and then shrugged. “The pool made me sad.”

“I’m sorry, baby.” Namjoon signed. “Can I do anything to make it better?”

Hoseok sighed again. “No.” He signed and then pressed his head to Namjoon’s shoulder. Namjoon rubbed his large hand over his back and pouted a little.

Yoongi reached over and rubbed his back too. “Poor baby.”

Seokjin gave a big sigh. “Hoseok’s a volume eleven person.”

Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed at their ex-case manager. “What?”

“You know, like,” Seokjin shrugged. “You have emotions at different levels. Like, sadness, for instance.” He said. “There’s a little morose to complete devastation. Or anger – slight annoyance to borderline homicidal. Hoseok’s one of those kids that just feels,” He made a motion like he was turning up a volume knob on a stereo. “emotions at their maximum volume.”

Yoongi stared at Hoseok. He had never thought of it that way before. But, he guessed it was true. Hoseok loved fiercely. He lived passionately. His happiness was radiant and his sadness was complete desolation.

“It’s not always a bad thing,” Seokjin said. “‘Emotions make good art’ I think Van Gogh said once or something.” He looked down at Jimin in his arms. “I don’t know. I’m just a social worker for
a foster care agency.”

Yoongi smiled as he watched the sun set over the fake savannah of Disney World. “Emotions do make good art.” He looked at his husband as his baby boy in his arms. “And they make great people too.”

Chapter End Notes

Please comment

And you can find me on twt
“Daddy,” Taehyung said as he hopped down the stairs of the first and second grade building of Oliver, a piece of paper in his hands. “I got first place!”

“You did?” Yoongi squatted to hug his TaeTae, who handed him the paper. “What did you get first place in?” He scanned over the award.

“The spelling bee.” Taehyung nodded. “I spelled ‘enough’ all by myself.” He rose up on his toes. “I get to go to the next spelling bee against the other schools.”

“Wow!” Yoongi cheered and then grabbed him and gave him a big kiss. “That’s great, baby. You’re so smart. I’m so proud of you.”

Taehyung smiled his rectangular smile, beaming big and wide. He had some food on his face from lunch and a Spiderman bandaid on his arm. “You gotta come and watch, okay?”

Yoongi glanced over his shoulder and pulled Jungkook closer to him to make sure he didn’t dash off. “Of course we will.” He said. “Where is Hoseok?”

At that second, the door opened and Hoseok came down the steps slowly, his fingers hooked up into his backpack straps.

“Hi, baby.” Yoongi greeted him. “How was school?”

Hoseok shrugged, not meeting Yoongi’s eyes.

“Is everything okay?” Yoongi asked. “How was school?”

Hoseok shrugged again.

“Eyes up.” Yoongi tapped his chin to get his head to raise. “We’re talking.”

“Can we go to dance?” He signed and then pouted. “I want to go to dance.”

“Baby,” Yoongi squatted. “If you had a bad day at school, you can tell me. It’s alright. Was it schoolwork?” He ran his fingers through Hoseok’s hair to tame the wilderness a little. “Or friends?”

Hoseok’s eyes rimmed with tears and he rubbed his face on his shirt sleeve. “I don’t have friends.” He signed and then marched past Yoongi, a scowl on his face.

Yoongi sighed and raised to his feet, accepting Tae’s hand to hold as they crossed the parking
lot. Tae’s expression was disconcerted as he nibbled on his lower lip. “What happened?” Yoongi asked.

“Um,” Taehyung stammered. “Miss Candace made Seokie do the spelling bee and he started crying and was the first one to get their word wrong.” His mop of hair flopped on his head. “Everyone laughed at him, ‘cept me.” He kicked a bit of gravel with his shoe.

Yoongi rubbed his forehead under his bangs as he watched Hoseok rip open the door of the SUV and climb inside. There were specific instructions in Hoseok’s school file to not make him go up to the front of the classroom. He couldn’t imagine the teacher’s line of thinking for making Hoseok not only go up, but participate in a spelling bee? Maybe a meeting with the principal was in order.

“We have to pick up Jimin.” Yoongi signed to Hoseok who was sitting in the passenger seat as he started the car. “And then dance practice.”

The tension deflated from his eldest a little at the mention of dance. He went almost everyday – as they were gearing up for their exhibition and Hoseok had a lot of choreography to learn in a very short amount of time. But, he always came out of the studio breathless and beaming and radiant with joy. His dance teacher, Neil, always praised how quickly he was picking things up and even hired an ASL interpreter so his instructions came through clear.

Dance was becoming Hoseok’s release, his sanctuary, his heaven.

“What’s wrong with being weird?” Yoongi signed. “What’s wrong with being weird?”

Hoseok shrugged and pressed his lips flat together. “Everyone thinks I’m weird since the teacher helps me with assignments or I do tests on the computer instead of on paper.” He signed. “Quentin said that I’m ‘special ed,’ but I’m not. I just...the words…” He scowled as his fists balled. “I hate school. Why do I have to go to school? I hate it.”

Yoongi sighed. “Because, Seokie.” He signed back. “You have to learn things to fill that big brain of yours.”

He huffed. “I hate it.”

“Look,” Yoongi signed. “You have three more weeks and then it’ll be summer break. Just hold on a little, okay?”

He pouted, but nodded. “Okay.” He signed.

“I’m so over all the students who wait until the very last moment to do anything about their failing grades.” Namjoon signed as he helped Yoongi in the kitchen, spraying suds everywhere as
his hands moved with his words. “And I can’t just fail them. That would ruin our graduation percentage or something.” He huffed.

Yoongi was packing lunches for the next day. “You still could just fail them.”

“Everyone needs to stop treating ASL like it’s…English. As soon as everyone recognizes that, they’ll learn to put forth some effort in the class.” Namjoon continued his tirade.

Jungkook toddled into the kitchen, humming and singing to himself as he flapped his hands. He bumped into Namjoon’s hip and wrapped his arms around Namjoon’s leg and buried his face into his sweatpants.

“You’re a good student, huh, Kookie?” Namjoon said to their youngest. “You never procrastinate.”

Yoongi looked over to Jungkook grinning up at Namjoon with his wide smile that was now missing his two front teeth. He gathered the material of Namjoon’s sweat pants in his tiny fists.

“Can you help me with this?” Namjoon handed him a plastic sippy cup. “Can you put that in that drawer?” He pointed.

Jungkook hummed, his eyes on the sippy cup as he inspected it.

“In the drawer.” Namjoon prompted and pulled the handle out for him a little. Jungkook dropped the cup into the drawer and pushed it closed. And Namjoon gave him a big high-five. “Good job, Kookie.”

Jungkook drummed his imaginary drum and then turned around and exited the kitchen.

“I think he’s done helping.” Yoongi joked.

“Chores were never my thing either.” Namjoon grinned and sighed. “Finals are coming up.” His smile faded.

Yoongi shrugged. “I’ll get through it.” He said. “It’s only a week.”

“I just hate how they keep me there.” Namjoon turned to rest his hip on the counter. “And I know that Jimin’s appointments are stacked now.”

Yoongi glanced into the living room. Hoseok was sitting in front of Jimin’s floor sitter, trying to get him to stretch his arms to the sky with him. He would put Jimin’s hand in the air and Jimin would drop it and turn it into a wave, saying “hi,” every time. Hoseok thought it was hilarious and kept falling over on the rug with his big laughs.

Yoongi sighed. Jimin’s appointments were stacked – blood tests and x-rays and measuring for this and measuring for that before they put him under for surgery. And they were only going to get more frequent as they approached his surgery date that was in a couple of weeks. It was stressful, but Yoongi was kind of thankful for the craziness. At least when he was moving, he couldn’t stop to dwell on the fact that his son was going to have his skull cut open and his brain operated on.

“It won’t be like that forever.” Yoongi said, trying to sound optimistic, but honestly he just sounded a bit hollow in his own ears.

“Well,” Namjoon started with his voice as he plunged his hands back into the sink full of water. “I’ll definitely be there for Hoseok’s exhibition.”
“Oh, that’s great.” Yoongi smiled. “He’s going to be so excited that everyone’s there. He hasn’t had a very good couple of days at school. That’ll make him happy.”

Namjoon shook his head. “My poor boy. I just want him to have a day where he’s not…” Namjoon shrugged. “Stressed out so bad.”

Yoongi watched Hoseok clap Jimin’s hands together, Jimin’s smile wide on his face as he played with his brother. “Ho.” Jimin said. “Ho.”

Hoseok leaned forward and gave him a big kiss on the cheek. Jimin giggled his light laugh and blew a kiss back, bouncing a little. Yoongi just smiled as he watched his boys with all of their scars on their little hearts, the fallout of their pasts – wanting to pick up all of their pieces, knowing that he wouldn’t be able to completely.

A little hand pat on his hip brought him back down to earth.

“Daddy,” Tae rose up on his toes, his award from the spelling bee in his hands. “Can we put it on the fridge?”

“Sure,” Yoongi squatted and picked him up, supporting him by the legs. They walked over to the fridge and Yoongi quickly rearranged the takeout menus and Jimin’s handprint art that he did in class and Hoseok’s 100% math worksheet he did all by himself and put Tae’s award in the middle. “There we go.” Yoongi kissed his cheek.

Taehyung wrapped both of his arms around Yoongi’s neck and squeezed, his big smile on his face. “I’m in the middle.” He pointed.

“When is your next spelling bee?” Yoongi asked.

“Ummm,” Tae pressed his finger to his lips. “Friday.” He said with a nod.

Yoongi pulled out his cell phone and opened his calendar – covered in green for Jimin’s appointments. And then red for Hoseok’s appointments and dance classes. Blue for Kookie, who showed up every Tuesday for his OT appointments at the autism center and then Yoongi’s own work meetings were in pink. Namjoon’s schedule was yellow. Taehyung was assigned purple, but he only showed up once – at the end of the month for a dental appointment.

“Friday.” Yoongi opened Friday. “What time?”

“Four.” Tae made the sign too. “I think.” He wiggled and Yoongi set him down on his feet and he ran off.

“Four.” Yoongi repeated as stared at the big block of red in the evening on Friday.

Taehyung came back with a flier. “Yeah,” He said and handed it to Yoongi. “Friday, May seventh.” He said. “At four pm!” He signed and pointed. “We just learned how to tell time. I’m the best in the class.” He beamed.

Yoongi didn’t respond immediately, he just backed out the calendar to the overview page to make sure it wasn’t a mistake. But, sure enough, Hoseok’s exhibition was at the same time – Friday at four. “That’s when Hoseok’s dance recital is.” He said and frowned.

Taehyung’s smile faded off of his face. But, then he smiled again. “I can do the spelling bee and then we can watch Hoseok dance!” He said.
“Honey,” Yoongi said. “It’s at the same time.”

“Oh.” Tae said. His eyebrows furrowed. “Are you…not going to watching me do the spelling bee?”

“Well,” Yoongi put his phone down. “We might not all be there. We might have to split it up – like Dad watches you and I watch Hoseok at his dance thing. But-,”

“But,” Tae interrupted, the indent in his eyebrows deepening. “Both of you have to watch me. If I win I get a big trophy.” He put his arms in the air. “And I get to take a picture for the newspaper with my daddies.”

“What’s going on?” Namjoon asked.

“Tae’s spelling bee conflicts with Hoseok’s dance recital.”

“Well,” Namjoon squatted to get on Taehyung’s level. “Why don’t me and Chim watch you do the spelling bee and Dad and Kookie go to Hoseok’s dance recital?”

“But,” Taehyung shook his head. “You both have to be there for the picture.” He insisted. “If I win, they take a picture and I have two,” He held up two fingers. “Daddies.”

“I know, baby.” Yoongi said. “But, Hoseok’s dance recital is important too. You know how excited he is to show us his routines.”

Taehyung’s face heated red like he was going to burst into tears, but then he sniffed a big breath. “But, I have…” He said, his two fingers up in the air. “Two daddies and Seokie always gets to do stuff with both of you.”

Yoongi winced. By “stuff” he meant Hoseok’s therapy sessions where the doctor was having them sit in so Hoseok could get used to opening up to them about his past. But, Taehyung didn’t know that. And…just based off of what Hoseok had gone through, they didn’t want to be the ones that told Taehyung. If Hoseok wanted to share that part of his life with his brother, that should be up to him.

“I have two daddies.” He insisted, tears leaking down his face. “I…never had two daddies before. I’m in the spelling bee.” He wiped his face with his sleeve. “I won the award. I thought you’d be happy. I wanted to win so you would be happy. Are you not happy?”

“We’re incredibly happy.” Yoongi squatted too. “You make us so proud everyday just by being TaeTae. It’s just bad luck that your spelling bee is at the exact same time as Hoseok’s dance recital.”

“Yeah, baby.” Namjoon pulled him so that he could kiss his cheek but Taehyung pushed him away, his face flushing a deeper red. “We will be there. We just all won’t be there.”

Taehyung looked like he was going to burst into tears the way his face was screwing up and Yoongi reflexively put his hand on his shoulder to pull him into a hug. Instead of crying, he just sucked in another big breath and nodded a little. “Okay.” He said and turned around.

“Taehyung,” Namjoon started, but Yoongi put his hand on his husband to stop him. Namjoon sighed and stood up and then pulled Yoongi up by the hand. “Did we just tell our son who came to us thinking he would be loved less because he was a foster child that we are prioritizing Hoseok over him?”
“No,” Yoongi shook his head and sighed. “We just told our son who doesn’t ask for anything that we can’t do the one thing that he’s actually asking for because of schedule conflicts.” He rubbed his temples with his fingertips. “This…sucks.”

“And Hoseok would be…” Namjoon’s eyes flicked to his feet.

“Absolutely devastated if we couldn’t make it to his first dance recital?” Yoongi glanced over his shoulder. Hoseok was up on his feet now, dancing along with a music video on the television.

Namjoon winced. “Well, I can go watch Taehyung-,”

“No,” Yoongi shook his head. “I’ll do the spelling bee. I’ll…call Seokjin. See if he wants to come down with me. And I’ll take Chim.” Yoongi said. “They probably won’t have an interpreter. It would make more sense if I went.”

Namjoon nodded. “And I’ll take Kookie to Hoseok’s exhibition.”

“It’s not perfect.” Yoongi shrugged and glanced down the hallway, feeling horrible for dashing on Taehyung’s expectations. “But, it’ll have to do.”

The next morning, Taehyung didn’t come out for breakfast.

“Hoseok,” Namjoon waved with one hand as he held Jimin’s spoon with the other, trying to get a bowl of oatmeal in him before he had to leave for work. “Where is Tae?”

Hoseok had a piece of toast in his hands, crumbs stuck to his lips. He shrugged. “I don’t know.” He signed off of his forehead and then bit into his toast.

Namjoon sighed and glanced into the kitchen, where Yoongi was helping Jungkook wash his hands as he stood on the little step stool and then at Jimin, who was wringing out his silky piece of cloth as he smack his lips. Namjoon put his spoon down on the table. “I’m gonna find Tae.” He said into the kitchen. Yoongi signed back “okay,” with one hand.

He moved to the older kids’ bedroom, finding Taehyung sitting on his bed. He was sort of dressed for school, but his hair was still unbrushed and his hearing aids were out. He had something in his hands. “TaeTae,” He clicked the lights on and off. “Do you want to come out for breakfast?”

TaeTae looked up from his toy – his original tiny Iron Man action figure he came to them with. The same figure that was tucked in a little Crown Royal whisky bag. He nodded. “Yeah.” He slid off of his bed, his full lips pressed out into a pout.

Namjoon squatted and intercepted him. “Tae, baby.” He said, guessing Taehyung was still unhappy about the spelling bee. “I’m sorry about the spelling bee.” He signed and said. “I’m sorry that both daddies can’t be there, but you understand why, right?”

He looked at his toy. “Yeah.” He nodded.

Namjoon rubbed his shoulders. “And you know how sad Hoseok would be if none of his daddies showed up to his dance recital, right?”

Taehyung’s lip pouted out farther and he dropped his eyes to his toy. He gave a big sigh.
“Yeah.” He nodded.

“You’re being a good brother by-,”

Taehyung’s lip quivered. “But, why?” He interrupted.

“Why what?” Namjoon’s eyebrows furrowed in confusion.

“Why do I always have to be the good brother?” Taehyung said, his eyes trained aggressively on his toy. He squeezed it. “Why can’t I…” He let his sentence drop and wiped his face. “Mr. Jensen said that ‘my socks may not match, but my feet are always warm, so be grateful for what I have and stop wishing for what I don’t.’” He recited. "But, I wish that my daddies would be at the spelling bee. I wished it on all the stars last night before bed."

Namjoon sighed and let his butt hit the floor, since he assumed he was going to be there a second. “Taehyung,” He let his hands glide down his son’s arms. “Do you remember what I told you on your first day here with us?”

He shook his head.

“If you need anything, let us know.” He wiped his face. “Anything. A hug. Someone to talk to. Even just…” He shrugged. “A couple of moments of being selfish.”

“Selfishness is a thief of joy.”

“Your previous family needs to stop reading Chicken Soup for the Soul.” Namjoon rolled his eyes, not believing for a second that his first grader even knew what that meant. “Now, your brothers have a lot of needs. They rely on us to do a lot of things for them because they can’t or it’s really hard for them or whatever.”

Tae nodded. “Chim’s hurt brain and Jungkook’s autisms.”

“That’s right.” Namjoon winced a little. “And Hoseok’s…everything.”

Tae nodded.

“You don’t need us to do things for you like they do, but that doesn’t stop you from having wants and needs, Tae.” He played with his hair. “And just because their needs are…” He shrugged. “A little louder than yours, does not make them less important.” Namjoon shook his head. “And you don’t always have to be the ‘good brother’ if you don’t want, because you know what?”

“What?”

“You’re automatically the good brother.” Namjoon said. “Because what makes you a good brother is that even though you have needs and wants you always put others before yourself. And you just do it. Nobody asks you to. Nobody forces you. You just love your brothers so much that you just…” Namjoon shrugged. “…look to make them happy all of the time.”

“Yeah?” Tae smiled a little. “I like making them happy.”

“Absolutely,” Namjoon said and rubbed his belly.

“What about…” He sniffed. “The spelling bee?”

Namjoon sighed a little, feeling his heart clench. “Well, it falls at the same time Hoseok’s dance recital does.” He said. “If we both show up for your spelling bee and not Hoseok’s dance
recital, he’ll probably be really, really sad and probably cry.” Namjoon said.

“I don’t want to make Hoseok sad.” Tae frowned.

“I know you don’t.” Namjoon said. “Now, one daddy and Chim can go to the spelling bee to watch you and the other can go with Kookie to watch Hoseok dance and then we can meet up afterwards for pizza and I know that’s not exactly what you want, but it kind of works out for the both of you.” Namjoon said. “So, it’s really your choice, baby - both daddies at your spelling bee and no daddies go to Hoseok’s dance recital or one parent goes to both and then pizza.”

Tae sighed and looked at his action figure. “I guess,” His little shoulder shrugged. “I guess one daddy is okay if the other is watching Hoseok so he doesn’t get sad.” He shook his head. “And then we can get pizza afterwards.”

“Oh, yeah.” Namjoon smiled and kissed his head. “Pizza is the most important part.”

Tae’s wide, square smile stretched over his face. “Can we go to Peter Piper?” He widened his eyes a little.

“Yeah,” Namjoon conceded. “We could probably do that.” He said. “And Tae, if you need anything - no matter how busy we seem with your brothers - you know your daddies are always here for you. Don’t ever feel selfish about going to us. Making sure our babies our happy and protected and loved is our most important jobs.”

“Okay, Daddy.” Tae stepped forward and wrapped his arms around Namjoon’s shoulders.

“I love you, my sweet angel.” Namjoon said as he clutched the little soul that held part of his heart.

Chapter End Notes

Please Comment!

And you can find me on twt
Namjoon felt very out of place in the performance hall dressing room surrounded by little girls wearing a lot of makeup and their mothers who were wearing even more makeup than their daughters. There was a haze of face setting powder and glitter in the air, but above that an electricity. Anticipation. Excitement. Determination.

And for everyone, but especially for his little boy, nerves.

“What if I get a move wrong?” Hoseok asked, his lip caught between his teeth. He had started chewing on his lower lip when they entered the expensive-looking performance venue that was situated in downtown LA, surrounded by tall skyscrapers with gigantic movie posters painted on the sides. It was the same hall that LA ballet performed at.

“Honey,” Namjoon signed back - for the sixth time that night. “You’re going to do great.”

Hoseok was sitting in a dressing room chair with his knees to his chest, next to a girl that was getting her hair curled by her mom. Everyone was dressed very simply - the girls in black and the boys in white shirt with black pants. Not a sequin to be found anywhere.

Namjoon turned right before Jungkook touched someone’s makeup palette that was sitting on the counter and intercepted him, pulling him close to Namjoon’s body. Someone shook a can of hairspray and Jungkook winced and started to stim next to his ears. He didn’t have a ton of time.

“Hoseokie,” He said and motioned around. “I have no idea how to dance. But, I have seen you dance.” He started. “And I am absolutely, positively sure that you are probably the best dancer I’ve ever seen. I’m pretty sure you dance in your sleep.”

Seokie’s face lit up a little. “You’re not just saying that because you’re my Dad and you have to?”

Namjoon pulled Jungkook up into his arms and settled him on his hip. “You’re going to do phenomenal.” He said. “And if you get a little scared on stage, just remember that I am right there cheering you on, no matter what.” He intercepted Jungkook’s flapping hand before he got punched in the face. “Jungkook’s not taking this room well, so we are going to find our seat.”

Hoseok nodded, his eyes widening a little with anxiety again. “Okay.” He signed back, little and small. “Sit somewhere where I can see you.”

Namjoon bent at the waist and kissed his head. “Remember,” He said. “The most important thing is to have fun.”

Hoseok nodded, his eyes little galaxies set in his face. “Okay.” He signed.

Namjoon scooted from the room as a dance mom came over and started patting Hoseok’s face with powder, getting Jungkook out of the fog of scents and noises that were triggering him. Namjoon
could feel by how tight Jungkook’s fists were around his shirt, that it would probably be a good idea get him calmed down before going into the crowded performance hall.

Namjoon found the front lobby - empty now except for the usher that was handing out programs - and set Jungkook on his feet. He pulled the light up toy he brought from the small backpack he brought and handed it to his youngest and then took a seat on an empty bench.

“You ready to watch Hoseok perform?” Namjoon asked his youngest as he stomped around in circles, his eyes on his light up toy. “There’s going to be a bunch of music for you.”

“Music.” Jungkook turned and leaned on Namjoon’s knee, he held up his spinner for inspection. “Watch music?”

“Well, sort of.” Namjoon said. “But, instead of on a screen, it’ll be real life.” He said. “And it’ll be your brother, Seokie.”

Jungkook’s nose scrunched up with his smile.

“You like music, huh? That’s your favorite thing in the whole world.”

Jungkook nodded, his mop of black hair falling in his face. “I like music.” He signed and then clutched his spinner toy to his chest.

Namjoon sighed and pushed his son’s bangs out of his face. He had never really formed that connection to music that Yoongi seemed to. But, his son did. His severely deaf son found dance. He found something he loved, even though the world told him he wouldn’t love moving to music because he was deaf. Namjoon was so proud of him.

He glanced up to some movement - finding the bald guy that he recognized as Hoseok’s dance instructor. He was on his phone, pacing around, a determined look on his face.

Namjoon suddenly had an idea. He got to his feet and approached the guy as he finished his phone call. “I’m sorry,” Namjoon started. “I know you’re probably ridiculously busy. But, I’m Hoseok’s dad. I was wondering if I could talk to you a second?”

“I am ridiculously busy.” He said and deposited his phone in his pocket. “But, if you make it quick.”

“I actually have a tiny request…” Namjoon smiled.

“What about,” Seokjin asked as Taehyung hung from his forearm, causing all of his back muscles to pop through his polo as he struggled to hold up his weight. “Could?”


“Good job.” Seokjin said. “Blackberry.”


“You’re doing great.” Yoongi said as he pushed Jimin’s wheelchair next to the set of chairs that they secured on the out of edge of a row. They were in a different’s school gymnasium that had a stage to one side. The curtains had been pulled back and a line of student chairs had been set up to one side and a mic sat in the middle. “You’re really going to be some fierce competition.”
“If I win,” Taehyung said to Seokjin. “I get to win a big trophy!” He pointed to the table set up front of the stage where a bunch of trophies were sitting like guarding soldiers.

“Not if you win.” Seokjin corrected. “When you win. You have to have confidence.”

“Con-fi-dence.” Taehyung repeated. “What’s that?”

“It’s when…” Seokjin said. “You believe really hard in something.” He touched his chin. “Like, I am confident in my dashing good looks. I believe really hard that I am very handsome.”

Tae’s face scrunched with his smile. “You’re silly.”

“I’m not silly.” Seokjin said with a fake gasp. “I’m confident.”

Yoongi smiled at the interaction and then turned his attention to Jimin, who had a little blanket wrapped around his body because he had woken up that morning with a red nose and puffy cheeks and the sniffles.

Yoongi tucked him in and then played with his hair. They had another appointment tomorrow for another blood draw. The first showed that his white blood cell count was too low…or something. And then he had another x-ray. And meeting with different specialists. Yoongi understood the need to make sure that everything was 100% before surgery, but he knew that Jimin was starting to grow fatigued of all of the appointments. And frankly, so was he.

“Daddy,” Tae said excitedly, his hands finding Yoongi’s leg. “You got cheer the loudest.”

“We will.” Yoongi squeezed his hand. Tae had dressed himself that morning - choosing an eclectic outfit that included a page boy hat that he was wearing backwards and a sweater that was way too big and looked like it was pulled out a 90’s sitcom. “Make sure to take your time, okay. Don’t rush.”

Taehyung nodded. “Okay.”

There was an announcement from the MC that the spelling be was going to start. Tae’s group of first and second graders were up first. “You’re up, TaeTae.” Yoongi grabbed his shoulders and gave him a big kiss on his cheek. “Remember, whether you win or lose at the spelling bee, you always win at being Taehyungie.”

He giggled. “Okay, Daddy.” He said. “But, I’m gonna win.”

Seokjin took a seat next to Yoongi. “That’s what I’m talking about.” He said and made a fist. “Confidence.”

Tae turned to Jimin. He ran his fingers through his hair and Jimin’s gave a little “hrrmph,” noise from being disturbed. “I’m gonna put my trophy in your room, Chim.”

“Chim.” Chim said back, his stuffy nose making it sound like “Chimb.” He freed a hand. “Tae.” His head tipped so he could see.

“I love you, Chim.” Tae pecked his head and skipped up the stairs onto the stage, taking a seat in an empty chair. He kicked his legs and waved at Yoongi, beaming wide. Yoongi waved back.

The MC started, calling kids in alphabetical order by their last names to the mic. Yoongi and Seokjin watched the first couple of kids spell their words. One kid got their first word wrong and was dismissed, his light-up sneakers *clunk-clunk-clunking* down the steps from the stage to the gym.
Taehyung was called next and he skipped the mic, raising on his toes a little to get to it.

“And what is your name and school?” The MC said and Tae looked at the interpreter.

“My name is Taehyung, uh, Kim.” Tae said into the microphone. “I’m from Oliver School for the Deaf.”

“Your word,” The MC started. “Is ‘begin.’”


Jimin shifted in his seat, his eyebrows furrowing in confusion. “Tae.” He said, his eyes roving around and his head tipping.

“That’s you brother, Chim.” Yoongi said. “You can hear your brother really loud on the mic, huh?”


They finished the rest of the students for that round. Two messed up their words, leaving ten students. The second round began and the words got increasingly harder. When it was Tae’s turn, Jimin perked up again at his brother’s voice echoing through the large room they were sitting in. “Tae.” He said.

“He’s up there, baby-,”

“Tae!” Jimin called, pushing the blanket off his lap.

Yoongi watched the heads of the audience sitting around them whip around at the disturbance. Yoongi wrapped his hand around Jimin’s. “Jimin, shhh.” He bent over and pick up the blanket Jimin had pushed to the floor. “Shhh, baby.”

“Tae!” Jimin called again, his face going pinched as he tried to crane his head to see. “Tae! Ball!”

More people were staring, some leaned over to whisper into their neighbor’s ear. Yoongi generally didn’t care anymore about starers. Jimin was different, he was going to get looks. Humans were naturally curious about people who were different from them. It was just always how it was going to be.

But, Jimin was almost yelling for his brother. Jimin yelled for his brothers at home too, but he was answered there. This time, Tae was busy and Jimin had to wait.

Yoongi pulled out Mr. Ba and a sippy cup of apple juice, hoping that would distract him enough to get him through the spelling bee. “Baby,” Yoongi said and place his arm around his bear and tried to coax the mouthpiece of the sippy in his mouth. “Tae’s busy, okay? He’ll be down in a second.”

Jimin’s already flushed face grew redder and he pushed his favorite bear out of his chair and waved the sippy out of his face. “Tae!” He called, groaning. “Tae!”

Yoongi pulled the frame of his wheelchair so that it was facing him and then got close to his son’s face. “Jimin, baby. Shhhhh.” He said as he petted his hair back. “Shhh.”

Jimin had to stop to focus on Yoongi, his mouth slightly open and drool dribbling down his
Yoongi tried the sippy again. Jimin just groaned like Yoongi was the last person he wanted to be interacting with on earth. He seethed a little through his teeth, spraying saliva on his and Yoongi’s shirt. “Tae!” He screamed. “Tae!”

And then he picked his head up and slammed it back on his headrest.

Yoongi felt his stomach drop. Jimin only slammed his head twice on his head rest of out frustration since Yoongi and Namjoon found him - once in car awhile ago and once in the grocery store. It was his way of communicating that he was over it. However, both times he didn’t have an aneurysm in his brain that was ballooning out and needed to be operated on. Yoongi wasn’t a physician, but he knew - probably - that slamming one’s head against semi-hard surface was not healthy.

“I’m gonna,” Yoongi stood up. “Walk with him in the back.” He whispered to Seokjin.

“Okay.” Seokjin nodded. “Do you want me to go with?”

“No,” Yoongi said. “I’m just going to see if the motion helps.” He unclicked the handbrakes of Jimin’s wheelchair and pushed his son - who was now grumbling and moaning - to behind the audience near the door.

Taehyung’s eyes squinted on where Yoongi had been and then searched around when he saw that their seats were empty. Yoongi waved to get his attention and he smiled when he found Yoongi and Jimin, waving back. He hopped up to the mic when it was his turn, spelling the next word perfectly.

“Tae!” Jimin cried as Taehyung’s voice echoed around the auditorium. “Tae!”

“Shhhh.” Yoongi glanced around at the people who were turning their heads to look over their shoulders. Some people leaned over to whisper. One kid even pointed and asked his mom “why is that kid making those noises?” Yoongi felt his blood percolate in his veins.

Yoongi inhaled and refocused on Tae as Jimin started to pitch a tantrum from his wheelchair, wailing loudly with his fists clenched. He pushed and pulled Jimin’s wheelchair, avoided stares and prayed that every kid in Taehyung’s spelling bee group suddenly forgot the English language.

Namjoon chose the front row front row, right where Hoseok could see him and Jungkook.

The stage was pretty large and the hall itself seemed expensive. Namjoon was thoroughly impressed. He was even more impressed as he watched a couple of stagehands remove the speakers from where they were mounted on poles on either side of the stage and place them on the floor - probably for Hoseok’s sake.

He was also impressed with the ASL interpreter that had gotten up on stage with Hoseok’s dancing instructor.

“Good evening, all.” The instructor said into the microphone in the middle of the stage and the interpreter signed his words next to him. “My name is Neil Dannick. I am the owner and operator of Stardancers in Pasadena. Welcome to the Stardancers’ Exhibition, kicking off this season of dance competition and highlighting what we do here - which is dance and have fun.” He smiled. “This is
Linda, my ASL interpreter. She’s here because in my first group - The Sunshines, which is my six to eight year old class - we have a dancer who is deaf and who uses sign language to talk.”

Namjoon watched the interpreter, but didn’t miss how Neil’s lips hitched up into a little smile.

“If his dad - who is also deaf - approached me in the lobby and asked me ‘did you know that the Deaf have their own way to clap?’” Neil started to clap his hands, “And I guess I never really thought about it before. But, what is applause?” He continued to clap. “It’s the audience’s way of telling a performer they did a good job. The louder the applause, the better you did, right?” He stopped clapping. “But, if you’re deaf, you can’t hear clapping. How would you know if you did a good job?”

Namjoon started to smile too as he watched Neil hold up his palms to the audience.

“You clap like this.” He started to shimmy them like excited jazz hands. The interpreter did the same and so did a couple of people in the audience. “Jazz hands. As a dancer, it made sense to me that this would be the best way to clap.” Namjoon laughed at the face the interpreter made for that last bit. “So if you please remember, please clap like this if you think our next group did a great job at their first performance of the season.”

Namjoon shifted as Jungkook started to rock in his seat, his eyes watching the spotlights as they started to move around as a group of schoolchildren toddled out on stage in a mob. It was mostly girls and then one little boy with red hair and then Hoseok.

Hoseok’s eyes widened with fear as he took the crowd gathering in front of the stage. Namjoon waved and Hoseok caught his eyes.

“You're going to do great.” Namjoon signed at him, his chest filling with a fond warmth. “I love you.”

Hoseok’s made the sign for “i love you,” back with one hand as he took his position, relief relaxing him a bit.

The stage lights dimmed and everyone froze as the music started. Namjoon knew the music had started by the way the speakers thrummed through his sneakers. Jungkook clapped his hands and his smile stretched wide over his face at the music swirling around him.

Namjoon watched his little boy, his sweet, beautiful boy that came to them knowing 2 words. The little boy that screamed to get people’s attention. The little boy was dirty and malnourished and addicted to methamphetamine. The little boy he helped grieve with the loss of his first parents to loving his as his parent. The little boy that needed help stitching up the wounds of his past so that he could focus on his future...

Dance.

And he watched the way his little boy, his sweet, beautiful little boy lit up like a candle flame as he danced - his movements fluid like water. His passion illuminated his spirit, lighting him from the inside out. He was blindingly brilliant. This was no longer the little boy that screamed to get people’s attention. The little boy was dirty and malnourished and addicted to methamphetamine. The little boy he helped grieve with the loss of his first parents to loving his as his parent. The little boy that needed help stitching up the wounds of his past so that he could focus on his future.

Hoseok was just the little boy with a soul on fire for what he loved. And what he loved was...

Dance.
“Can I help you in some way?”

Yoongi whipped his head around to a middle-aged lady wearing a #SPED t-shirt. He wondered for a split second if she was summoned by someone or just sensed that there was a disabled child’s parent in distress and came flying in like a special education Batman.

“I’m, um,” Yoongi winced a particularly high note in Jimin’s wailing. Almost C8 on the piano. “I’m okay.” He glanced at the stage. “My son’s in the spelling bee and his brother is unhappy that he can’t see him at the moment.”

“Oh,” She started to look around. “Well, I can see if-,”

“We’re okay,” Yoongi said quickly. “He’s just tired and fussy and a little sick and-,”

“Tae!” Jimin shrieked, his fussiness morphing into crying.

“He’s not having a good day, is he?” The teacher pouted at him and then glanced on the stage. “Here let’s get him to the front. Maybe that’ll help.”

“Oh, well’s he’s being loud and I don’t-,”

“Nonsense,” She said. “He needs his brother. We can do something about that.”

Yoongi followed the teacher down the middle aisle. And she sat Yoongi down in an empty chair in the front row. Yoongi wasn’t sure if Jimin could see Tae even when he was standing at the microphone. But, there were only three kids now so, if anything, the crowd could endure another couple of minutes as the group finished up and Yoongi could get Jimin outside.

Yoongi watched Tae take the microphone - hopping like a bunny all the way across the stage. The MC chuckled, slightly amused and then gave Taehyung his word. “Lemonade.”

Tae squinted at the MC. “Lemonade?”

“That’s your word.” The MC said. “Lemonade.”

“Oh,” Tae’s lips pouted out.

“You can do it, baby.” Yoongi cheered lowly, trying to get Mr. Ba in Jimin’s arms. “You can do it.”


“Correct.”

Tae danced back to his seat and the next two children went. One struck out on ‘beautiful,’ and the other got theirs with ‘campfire.’ Tae hopped back to the mic when his turn came up and he was given ‘accident.’ Which he got perfect.

The last opponent was at the mic - a girl with two, long braids. She stood one foot on top of the other as she waited for her word.
“Your word,” The MC said. “Is ‘building.”


“That is incorrect.” He said. “B-U-I-L-D-I-N-G is the correct spelling. Taehyung’s turn.” He said and the little girl sat down. “Now, if Taehyung gets this word right, he would win the first and second grade LA county private school association regional spelling bee.”

Tae took the mic. His eyes squinted down at Yoongi and Jimin and he frowned as he took into Jimin sobbing from his seat, repeating “Tae. Tae. Tae.” His fist opening and closing.

“You got it!” Seokjin cheered with a big clap from his row.

“Your word is,” The MC said. “Brother.”

But, Taehyung wasn’t watching the MC. He was squatting and hopping off the stage, the mic in his hand. “Chim,” He said, his voice amplified by the mic. “It’s okay.” He grabbed both of Jimin’s hands and put them on his his cheeks. “It’s me. It’s TaeTae.”

Jimin cries ceased as he focused on Tae, his fingers squishing Tae’s cheeks. His lips turned up. “Tae.” Jimin said and put both of his hands over his face. “Boo!” He giggled, his nose still stuffed up.

Yoongi glanced at the MC, who was looking at Tae and all the rest of the audience taking in this as their conversation was captured in the mic. Yoongi turned to Tae. “Baby,” He said. “Your word is brother.” He signed.

“Brother?” Tae asked in the mic.

Yoongi nodded.

“Brother,” He said and smiled. “B-R-O-T-H-E-R. Brother.” He petted Jimin’s head, adoration in his eyes. Yoongi felt a big surge of pride in his chest, making his light and airy as he took in two pieces of his heart smiling at each other.

“That’s correct.” The MC said. “You are the winner, Taehyung of the first and second grade LA county private school association regional spelling bee.”

“Did I win?” Taehyung asked Yoongi, his eyes wide.

“We will take a short ten minute break and move on to the third, fourth and fifth spelling bee.” The MC said.

“Yes, baby,” Yoongi grabbed him around the waist and squeezed him. “You did.”

A teacher quickly came up and traded the expensive mic for Tae’s trophy. Tae hopped around singing “I’m the winner! I’m the winner!” with the trophy above his head. He danced up to Yoongi. “Look, I’m the winner! I got the trophy!”

“You did!” Yoongi said. “You did so well, TaeTae.” He pressed a kiss to his head. “You’re so smart. I didn’t have a doubt in my mind that you weren’t going to win.”

“YAAAAHHHHHHHHH!” Seokjin came flying up from his row. “That’s what I’m talking about. Confidence!” He cheered. “Good job, Taehyung! You did great!”

“I won the trophy!” Tae said, showing off his prize.
“Tae!” Jimin sang, his arms out. Tae threw himself onto Jimin’s chest and Yoongi jerked as he watched the trophy narrowly miss Jimin’s eye. Jimin giggled as he sat nose-to-nose with Tae.

“I’m gonna put it in your room.” Tae said with a smile. “Since you’re my brother.”

Jemin just beamed back - opened mouth and drooling, his eyes sparkling - at the person that was his prize in life.

“Hoseok was amazing,” Namjoon said, tearing up again as he pulled out his phone to show Yoongi the video he got. He started crying about twelve seconds into Hoseok’s performance and didn’t stop until after got out into the hallway. Hoseok was alive and free and bright. Bright. And Namjoon was so excited that Hoseok found the thing that set his soul on fire.

Seokjin handed him a napkin to use as a tissue. They were in Peter Piper - Hoseok and Taehyung and Jungkook in the arcade area where Yoongi and Namjoon could keep an eye on them. Hoseok was still in his dance pants and Taehyung held his trophy like a teddy bear and they were both beaming and flushed and beautiful as they had fun playing games.

Yoongi inhaled. “Do I want to sob in the middle of Peter Piper Pizza?”

“Yes.” Seokjin and Namjoon both said at once.

Namjoon wrapped his arm around Yoongi as he hit play and watched their son dance. It took slightly longer for Yoongi to cry - eighteen seconds. But, his body popped with a little sob and his eyes teared up. Namjoon rubbed his shoulder.

“He’s so…” Yoongi signed. “Beautiful.” He sniffled and pulled Jimin closer by his wheelchair. He had started to nod off after his breakdown at the spelling bee. His face was flushed red and his lips and eyelids were red and swollen, but he had a smile on his face - knowing exactly where his TaeTae was. “Beautiful.” He repeated, his face heating red.

“Taehyung did so well.” Seokjin said, a big smile over his face. “I just showed him a little bit of confidence goes a long way.” He pursed his lips out and nodded.

“He did.” Yoongi smiled. “He had a ton of fun, too.”

Namjoon looked into the arcade, where his boys were playing an arcade game together, slapping buttons in tandem, their eyes focused on the screen. Jungkook was wiggling his butt a little as he stimmed and watched the screen with them. Jimin had tucked his hand under his chin as he sighed in his sleep. *His boys.*

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!

And you can find me on twt
Flowers, Bubbles, and Birds

Chapter Notes

Chapter warnings: r-word, panic attack

Namjoon donated money to a Deaf school for their art program the other day! To those who commented or tagged me saying that they thought about this story when they read that, THANK YOU. It means the world to be thought of when BTS does things to better the world around them. To have my story correlated with their humanitarianism is everything to me!<3

For this chapter, we are switching it up again!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Hoseok felt his tongue catch in his teeth as he very carefully tied a dandelion stem with a wildflower stem. He pulled the two ends of his little knot taut and then inspected the ring of flowers he made before setting it on his head like a crown. He stretched out his legs on the little patch of grass he claimed and dug the bottle of bubbles he snuck out in his pants pocket.

He surveyed the playground. It was recess for the first and second grade classes. He spotted Taehyung, playing pirates with Melody and a couple of other kids on top of the jungle gym. He eyeballed Carson underneath the jungle gym with his friends, digging at the ground.

Hoseok was sitting in the flowers by himself. Melody had been sitting with him, but Taehyung lured her away with a game. He tried to get Hoseok to play too, but Hoseok didn’t want to go anywhere near Carson because Carson was mean so instead he made chains out of the wildflowers growing next to the fence and sat by himself.

Hoseok opened his bottle of bubbles and blew through the wand. A couple of tiny bubbles flew towards the sky and he watched them float up. He always liked the colors of bubbles. They were clear, but at the edges, you can see pink and purple and blues swirling together. You had to look closely to see them, at a specific angle.

Hoseok brought his finger up to a bubble that was moving slower than the rest of them - floating instead of flying up towards the sky in a little group. He delicately caught it on his finger and brought it to his face so he could see all the colors of the bubble. The paintings of rainbows that you couldn’t see unless you looked hard.

The bubble was popped however, when there was a suddenly arm striking out into his Hoseok’s hair, pulling it a little as his flower crown was pulled from his head. He looked up to Carson as he held Hoseok’s flowers in his hand. “What are you doing?” He signed with his other hand.

Hoseok pressed his lips into a thin line. “Give me back my flowers.”

“Why?” Carson asked. “So you can wear them in your hair like a girl?”

Hoseok’s cheeks flamed with anger. “I’ll tell Miss Candace on you that you stole them.”
Carson ripped the flower crown in his hands, separating the heads from the stems and tearing it to pieces. Hoseok felt tears burn in his eyes as he watched the ruined flowers fall out of his hands onto the ground. “I don’t care.” He signed after dusting his hands off.

Hoseok gritted his bottle of bubbles in his fist, fighting the way his guts were tying into knots. He sniffed and started to scan around for a teacher or playground monitor.

“Are you going to tell on me?” Carson continued to taunt. “Cry to the teacher like a girl?”

“Why don’t you just leave me alone?” Hoseok rubbed his face.

Carson eyes just found the bottle of bubbles in Hoseok’s hands. “Give me your bubbles and I’ll leave you alone.”

“No.” Hoseok argued. “These are my bubbles. I brought them from home.”

Carson’s hand snatched out and grabbed Hoseok’s wrist. Hoseok felt the knots in stomach clench violently at being grabbed and he tried to jerk away. But, Carson was bigger and managed to pull the bottle of bubbles out of Hoseok’s hand, spilling a bunch on the ground.

Hoseok was crying hard now. “Give them back. They’re mine.”

Taehyung barreled up at that moment, followed by Melody. He pushed Carson back - actually being able to match him in size. “Carson,” He signed. “Go be a butthead somewhere else.”

“Hoseok is a pussy.” Carson signed back.

“Don’t use that word.” Taehyung stepped forward, his cheeks puffing. “It’s rude.”

“I’m not a pussy.” Hoseok argued. “I’m not.”

A playground monitor came up to their group. “What’s going on?”

“Carson broke my flower crown and stole my bubbles.” Hoseok signed, wiping his face of tears. “I wasn’t doing anything and he just started messing with me.” Hoseok tried to get the tears to stop, but more fell down his face as he grew upset again.

“Carson, go sit on the green bench.” The playground monitor pointed, taking the bubbles out of his hand. “And Hoseok, you know you’re not allowed to bring toys on the playground.”

“I know.” Hoseok sniffled.

“Go sit on blue bench until the bell.” She said. “I’ll give this to your teacher and she’ll decide whether you get them back.”

Hoseok looked at Tae, who signed a quick “I’m sorry,” on his chest and then started to walk to the benches were forced to sit on if you got in trouble at recess. He bent down on the way and picked up his ruined flower crown, hoping to salvage it as he waited until the bell.

He sat down, the knots in his stomach twisting really fast like the washing machine at home, blending all of Hoseok’s insides together until he felt like he could be sick. He tried to focus on his flowers - picking off bent petals and retying the stems together - as his hands shook with anger and fear over what his teacher was going to say about the bubbles.

He felt his skin prickle and glanced over to the other bench where Carson was sitting. He wasn’t crying like Hoseok was. He was smiling like the whole thing made him laugh. He signed
“retard,” at Hoseok on his forehead and Hoseok aggressively trained his eyes back on his flower crown, blinking through tears as he quickly got it back together.

He examined it. It was broken and trampled, but the flowers were still pretty. It wasn’t as perfect as before but the colors were still bright and the flowers still looked happy. Flowers couldn’t feel sad or angry or have to deal with bullies. They were just colorful and happy.

Hoseok wished that he could be a flower.

“Carson was being mean.” Hoseok signed, his gaze averted so he wouldn’t have to look Miss Candace in the eyes. Carson was the one who started it. Carson was the one who took his bubbles. Carson was the one that destroyed his flowers. It was Carson that should be getting punished, not Hoseok. “He came over and started picking on me for no reason.” He signed as he fidgeted in the chair that sat next to Miss Candace’s desk.

Hoseok glanced up into Miss Candace’s face, into her eyes. They shown with disappointment and anger. She was mad at Hoseok. He could see it in her face. He glanced at her hands and felt the knots in his stomach tighten and tighten, making him feel like a towel being wrung out. He tried to take in a breath, but the knots wouldn’t let him. He felt a surge of fear and gripped his seat and tried to count like Dr. Greene had been teaching him to do.

“And I’ll talk to Carson about that.” She signed back, the bottle of bubbles on her desk. “But, Hoseok, you know you’re not allowed to bring toys out of the classroom.”

“I know.” He dropped his eyes. “I’m sorry.”

She picked up the bubble bottle and handed it to Hoseok. “Don’t do it again, okay?”

Hoseok nodded and gripped the bottle, fighting tears again. He slid out of his chair and went to his desk that was clustered with Taehyung’s, Melody’s and Matthew’s. He sat down and looked at the math worksheet that had been passed out and almost started crying harder. He glanced at Tae’s worksheet and saw that he was almost done. Hoseok slumped in his seat and stared the problems that everyone seemed to be able to figure out but him.

And it wasn’t that he didn’t understand. He understood subtraction means taking away and addition means giving. He understood when the teacher worked it out on the board. He understood when he watched her figure out the problem with the dry eraser marker. It was just when he sat down and had to work the problems himself. It was like the numbers started to bleed together and he forgot which one goes up and which one goes down. And…

Retard.

Hoseok glanced at Carson, who sat in a desk against the wall by himself because he got in trouble picking on Victoria. Carson called him a retard all the time. But, Hoseok wasn’t retarded. He was smart. He just needed more time to figure things out and put words together and lots of room so he could write his letters big enough for his eyes to be happy. He needed time. He never got enough time and it made the knots twist when he couldn’t figure things out fast enough.

Retard.

He looked at the bubbles in his hand. He unscrewed the lid and pulled out the wand. He blew through the opening, watching one perfect bubble come out. He caught it on his fingertip so he could
look at the colors. The colors that were so pretty, but you couldn’t see them unless you were looking really hard. Each one looked like each other at first glance, but they were actually very different from each other in their own way.

Hoseok wished he could be a bubble.

“Chim,” Hoseok said out loud. “Chim.” He said the words slowly, trying to get the sounds to fit together. Sometimes he got the sounds wrong, though. So, he had to focus really hard to talk. He preferred sign language.

Jimin looked mad as he sat in his chair. He was wearing a big sweater and was chewing on the sleeve and his nose was running. His dad, Yoongi, pinched the snot from his nostril and wiped it on his pants.

Hoseok looked up at his Dad, dressed in all black including a black beanie even though it was warm outside and then he looked at the Target logo that sat on the big building. He glanced at the bench that sat outside the front doors. Before his dads, had to sit on one one time all alone with a fast food bag full of rocks. His mom just…left him there. He was so scared being all alone. He cried really hard. And then a stranger came up and ripped the bag from his hand and shoved a different one against his chest.

Hoseok shifted closer to Dad when he felt the knots tighten and turn in his middle. He looped his fingers through his belt loop where he knew it was safe and watched as he pulled Jimin’s hoodie sleeves past his hands so he couldn’t scratch at his nose that was all red like Rudolph. Jimin wiggled his arms, making his sleeves fly around.

“I know,” Dad said, brushing Jimin’s hair back. “It sucks. We’ll go really fast.” Dad had an equally as red nose.

Hoseok looked at Jungkook, who was playing with Taehyung and then walked towards the entrance clinging to his Dad’s leg. He tried focusing on other things beside the bench - like the trees and the big red balls and the pigeons. There was a pigeon that was picking at a piece of popcorn. He flew away when Jungkook ran to chase him.

Hoseok watched him flap his wings and disappear quick as lightning. He wondered what it felt like to fly. He flew in an airplane and that was fun, but he wasn’t outside. He wondered if the bird was scared to be that high.

“We just need a couple of things.” His dad signed as he pulled out basket and hung it from the handle of Jimin’s wheelchair. He rubbed his face and then they headed to the medicine section where he pulled out the purple liquid stuff off the shelf and put in the basket.

Hoseok glanced up at the counter where the pharmacist was. Sometimes him and his momma would go to a bunch of different pharmacies in a day. Always for a white box. Sometimes they would drive really far to get it.

“Dad,” Tae signed and patted their dad’s hip. “Can we go to the toy aisle? I don’t want anything.” He signed. “I just want to look.”

“Jimin is sick, baby. We gotta get him home.” Yoongi signed back with one hand as he
pushed the wheelchair with the other. “Next time, okay?” He coughed into the crook of his arm.

Hoseok let go of his Dad’s leg to make sure Jungkook was keeping up, since his legs were smaller and sometimes he stopped to look at his toy instead of walking with everyone else.

“Come on, Kookie.” Hoseok signed and grabbed Jungkook’s wrist.

Jungkook hopped like a bunny for the first couple of steps and then held up the iPad he was carrying. “Music.” He signed and then showed the iPad to Hoseok.

“That’s cool.” Hoseok signed back, but Jungkook’s eyes were already back on the iPad as he played a music video.

Hoseok let go of him and he trotted up to Taehyung. Hoseok walked slowly behind everyone else. He rose on his toes and put his hands over his head and started to dance the new choreography that he was learning in dance class. They had a competition next week and Hoseok was doing a duet with Kristy. Neil said that it was “40s swing-inspired” and while Hoseok didn’t know what that meant, he liked that it was really energetic and fun.

Hoseok leaned side to side with his arms out as he ran through the moves in his head. There was a part where he swung them like a bird. He imagined himself taking flight like the pigeon - dancing in the sky, not scared of anything, just being free. He wondered where he would go? To the sun? To space? In the clouds? Across the whole ocean?

He put his arms down when he realized that he had been left behind, that everyone had disappeared. “Daddy,” He said out loud, the knots in his stomach twisting and twisting. He broke out in a sweat as he looked around, trying to find his daddy and his brothers. “Daddy.” He started to tear up as he wrung out his hands.

He stood in the middle of the white tile, feeling like the walls started to grow outwards, like he was caught in a big room and something was going to come out and grab him. A weight dropped on his head and his shoulders and his chest and he started to breathe really hard. Did they leave him? Did something happen? Why did they leave? Didn’t they want to wait for him? Where are they?

Where are they?

Something grabbed his wrist and he jerked and turned to Taehyung. “Where is Dad?” He demanded, his fingers fumbling.

“He’s down this aisle.” Tae signed back and pulled. “Come on slowpoke.”

Hoseok inhaled a shaky breath, counting to eight like Dr. Greene wanted him to. He did that as he followed Taehyung, trying not to focus on the way the walls were still moving out and the knots in his middle. He focused on the pigeon outside, what it would be like to fly into the clouds, what it would feel like to be brave all the time even when really high.

Hoseok wished he could be a bird.

“You ready to try again?”
Hoseok looked at Neil and then Linda, the interpreter who took Neil’s words and turned them into sign language for Hoseok to understand. He nodded at Neil and got to his feet.

Dance class was over. It ended awhile ago. But, Hoseok kept making a mistake on this one part and Neil wanted to make sure Hoseok got it down before they learned the next part of the choreography.

Hoseok hadn’t been dancing as long as some of his classmates. Pallavi has been dancing since she was four. It was Helen’s third competition season. But, he was ready to show them. Because, even though he hadn’t been dancing the longest, even though he couldn’t hear the music, he was really, really, really, really good at dancing.

Linda started the music and Hoseok got into position, waiting for the part they were working on. He could feel the vibrations tickle his bare feet and the way the music thrummed in his chest. He imagined the music like a living thing, like a fairy or an angel. He imagined it climbing its way through Hoseok’s body, banishing the knots in his middle and his bad memories of bad men and his momma sleeping all day and lighting up all the dark corners until it got to his chest, where his heart lived. And it would live there too - the music and his heartbeat - making him so happy he had to dance.

And his movements would come better and quicker when Hoseok could feel the music in his chest, when he felt all the light inside of him.

“Good job, Hoseok.” Neil said as he sat and scrutinized him. “You got this.”

Hoseok just smiled, watching his own reflection smile back at him in the mirror. He knew he was doing a good job. He was really, really, really, really good at dance. It’s what made him happy, even when he felt trampled on. It was his hidden colors, that you could only see if you looked really close. It was what sent him flying, unafraid of how high he went. He was everything he wanted to be and more.

Hoseok wished he could only be a dancer.

Hoseok turned over on his belly, rolling towards Tae’s bed. He was asleep - his mouth open and wide and his hands next to his face.

Hoseok couldn’t sleep, even though his dad checked for monsters three times in the closet and under the bed. He just felt…sad. So sad. And he couldn’t figure out why. He finished his homework. He got to dance. They ate fish sticks for dinner. He didn't even have to go to therapy since Jimin was sick.

He felt sad like this before, in his old house. He would get really, really happy and want to jump and play and smile and go and go and go and then he would feel…

Sad.

It was like the knots morphed into weights that made him feel super heavy. And all he really wanted to do was dance again to feel happy, but it was nighttime now and he had to sleep for school tomorrow. Even though, the thought of going to school where he had to deal with Carson and his stupid math problems and Miss Candace hating him made him want to start crying like a little baby.
Hoseok squirmed around, trying to find a comfortable position and couldn’t. He squirmed even though the weights just wanted him to stop moving completely and just lay there like a rock.

But, a painful stab in his stomach had him rising out of bed. Hungry. He was hungry. And it hurt so bad he actually started to cry. He slid out of bed and padded down the hallway. Jimin and Jungkook were asleep in their beds, their rooms dark. Hoseok kept his eye on the shadows, keeping his eye out for monsters.

His dad - the other, taller dad - was sitting in the lounge chair in the living room with a big book in his lap. He looked up when Hoseok entered the living room and placed his foot on the side of his knee, balancing on one leg. “What’s up?” He signed.

“I’m hungry.” Hoseok rubbed his tummy and winced. He would get hungry at his old house too, but he didn’t always get food. Sometimes he would just have to force himself to go to sleep. He hoped that his dad wouldn’t be mad at him for getting out of bed. He wrung out his fingers.

“You’re hungry?” Dad asked, collapsing the leg rest of the lounge chair and put his book away. He got up, swinging Hoseok into his arms. Hoseok gripped his t-shirt as they walked to the kitchen together. “Why are you crying?” His dad wiped his tear off of his face.

“My tummy hurts.” Hoseok signed back. “And I’m sad.”

“Does your tummy hurt because you’re hungry?” His dad asked as he fished around the pantry, pulling out a granola bar.

Hoseok nodded. “I think so.”

“Or does your tummy hurt because of nerves?” He asked. “I just don’t want you to get sick later. That would make you even sadder.”

Hoseok rubbed his face on his dad’s shoulder as he thought about it. These weren’t the knots, this was a stabbing pain. “Hunger.” He finally signed.

“Okay,” He handed over the granola bar and then turned and exited the kitchen, opening the door to the basement. Hoseok squeezed his eyes shut when he saw the dark stairs and gripped his dad’s shirt. He hated going down the basement stairs. They were always dark and scary.

He waited with his eyes closed until he got to the bottom. He opened them to his other dad sitting at his computer, headphones on his head. He looked over as Namjoon sat down on the little couch against the wall. Hoseok undid the wrapper to his granola bar and bit into it.

“What’s going on?” His dad asked as he removed his headphones.

“We’re having an emotional crash, I think.” His other dad signed back. “We’re hungry and sad.”

“Aw, baby.” He pouted. “He gets those endorphins up in dance class.”

“And then it’s,” His dad signed like an explosion was happening.

Hoseok curled his legs up against his chest as he nibbled on his granola bar, feeling one hundred times better leaning against his Dad’s chest. The pains in his stomach subsided and he always felt safe when he was being hugged, knowing his dads would always be there to protect him, no matter what.
“Feel better?” His Dad signed and then raked his hair back off of his face.

“Yeah,” Hoseok nodded. “I’m happy now.”

His dad’s arms circled around him and he felt lips in his hair. Hoseok finally felt sleepy and comfortable enough to fall asleep. Safe. Warm. Loved.

And okay with being just Hoseok, the little boy.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!

And you can find me on twt
Anything

Chapter Notes

Sorry this took so long to get up. I’ve had Chicken Noodle Soup stuck in my head for 3 days straight. This is a bit of a weird tidying-up chapter before we move on!

I also want to warn those of you who wish to make this a neverending story that we only have about 9-10ish chapters left :(  

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Young woke up in a start, sitting bolt upright in bed, feeling like something was wrong. The sun was out. He never woke up after the sun. And yet it streamed through the window, casting long stripes across his bedspread.

He immediately twisted for the baby monitor of their most medically fragile child and saw that it was missing. He then looked to his left and saw that Namjoon was also missing. He breathed a sigh of relief. Namjoon’s got Jimin.

And then the wave of ick and sickness washed through Yoongi and he let himself fall back on his pillow. He tried breathing through his nose and couldn’t, so he just inhaled and exhaled noisily out of his mouth. And then coughed into his elbow.

Yoongi was sick. He caught whatever Jimin was infected with, which was whatever the hospital was crawling with the stack of appointments he had the past couple of weeks. Thankfully, unlike last time, they immediately put him on a kid-grade NSAID to prevent fever - and most importantly any other swelling.

Yoongi grabbed his phone and checked it before pushing on his eyeglasses and grabbing his box of tissues. He shuffled to the living room where he found Namjoon trying to feed an equally as miserable-looking Jimin breakfast in the dining room - his little nose red and chapped and his hands imprisoned in ant-scratch mittens so he couldn’t rub his face. His poor baby. Yoongi winced at the light from the headache he was nursing, wholeheartedly empathizing with his how his son was feeling.

“Good morning.” Yoongi croaked and then coughed into the crook of his elbow.

Namjoon looked up at the movement. “Baby,” He said, since his hands were full. “You should be in bed resting.”

Yoongi glanced at the wall clock. It was 9 o’clock in the morning. “This is the longest I’ve slept in, like, eight years.” He retorted in sign.

“This is also the first time you’ve been sick too.” Namjoon pointed out.

Yoongi sucked in a breath through his nose and felt a little woozy being on his feet. “The boys at school?” Yoongi asked in sign and then pulled a tissue out of the box and wiped his runny nose.

“Yep.” Namjoon nodded.
“Jungkook?”

“Playing with his sensory corner.” Namjoon smiled and then looked longingly at the Paw Patrol plate of food sitting half-eaten on the table. “We got breakfast…sort of.”

“He’ll be out when he gets hungry.” Yoongi said and approached Jimin. He smooth the hair off of his clammy forehead and then pressed a kiss to it, gauging temperature and giving love.

“Daddy,” Jimin whined and pouted. He played with his hands, a little frustrated line forming between his eyebrows. He squirmed in his chair and then gave a huffed out sigh. “Daddy.” He held out his hands to Namjoon to pull the mittens off.

“Baby, I can’t.” Namjoon said and pushed his arm down. “You’re making your own nose bleed from scratching.”

Jemin didn’t like that answer, because he thrashed slightly and started to cry. He rubbed his face and then his head, mussing his own hair. “Ouch. Ouch.” He complained.

Yoongi’s heart broke watching him just suffer. He started to undo Jimin’s lap strap. “I think we’re done with breakfast.”

“Yeah,” Namjoon dropped the spoon in the bowl. “I think you’re right.” He sighed and glanced at his phone that was sitting on the table. “Oh, we got an email from Hoseok and Tae’s teacher asking for another meeting.”

Yoongi hoisted his little one into his arms with a groan. “Who about?” He asked as he wiped Jimin’s snotty nose for him. He had a sneaking suspicion of what it could be.

“Hoseok.”

Yoongi walked to the living room where he sat on the couch and settled Jimin in his lap against him. He pulled the throw blanket over both of them, trying to rid himself of the chills that were making him shiver. Jimin settled with a little perturbed sigh, his lower lip pouting out.

Namjoon appeared a moment later, holding the Vick’s vapor rub and Jimin’s sippy and the DayQuil in his arms. He sat down next to Yoongi and Yoongi cuddled up against his large, warm husband who was kind enough to rub the mentholated goop on Yoongi’s chest for him.

“What about this time?” Yoongi sighed.

“He’s not participating in class - like his worksheets aren’t being done and he’s not answering questions.” Namjoon said and rubbed a little Vick’s on Jimin’s chest too. His head perked up at the smell.

“Anxiety? Bullies?” Yoongi asked.

Namjoon made a noise through his nose and put the Vick’s on the coffee table. “All of it,” He signed. “Knowing Hoseok.”

Yoongi rubbed his temple with a stabbing headache. “Maybe we should switch schools?” He suggested.

Namjoon sighed, his eyes going sad and slightly defeated. He had this school picked out since before he even brought up the subject of fostering deaf kids to Yoongi. Namjoon only wanted the best for his kids because he never got the best himself. Knowing Hoseok was having such a tough
time must’ve been disappointing. Yoongi rubbed his arm in comfort before holding his fist to his mouth to cough into it.

“I think you’re right.” Namjoon said. “Maybe Hoseok needs new…scenery.” He sighed.

“He only has, what,” Yoongi signed. “Three weeks of school left? Let’s get him through the first grade and then we’ll see. Maybe Dr. Greene will have suggestions or something.”

Namjoon nodded. “In the meantime,” He stood up and Yoongi let out a whine. He wanted Namjoons body heat to keep him warm. “I think Jungkook and I are going to do some father-son bonding while you guys rest. Will you be okay to watch Jimin for an hour or two?”

Yoongi looked down at Jimin, who was breathing out of his mouth and making disgruntled moaning noises. Yoongi pressed a kiss to the side of his face and picked up the remote to the television. “A day on the couch binge-watching crap reality shows?” He nodded and put on Hell’s Kitchen. “I think I can manage.”

Namjoon smiled gently, his dimples peaking out. He pressed a kiss to the top of Yoongi’s head and then to the top of Jimin’s head and then spun on his heels. “Make sure you both drink lots of fluids!”

Yoongi dutifully picked up Jimin’s sippy and stuck the end in the his mouth as Gordon Ramsey called some poor soul a ‘fucking idiot’ on TV.

“Kookie,” Namjoon said as he pulled down Jungkook’s Spiderman shirt. “You ready to have some fun?” Namjoon bounced him against his hip.

Jungkook pointed at the large building, his eyebrows scrunched slightly in the expression Namjoon called ’Kookie’s deep-thought face.’ His other hand was in a fist flapping in front of his face. “Where?” He signed.

“We are going to make some music.”

They were at Namjoon’s college campus walking towards a building Namjoon seldom went into - the music building. He shared an office space with the drumline instructor who also happened to have an autistic pre-schooler and he invited them both to hang out before their class.

He entered the auditorium of the college where they held graduations and performances and went down the corridor to where the classrooms were. The band room door was open and Namjoon entered the large room that had multiple instruments stacked against the wall. There were music stands in front of chairs and sheet music stacked haphazardly everywhere.

Keith - a guy that looked like he could be a roadie for Metallica - was sitting on the ground with a big string instrument in front of him. He looked like he was removing the strings.

A little girl wearing pink ear defenders was sitting next to him, a drumstick in her hand as she played on a practice pad.

“Hey!” Namjoon greeted and set Jungkook down on his feet.
“Good morning, Namjoon.” Keith said as he undid a string on the instrument in his lap. “Glad you could make it.”

“Me too.” Namjoon squatted in front of the little girl. She was wearing flowery overalls and had her hair in pigtails. She glanced at Namjoon’s face and held eye-contact for a couple of seconds before looking down at her practice pad. “Hello, sweetheart.” He looked up at Keith.

“This is Bella.” Keith introduced. “Bella, can you say hi?”

“Can you say hi?” She repeated and waved with the hand that wasn’t holding a drumstick.

“Bella is a pretty name.” Namjoon said. “My name is Joon and this is Kookie.” He glanced over at Jungkook who had squatted to examine the large cello or bass in Keith’s lap.

Bella glanced at Jungkook and then at her father.

“You can go play.” He said and pulled the drumstick from her hand and replaced it with a marimba mallet. “Why don’t you show him the bells? Hmm?”

“Why don’t you show him the bells?” She repeated, but didn’t move. Instead she thrusted out the mallet to Namjoon. “Why don’t you show him the bells?”

“Bella repeats.” Keith explained and with a gentle smile.

“Bella repeats.” Bella got to her feet and toddled over to a xylophone that had been taken off of its stand and set on the floor. She sat down on her knees and banged on the instrument with her mallet. Jungkook’s head whipped around at the noise and he got up to investigate, sitting next to Bella.

Namjoon sat down on a chair and watched Keith wind strings around his hand. “Last week we had a barbecue with some family and my cousin said ‘fuck the Patriots’ offhandedly and Bella repeated it,” Keith looked up. “All. Day. Long.”

“Oh God.”

“Right?” Keith shook his head. “I told him that she was a tape-recorder. She takes it all in and repeats it back to you. I told him I would never let him live it down.”

Namjoon giggled. “Well, that’ll be an interesting story to tell on her wedding night to embarrass your cousin.”


“Ahh, he’s nonverbal.” Namjoon said and pointed to his own ear. “And as far as I know silent. But, my husband says that is not the case at all.”

“Oh, yeah. He’s a singer.” Keith said. “He’s singing right now with the notes. He’s got a good tone too.”

“Yeah?” Namjoon looked over to where Jungkook was watching Bella play on the instrument. His fingers would go every couple of seconds like he was playing on a piano. “He loves music.”

“It sounds like it.” Keith said and put the instrument to the side. He got to his feet and crossed over to the xylophone the kids were playing with. Namjoon got up to follow. He watched as Keith
took one of the mallets from Bella’s hand and hit a note. Jungkook’s eyebrows furrowed. Keith hit a different note and Jungkook, who was squatting, stimmed his hands and scrunched his nose.

“He’s got an excellent ear.” Keith said and gave the mallet to Jungkook, who immediately started to drum on the instrument. “He matched all the notes.”

Namjoon sat down next to Jungkook and watched him happily play on the instrument with Bella, who was giggling and tapping her own knees.

“Have you thought about putting him in music lessons?”

“Well,” Namjoon thought. “He’s a little…” Namjoon had never had them, but he just imagined sitting next to some old lady at a piano practicing the same basic songs over and over. Knowing his Kookie, that sounded like torture.

Keith shrugged. “It might be worth exploring. Bella has a special interest in these…uh…tiny animal toys. Pet Shop something or other.” He waved. “My wife knows more about the toys themselves. But, like, she’ll play with them all day if you let her. It brings her joy, y’know?” He motioned to Jungkook. “Jungkook might have a special interest in creating music, he just doesn’t have the skillset to do it yet.”

“He does love music.” Namjoon nodded and carded Jungkook’s long fringe out of his eyes. Jungkook tangled his hands together and jammed them under his chin as Bella took the mallet out of his hands to bang on the instrument.

*It brings joy.* Namjoon’s favorite thing in the whole world was seeing his children happy. With Jungkook, just given his own, unique way of viewing the world, he especially liked to find the things that made him happy. “I guess,” He watched Jungkook’s lips purse cutely. “I guess we should look into some music lessons.”

Yoongi coughed in tandem with Jimin, who he had moved to sitting propped up on the couch next to him when Yoongi started to overheat. He grabbed some tissues and wiped Jimin’s nose for him before getting himself. “I hate being sick.” He said and discarded the wad of tissues.

He looked down at Jimin, who had his head on Yoongi’s arm and his hand on Mr. Ba. He was starting to drift off, his mouth open and drool trailing down his chin. Yoongi carefully gathered him and walked him into his own bedroom, where he laid him down on his bed and covered him in his blankets.

“I hate being sick.” Yoongi grumbled again as he moved back to the living room with the baby monitor in his hand and fell heavily on the couch. He rolled onto his stomach for better drainage and flipped through channels until he landed on HGTV. He picked up his cell phone and saw that he had missed call from a number he didn’t recognize. He hit redial.

“Los Angeles County Sheriff’s office.” The voice greeted on the other side and Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed in confusion.

“Hello,” Yoongi said and propped himself on his elbows. “I received a missed call from this number. My name is Yoongi Min-Kim.” His nose was so stuffed up that ‘Kim’ came out ‘Kimb.’
Yoongi listened to happy flamenco music until he was connected to a gruff sounding voice.

“Hi, this is Yoongi Min-Kim. I missed a call from this number.”

“Ah, yes.” The voice said. “I was calling in regards to the assault of Nam…joon Kim by Hei-Ran Kim?” He sounded out all the names very slowly like he was playing a phonics game. “We have a list of charges that include violating a restraining order and illegal possession of firearm, but we did not seem to,” There was a shuffling of papers. “Take down anywhere that you are pressing charges against Kim?”

“Officer Griffin.”

“Hi, this is Yoongi Min-Kim. I missed a call from this number.”

“I was calling in regards to the assault of Nam…joon Kim by Hei-Ran Kim?” He sounded out all the names very slowly like he was playing a phonics game. “We have a list of charges that include violating a restraining order and illegal possession of firearm, but we did not seem to,” There was a shuffling of papers. “Take down anywhere that you are pressing charges against Kim?”

“Officer Griffin.”

“Oh.” Yoongi stopped and rubbed the lines in his forehead. He thought back to that night. The only real casualty was about four days of sleep, as Hoseok was a bundle of nerves who they couldn’t get to calm down. Bedtime would roll around and Hoseok would fight sleep until he passed out from exhaustion in Yoongi and Namjoon’s bed. Finally, he realized that he was okay and started to fall asleep in his own bed again. Namjoon’s arm healed fine. They fixed the hole in their garage wall. They all were fine.

Namjoon had told Yoongi what Taehyung’s mother had said. That they were homeless. That she was just trying to survive with her baby. That maybe she was a little ill in the head. That she had dug herself into a hole and felt cornered and scared in a cruel world. That maybe showing up at their door was her final cry for help.

And while Yoongi was angry and appalled and, frankly, a little traumatized that his husband was almost shot dead on the steps of their front door, his mind kept drifting to Hoseok’s mother. And how she had also dug herself into a hole, the fallout being her own life.

“How long?” Yoongi asked. “How long would she get.”

“Well, she violated parole and a court ordered of protection, illegal possession of firearm would get her a couple of years.” He said. “If you press charges, that would add attempted homicide and aggravated assault into the mix and she could face up to fifteen years if she is found guilty for all charges. Probably also have to go to court-ordered rehab, but that’s all up to the courts.”

“Wow.” Yoongi said.

“If you press charges, you and your, um, partner will have to testify in court.”

Yoongi sighed. “She was just desperate.” Namjoon had sighed. “I would be too if my baby had been taken away from me.” Desperation made people do the craziest of things. He couldn’t imagine the lengths he would go for his own children. He tried to imagine them and honestly couldn’t. Because he would do anything, anything to protect his babies.

Desperation is what drove Hoseok’s mother to suicide. And while Taehyung’s mother wasn’t the same as Hoseok’s, there was a vague fear of history repeating itself. And really, pressing charges would just show Tae's mom that they were a part of that world that was already so cruel to her. He didn't want to be in that world.

Yoongi continued to rub his forehead. “I don’t…” He started. “I don’t think we’re going to press charges. Her actions aren’t excusable but…” He sighed. “I get it.”

“Oh, well…” The officer sounded surprised. “Alright. I’ll mark that down. Thanks for getting back to me.”
Yoongi hung up and pulled himself off the couch. He glanced into Jungkook’s room - at the line of blocks he had carefully lined up on his floor that morning. And then the boys’ room where Hoseok’s bed was made, but Taehyung’s wasn’t. Yoongi did it for him and then glanced at the drawing Tae had stuck to the wall with a bunch of others. A drawing of his family.

He then exited their room and went into Jimin’s. He carefully dropped one side of the roll guards to his bed and crawled in next to his son, snuggling Jimin’s little body against his own. Yoongi pressed his nose into Jimin’s hair and closed his eyes.

He understood Tae’s mother. When you loved as fiercely as a parent loved their child, you would do anything for them.

Anything.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!

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Chapter Notes

I do want to apologize for the lack of consistency. I’ve had multiple irons in the fire and they seem to be sucking up my time. I haven't abandoned this story, I promise!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

It was three am and three out of their four children were up.

It started first with Hoseok, who woke up with a bad dream and wanted to crawl into bed with Namjoon and Yoongi. Namjoon let him crawl in on his side since Yoongi was still getting over that flu he had. But, then as Namjoon started to drift back to sleep, Yoongi elbowed him awake because Jimin was having a seizure. They all got out of bed to tend to Jimin, Hoseok hanging onto Namjoon’s leg as he watched his brother convulse on his bed with large, frightened eyes. And then Jimin threw up on his sheets - and partially on Yoongi - and Hoseok screamed and that woke Jungkook up.

Namjoon inhaled as he watched Jungkook watch an infomercial for an 80’s love ballad compilation disc that could be bought for $19.95 plus shipping and handling on the television in the living room as he held and bounced Hoseok. He exhaled that breath as he took in Yoongi - who still had a stain of vomit on his sleep shirt - as he sat with Jimin on the sofa and rocked him in his arms. “Fatherhood, eh?”

Yoongi’s dark eyes snapped up. They were tired and his nose was still red from the sniffles. “Are you sure it isn’t disaster response?” He signed.

Namjoon smiled gently. “It feels like that sometimes.” He glanced down at Seokie who had Namjoon’s t-shirt gathered in his fists. He patted his eldest’s back. “I think…stress ball can be added to that list.”

Yoongi glanced down at their other child and then at the stain on his shirt. “Glorified tissue?”

“Food bringer?”

“Kisses giver.”

Namjoon buried his nose in Hoseok’s neck. “Snuggler.”

“‘Bad dad’ I got once from Taehyung when I wouldn’t let him have ice cream before dinner the other day.” Yoongi sighed and glanced down at Jimin in his arms. “He apologized with a hug ten minutes later.”

“Boo-boo fixer.”

“Chauffeur.”

“The omniscient spirit that knows where every shoe in the house is.”

Namjoon giggled with his face still against Hoseok. “Swing-pusher.”
Hoseok pulled his head back. He half-glared at Namjoon for disturbing him, half-scrutinized him with squinting, tired eyes. His little lips blew out with his sigh.

“Bed?” Namjoon asked in sign and then rubbed Hoseok’s back.

Hoseok nodded. “Yeah.” He signed back. “I’m tired.”

“I know.” Namjoon said and pecked his nose and Hoseok resettled his head on Namjoon’s shoulder.

Namjoon carried his baby boy down the hallway and settled him down in his own bed, saying goodnight and checking under the bed for monsters for a second time that night. He waited until Hoseok’s heart-shaped mouth parted with his snores and his fingers uncurled next to his face, falling slowly and delicately like a feather into sleep.

“One down, two to go.” He breathed and let himself out of the elder boys’ room.

Namjoon came back out to the living room to his husband cradling both Jungkook and Jimin in his arms. He picked up Jungkook and sat down next to Yoongi on the sofa, getting their youngest settled with a little blanket around him. He looked so small swaddled in Namjoon’s arms - his dark eyelashes so long they were tangled with each other and his nose twitching.

Jimin’s face was tear-streaked but he was finally asleep too - one hand in his hair and the other in his mouth. Yoongi had his lips pressed to his forehead and was rubbing them back and forth.

“Fatherhood.” Namjoon sighed and glanced back down to Jungkook.

Yoongi’s narrow eyes snapped to him. He moved so his cheek was pressed to Jimin’s forehead. “Yeah.” He signed with a lazy fist. “It’s a tough job.”

“Yeah,” Namjoon agreed. “But, I wouldn’t trade it for the world.”

“Daddy!” Taehyung screamed as he ran out of the school, a big folder clutched in his arms and his hair streaming behind him in the wind. “It’s the last day of school!” He yelled as he skidded to a stop.

Yoongi giggled and straightened his glasses for him. “It is. Was it a good school year?” He signed.

Tae squinted as he thought about it. He finally nodded. “I think so.” He said.

“What was your favorite part?”

His expression grew more concentrated as he thought about it. “I liked being in a school where I can sit anywhere in the classroom. Last year I had to be up front since I couldn’t hear good. But, here I could sit anywhere!” He thrusted his folder over his head. “Oh, oh! And having Seokie in the class too!”

“Where’s Hoseok?” Yoongi side-glanced to make sure Jungkook didn’t dart off.
Right as Yoongi asked that, he watched Hoseok skip down the steps, his backpack slapping against his butt and a little, pleased smile over his face. He had a folder of stuff too. “Dad!” He said. “I won an award!”

“You did? What did you win?”

“I won ‘most improved!”’

“That’s great.” Yoongi hugged him tight. He still had this little, weird smile on like he was holding back a juicy secret. “What’s that smile, Seokie? You look like you did something naughty.”

“I didn’t do anything naughty.” Hoseok signed back quickly, his smile growing wider.

“No,” Tae added, giggling widely - that caused Jimin to giggle along too. “He caught Carson doing something and he was all em-embarrassed.”

“Carson?” Yoongi was confused.

“He’s this super mean kid in our class.” Tae offered. “He’s a butthead.”

“Tae,” Yoongi rolled his eyes as he unclicked Jimin’s handbrakes. “Don’t say-,”

“He always made fun of Hoseok.”

Yoongi whipped his head around, surprised and concerned. “Seokie,” He let go of Jimin’s handle to sign. “We told you if you’re having trouble with bullies to tell us.”

“I know.” Hoseok signed and sighed. “He wasn’t just bullying me, though. He bullied everyone.”

“Yeah, but he picked on you extra because you are small and need the teacher’s help.” Tae added.

Yoongi pressed his fingers into his temples as he felt his nerves all fire off at once. *School’s out.* He reminded himself. *This is the last day. No more Carson. No more bullies. No more-

Tae and Hoseok both erupted in a fit of giggles when they made eye contact.

“What did you catch Carson doing?” Yoongi asked.

Hoseok pressed both hands over his mouth to stifle his laughter and Tae started pogo-sticking in place. “He was putting on makeup in the bathroom when he thought no one was looking.”

“Makeup?” Yoongi asked, surprised.

“Yeah!” Hoseok signed. “Lipstick and mascara.”

“And then he started kissing himself in the mirror like he was kissing a girl!” Tae started laughing again. “He called himself ‘pretty lady.’” He grabbed onto Hoseok’s shoulders as he laughed.

Yoongi sighed and rolled his eyes a little at what entertained first-graders. “Makeup isn’t just for girls.” He signed. “Boys can have fun with it too. I have makeup and I’m a boy.”

“Yeah, but Daddy,” Hoseok signed. “Your makeup makes you look scary like Maleficent.”
“Malefi…” Yoongi tried to imagine Namjoon’s face as he tells this story later.

“Yeah,” Tae agreed. “Or tough like Gamora.”

“Yeah,” Hoseok agreed. “I wear makeup when I dance in performances.” He signed. “But, when I caught Carson, I asked where he got the makeup from and he said that he took it from Miss Candace’s purse.”

Yoongi felt his mouth pop open. “Did you tell Miss Candace?”

“Yes,” Hoseok’s small, little smile came back. “He got dragged out of the bathroom in front of the whole class by the principal.” He started to giggle. “With the makeup still on his face.”

“The whole class laughed.” Tae added.

Yoongi opened his mouth to reprimand for laughing. But, then he closed it. Honestly, it sounded like he had it coming. He shook his head instead and leaned Jimin on his back wheels to get him off the curb. “Did you have a good last day of school?”

“Yes,” Hoseok signed and looked up at the building. “Some of my classmates weren’t nice to me. But,” He shrugged. “I tried to be nice to everyone.”

“That’s good.” Yoongi said as he herded his pack to the SUV. “That’s a good boy.”

Hoseok grabbed Jungkook’s elbow to keep him from running off. “I hope next year is good.”

“Me too, baby.” Yoongi ran his fingers through his hair, thankful this school year was over. “Me too.”

“Can you walk towards me?” Namjoon asked as he sat on the floor of the living room while Yoongi got dinner ready. He was right in front of Jimin who was all strapped into his gait trainer. “Come on, you can do it.” He beckoned.

Jimin had his little fingers wrapped around the handlebars of the metal contraption that was designed to increase his mobility. Instead of walking, however, he bounced on the toes of one foot and danced around a little, a wide smile over his face.

Namjoon leaned over and grabbed Mr. Ba from where he sat facedown next to Jimin’s floor sitter. “Look, Chim.” He said, getting Mr. Ba in Jimin’s face. “It’s Mr. Ba.”

Jimin tilted his head and held up one hand. “Bababababa.” He babbled, his fingers reaching for his favorite stuffed animal.

Namjoon pulled it back, forcing Jimin to push the whole walker forward. He took a hesitant step and then stopped, his smile falling off of his face. “Babababa.” He scowled a little, and leaned forward as far as he could, trying to get the toy. “Uh-oh. Daddy.” He said, his lips pursed out. “Uh-oh.”

“Uh-oh?” Namjoon repeated. “You can walk to get it, Jimin. You can do it.”

Jimin took another step forward, both hands around his handles now. And then he stopped and his face twisted with tears, balancing on one foot. “Daddy.” He said with pouting lips.

Jimin sniffled and dropped his other foot, bouncing again. Namjoon let him do that as he calmed himself down. He sucked in a couple of stuttering breaths and Namjoon wiped the bulbous tears that rimmed his eyelids. Jimin’s head tilted again to see and he started to reach for the toy. “Babababa.”

Namjoon pulled it away to get him to follow it. “Follow Mr. Ba, Chim.” He beckoned in the cheeriest voice he could come up with. “Mr. Ba is dancing, Chim. Can you dance with him?”

Jimin took a step and then stopped. He stomped his feet a little in frustration. His face pinching and his fists balling. He slammed them on his gait trainer.

“I know,” Namjoon said. “Asking so much from my little Chim. Just a couple of more steps, okay?” A movement in Namjoon’s peripherals caught his attention and he looked over to Jungkook pulling his Bop-It off the coffee table. “Kookie.” He said, an idea coming to him. “Come here. I need your help.”

Kookie hugged his Bop-It like a teddy bear and walked over to Namjoon, leaning heavily on his shoulder.

“Can you walk with Jimin?” Namjoon said, pushing him a little until he was standing next to Jimin. He put Kookie’s hand on top of Jimin’s arm and coaxed the Bop-It out of his hands. Kookie stimmed with his free hand and then looked at Jimin, his nose scrunching a little.

“Jimin’s not having a good time.” Namjoon said. “Can you show him how to walk?”

Jungkook’s eyes traced the ceiling and then the floor before he nodded. “Walk.” He signed and then started to stomp forward.

Jimin didn’t budge. Instead he craned his head to see. “Koo.” He said and pointed, drool beading from his lip and hitting his shirt. He held out his hand and started to wobble. Namjoon caught him and forced his hand back on his gait trainer to keep him steady.

“That’s your baby brother, Jimin.” Namjoon said. “He loves you so much.”


“Can you say ‘I love you’ back, Kookie?”

Jungkook grinned. “I love you.” He signed and then started to walk again, pulling Jimin with him. Jimin tap-danced in his gait trainer for a second, but took a step forward. His steps were heavy and took a lot of energy, but Jimin’s face was happily beaming as he followed his brother.

Jungkook stopped at the edge of the living room and turned around, waiting for Namjoon to hand him back his Bop-It.

“Koo!” Jimin said, reaching for him again.

“Can you show him your toy?” Namjoon asked and handed Kookie his Bop-It. Kookie flipped the toy in his hands for a moment before turning to Jimin and thrusting it out.

“You’re gonna have to show him.” Namjoon prompted again. “He can’t see real good.”
Jungkook hit the middle button and Namjoon watched his fingers fly around the toy so fast the light didn’t have a chance to populate completely. He watched Jungkook’s face turn focused as he concentrated and he watched Jimin’s face go slightly slack as he angled his head to see.

Namjoon sat back on his heels and watched his youngest boys. Jungkook’s affection was subtle and Jimin didn’t have the words to express his happiness, but Namjoon could tell that they loved each other in their own ways. Their own unique ways.

“Nini!”

“Nini!”

Hoseok and Taehyung ran in streaks of black hair and bright t-shirts into their grandmother’s arms as she crossed the threshold into their house.

“My grandbabies.” She said as she squatted to hug them, giving them kisses on their head. She straightened up to give a kiss to Namjoon on the cheek and then turned to give Yoongi a hug. “Dumpling.”

“Hi, eomma.” Yoongi gripped his mother back tight. “Thanks for coming.”

“Of course.”

Jimin’s surgery date was quickly approaching. Yoongi had called his mother mostly to let off some of the pressure that had seemed to be compounding under his skin, boiling in his veins and ready to steam over like a tea kettle with every moment closer to the scheduled operation. But, as soon as he mentioned that Jimin’s surgery date was set and that it was a week away, she proclaimed that she was going to come down to help watch the kids.

Yoongi heard a gasp and then an overjoyed screech and pulled away just in time to watch Jungkook zoom his way into his Nini’s arms. “Grandma. Grandma. Grandma.” He signed, making noises. He was moving his hands like he didn’t know what to do with them and turned in a complete circle before burying his face into her hip.

“There is my Kookie-yah.” She said and ran her fingers through his hair. He scrunched his nose with his beaming smile up at her.

“I’m gonna grab your suitcases.” Namjoon volunteered and slipped out the door.

“Where is my manggaetteok?” She asked.

“He’s playing in his floor sitter.” Yoongi motioned and the whole herd started for the living room.

Jimin was parked in his floor sitter, a frame made out of PVC pipe with multiple bright, dangly toys and mobiles hanging from it sitting in front of him. Sam had made it for him. Every time he got a mobile to move with his waving hands, he laughed the biggest giggle that Yoongi has ever heard and clapped his hands.

“There he is.” Yoongi’s mom squatted with a low groan and she gently carded her fingers
through Jimin’s hair. Jungkook took the opportunity to wrap his arms around her neck and bury his face into her shoulder. “Hi, angel.”

“Nini,” Taehyung was dancing around, his feet bare and his hair shining in the afternoon sun. “Did you know you, um, did you know that I won the spelling bee?”

“You did?” She asked with a big gasp, even though Yoongi had sent her a copy of the newspaper that Taehyung was in - beaming big and wide for the camera with the other spelling bee winners.

“Yeah, yeah!” He jumped up and down. “I got a trophy! I’ll show you!” He zoomed down the hallway, barreling in a full sprint towards his room.

She sat down on the ground, turning towards Hoseok, who was standing on his tip-toes as he hung from Yoongi’s waist. “How has school been?” She asked in slow sign language.

Hoseok’s eyes blew wide. “You sign.” He signed to her with surprise.

“I’m learning it for my grandbabies.” She signed back and then grabbed Hoseok’s wrist and pulled him into a hug. “You’re being a good big brother, right?” She asked and tickled him.

He nodded, his smile big and wide.

“Nini?” Taehyung scampered back into the room empty-handed. “Why are you here?”

“I can’t just visit my grandbabies?” She asked. “I have to have a reason?”

“No,” Tae fiddled with his fingers. “I guess not. But, like,” He rubbed his forehead like he was deeply confused over the whole thing. “You always come for birthdays and stuff.”

Yoongi jerked forward a little. “She’s going to be here to help take care of the house while Jimin has surgery.”

The kids understood what was happening in a vague way - Jimin had something wrong and the hospital was going to fix him because that’s what doctors do. But, Yoongi and Namjoon were apprehensive over telling them the specifics out of fear of freaking them out and making them worry needlessly. Yoongi was already trying and failing to comfort himself. Throwing his anxious son and the Jimin’s absolute best friend in that mix would only make it worse.

Tae approached Jimin and put his cheek on top of Jimin’s head and wrapped his arms around his shoulders. Jimin beamed wide, his eyes disappearing completely into his face. “So, you’re going to at home here while Daddy and Daddy stay at the hospital?”

“Daddies are leaving?” Hoseok signed, trying to keep up with the conversation. He suddenly looked worried.

“No,” Yoongi said and squatted too. “We’re going to take turns while Jimin stays in the hospital so you’ll have a daddy and Jimin has a daddy.”

“Tae!” Jimin’s hand came out and gripped Tae’s t-shirt. “Tae.”

“Nini’s going to be here to help take you to dance practice and stuff.”

“Okay.” Hoseok turned back to his grandmother. “You can watch my competition.” He signed happily.
She grabbed his hand. “You’re talking to an old lady.” She signed. “You need to slow down, smarty-pants.”

“He wants you watch his competition.” Yoongi interpreted for him.

“Oh,” She said. “Of course I will.” She signed. “I have to watch the best dancer in the whole wide world.”

Hoseok threw his hands over his head and spun around with a big smile.

“Okay,” Yoongi’s mom straightened with another groan, Jungkook hoisted in her arms. “What can I throw together in this kitchen of yours?” She tickled Jungkook’s little belly.

Chapter End Notes

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Namjoon studied Yoongi’s face as he played his piano in the sitting room, the moonlight cutting wide shafts of illumination across him, making his pale skin almost opalescent. He studied the way he carefully balanced Hoseok - who was attempting to fall asleep straddled on his lap - while playing slowly on the keys. He took in Yoongi’s nose and his small, hunched shoulders, and the child that was using the crook of his elbow as a pillow. His rings that were glinting in the light. His brown bangs falling across his forehead. His narrow eyes that always made him look more serious than he was.

Namjoon loved to study Yoongi. He was his favorite work of art. No creation was better than the man he got to watch fall asleep every night next to him. The universe really outdone themselves with him. And he was only improved with the love he had for his children.

Namjoon did have to tear his eyes away when movement caught his attention. He looked down at Jimin in his arms. He watched Jimin’s chubby fingers rake up into his own hair before he grimaced and then relaxed. He checked on Tae who was sleeping on his belly next to him, his arm around a random stuffed animal and then Jungkook, who had glued himself to Nini’s lap and was playing an iPad game.

Joon sighed gently and went back to studying Yoongi. It was the night before Jimin’s surgery and there was a slight apprehensive buzz in the air. Worry. Everyone was geared up and anxious and worried. It was what was keeping Yoongi’s form from completely relaxing or his mouth from loosening in the purse it was in. It was what was keeping Namjoon’s leg bouncing as he sat on the sofa.

However, they were putting a front of calm up for the kids’ sake. There was no use dragging them into their worries. They didn’t want to panic Hoseok or upset Jungkook. So, they pretended that everyone was calm and fine. They fed Jimin his favorite dinner of noodles since he couldn’t eat anything after midnight. And he ended up getting most of his supper on his bib and his face and his hands, beaming and singing the whole time. Yoongi packed his overnight bag and they put him in his Eeyore onesie.

The only thing left to do was wait. And not…worry. They had been walked through what was going to happen during the procedure by Jimin’s neurologist. They had been assured that this was a pretty standard procedure, that the location of the artery that was ballooning was in a reachable location, that the aftercare was pretty straightforward.

They had gone over the risks.

The biggest being Jimin’s epilepsy and his other weak blood vessels. Dr. Patel was “concerned slightly above the normal amount” because Jimin’s anatomy was damaged. But, it was either take the risks and fix it now or have it pop. And that’s what they were vehemently trying to avoid.
Namjoon’s arms tightened around his baby as a weight flipped in his middle. His mother-in-law stirred next to him and he looked over at her.

“I think it’s time to put this one to sleep.” She said and patted Jungkook’s bottom. He was wearing his own pajamas and he showed Nini that he could brush his own teeth all by himself when he dragged her into the bathroom by the hand earlier.

“Do you need help?” Namjoon watched her get up with Jungkook in her arms, teetering a little once she was on her feet.

“No,” She said. “I got it. Stay here and enjoy your company.”

So, Namjoon did. He got up with Jimin and sat down facing the wrong way next to Yoongi on the piano bench. At this proximity, he could see the gold in Yoongi’s dark eyes. The shine that turned them into little solar eclipses. He leaned forward and kissed Hoseok’s head.

Yoongi stopped playing, his hands freezing over the keys. He said something, but Namjoon missed it.

“Come again?”

“He’s going to be okay, right?” Yoongi’s eyes were hard in his face.

Namjoon sucked in a breath, hitting the weight in his stomach again. He could see the light in Yoongi’s eyes morph into anxiety and he blurted “of course he is,” before his worries could construct any other sentences.

Yoongi’s shoulders fell, the tension releasing from them a little. “I know,” He said since he couldn’t sign with Hoseok in his lap. “That I shouldn’t be worried. That it’s not…proactive to be worried.”

“It’s okay.” Namjoon rubbed his arm. “I’m worried too. But, he has a good team of doctors and-,”

“Us.” Yoongi finished, his eyes dropping to Jimin in Namjoon’s arms. “He has us.”

“He has us.” Namjoon repeated, cupping Yoongi’s face. “And we’re going to be right there with him.”

Yoongi inhaled a deep breath and let it out, his lips hitching up. “He’s going to get so spoiled the next couple of weeks.”

Namjoon dropped his hand from Yoongi’s face to cup Jimin’s head. Jimin curled tighter and slotted his fingers into his mouth. “He already has us wound around his cute little fingers.”

Yoongi wrapped one arm around Hoseok and used the other to push Jimin’s hair back. “They all do.” He said and then his eyebrows furrowed for a second. “We suck at being foster parents.”

“What?” Namjoon snorted.

“We adopted them all.” Yoongi patted Hoseok’s back, his full gummy smile stretching over his face. “I’m just imagining my dad right now - ‘you were supposed to go to Yale and you moved to Brooklyn. You were supposed to become a lawyer and you got into music. You became a foster parent and adopted every child you took in. Can’t you do anything right?’”
Namjoon giggled. “It’s not possible for us to do things right.”

“Nope.” Yoongi wound his arms around Hoseok and nosed his head before looking back up at Namjoon. "And if this wrong, then I never want to be right.”

“So grumpy.” Namjoon said as he unbuckled Jimin from his carseat, his hands weakly trying to swat Namjoon away. His face was twisted like he was going to cry at any second and exhaustion made his eyes droopy.

It was four am and dark in the parking lot as Namjoon loaded Jimin into his wheelchair, buckling him in. Jimin squirmed and waved his arms in protest. Yoongi said something to him, cupping his face and kissing his forehead, but Namjoon couldn’t make out his lips in the low early morning light. Namjoon understood Jimin’s sour mood, however. They awoke him from a deep sleep to get him in the car and to the hospital before dawn.

They made their way to the hospital and up to the seventh floor where the pediatric neurological wing was, Namjoon pushing Jimin’s wheelchair and Yoongi carrying Jimin’s overnight duffle that had clothes and his bear and a couple of other things that were going to help him through his five day stay while he recovered. Namjoon and Yoongi were dressed similarly in sweats, seemingly ready to wait it out.

They checked in at the front desk that sat to the side of almost empty waiting room. The only other people was a mother and her teenaged daughter who had half of her head shaved like Skrillex circa 2009. The receptionist gave them all hospital bands - a patient one for Jimin and two visitor ones for Namjoon and Yoongi - and let them know that someone would come and gather them in a couple of minutes, so they took a seat in an empty row.

“Hi, Chim.” Yoongi said to Jimin - who was starting to nod off in his chair with his fingers in his mouth - keeping his hands busy as he fussed over their son. Jimin resurfaced to consciousness, his eyes finding Yoongi. He smiled a little and waved. “Peek-a-boo.” Yoongi played with him and Namjoon watched Jimin’s smile stretch farther over his face.

Jimin put both of his palms over his face - one on his cheek and the other just above his eye - and ripped them down. “Boo!” He said back, drool bubbling in the side of his mouth.

Namjoon traced his fingers over Yoongi’s knee as they played back and forth, inhaling deep breaths that seemed to have a hard time reaching all the way to the end of his lungs. He glanced at the clock and then averted his eyes. His surgery was going to take four to five hours as long as everything went well. He made a promise to himself that he wasn’t going to stare at the clock so would just drive himself crazy.

He felt a nudge and looked up to a scrub-dressed hospital employee smiling politely. “We are all ready for him.” She said.

Namjoon glanced down at Jimin, who was giggling with his fingers in his mouth. But, am I ready for you to take him?
Yoongi was trying to figure out if the hospital employees were so chipper at four in the morning because of the coffee, lifters, or just because it took a special breed of people to work pediatrics.

He tried to figure it out like it was a chemical formula to solve or the DaVinci code to crack as he followed the nurse down the hallway, his fingers wrapped around the handles of Jimin’s wheelchair. He was trying to figure out - even though he honestly didn’t really care - because he had to keep his mind focused on anything but the fact that his baby was going into surgery in less than an hour. He had to focus on the fear that was vibrating his insides like a tuning fork, emanating a frequency that was causing his ears to ring and his teeth to clench harshly together.

They were led to an empty patient room. Namjoon and Yoongi both changed Jimin out of his PJs and into the hospital gown he was given and placed him in the bed. He was fully awake now, his eyes roving on the ceiling and his fingers in his mouth. “Daddy.” He squeaked.

Yoongi sat down on edge of the bed as he watched the nurse start to attach nodes to his chest. “I’m right here, baby. Your daddies are here.”

Namjoon was standing, propping himself up on roll guard so he could get in Jimin’s line of sight. He pulled funny faces to make Jimin giggle and distract him from the cold stethoscope on his chest. “We love you.” He said and raked his feather-soft hair back.

“We love you so much.” Yoongi echoed, holding his hand. “You’re going to do just fine.” He said out loud, trying to will his heartbeat to go down.

It was a futile effort, however, when Yoongi watched Dr. Patel and a couple of other scrub-dressed hospital professionals come into Jimin’s room and Yoongi’s heart took off in his chest. “Good morning.” He greeted and Yoongi felt the noise in his head increase in volume.

“Good morning.” Namjoon responded back.

“Are we all ready to take care of this aneurysm today?” He asked and the other employees started to surround Yoongi’s son, forcing Yoongi to his feet to give him room. He held onto Namjoon’s hand tightly as he watched them shave his baby’s hair that Namjoon was just carding his fingers through, locks of shiny black falling onto his pillow.

“The whole procedure should only take about four hours.” Dr. Patel said, dressed ready in green scrubs and a surgical cap that had a pattern of boats on it. “We will be in and out in no time.”

“Daddy.” Jimin’s eyebrows furrowed as he surveyed the strangers above him. Yoongi jerked forward automatically to grip his hand.

“I’m right here, baby.” Yoongi said. Namjoon was right behind him, saying the same thing. They were here. They were right there for him.

“Daddy,” He said again, his face displeased. “Uh-oh.”

“It’s okay.” Yoongi said. “You’ll be okay.” He said, sounding like he was trying to convince himself more than Jimin.

“You’re gonna take a nice long nap.” Namjoon said. “And then when you wake up, you’ll get all the ice cream you want.” He smiled.

“We are all ready, Dads.” One of the nurses said.
Yoongi stepped back and watched the hospital workers click off the brakes with their foot and pull the roll guards into a locked position. He inhaled and they both followed the bed out of the room and down the hallway.

“You’re gonna do so great.” Namjoon said, cheerleading his son as he walked alongside the bed. “You’re such a strong boy. My little soldier.”

Yoongi kept his fingers locked around the roll guard as he stepped quickly next to it, trying to calm the noise inside of him, trying to placate the hurricane in his middle. *He’s going to be fine. He’s going to be fine. He’s going to be fine.* He kept chanting like a mantra in his head.

They stopped right before two large doors that had *OPERATING ROOM* printed on them.

“Alright, Dads,” One of the nurses said gently. “This is where we part.”

Yoongi’s heart stopped beating completely in his chest. His fingers tightened around the plastic of the roll guard and he dug his fingernails into it. The chanting in his head ceased, replaced by the buzz of anxiety under his skin.

Namjoon turned immediately and folded his long body over Jimin’s face. Jimin smiled and his fingers came up and grabbed Namjoon’s jaw. “Remember,” He said quietly. “That we love you and we will be right here waiting for you when you wake up.”

Yoongi forced himself to thaw and moved to stand next to Namjoon. He put on a smile and kissed Jimin’s forehead. “I love you so much.” Yoongi whispered to him. “You’re gonna be just fine.”

Jimin put his palm over his mouth and ripped it back. “Kiss!” He said with a big grin.

“Kiss.” Yoongi said and pressed his lips to Jimin’s forehead.

“Kiss.” Namjoon said and did the same. “Goodbye, baby. We’ll see you when you wake up.”

His palm turned outward. “Bye-bye.” He sang and they wheeled him past the doors, the nurses disappearing with their angel, their star, their son.

Namjoon’s fingers laced with Yoongi’s. “He’ll be okay.” He said quietly.

Yoongi didn’t dare look. He couldn’t. He was frozen with his eyes on the door. “Please,” He whispered. “Let that be true.”

Yoongi had brought things to do in the bag that sat in Jimin’s empty wheelchair - a puzzle book, his iPad, that sort of thing - but he couldn’t get his fingers to unwrap from around Namjoon’s biceps or his cheek off of Namjoon’s chest. He didn’t want to separate from Namjoon’s warm embrace. Or he couldn’t. He was fine with either.

Namjoon was staring at the clock like it was going to start doing tricks. His eyes darted to the television that played a morning news show every once in awhile, but mostly he just stared at the clock.

Yoongi kept pushing intrusive, anxious thoughts from his head and the feeling of his stomach twisting into knots down and instead focused on Namjoon’s slow breathing and his heartbeat,
composing his favorite song to the rhythm of his husband’s pulse, the melody Jimin’s made-up hums that he would sing to himself sometimes, Hoseok’s noises when he signed, Taehyung’s whistles, and Jungkook’s singing. His favorite song. The music of his soul.

It was only when a movement caught his eye did he unglue from Namjoon’s side. “Seokjin.” Yoongi jumped to his feet at the sight of their ex-case manager and best friend.

“Sorry,” Seokjin said gently, his hands carrying a paper market bag and a drink carrier of coffee cups. “It took me forever to find this floor.”

“What are you doing here?” Namjoon asked. “It’s almost six in the morning.”

Seokjin shrugged. “I knew Jimin’s surgery was today and I don’t sleep very well when I’m worried. So, I got up and…stress baked.” He glanced down at the bag, thrusting it out to them. “I thought you guys to use an actual breakfast instead of whatever the cafeteria is serving.”

“Oh, Jin,” Yoongi breathed. “You didn’t have to do that.”

“I know.” He said and sat down next to Namjoon. “I wanted to.” He started handing out coffees. “How’s Jimin doing?”

Yoongi glanced up at the clock. “We have about two and a half hours left.”

Seokjin pulled out a container of what looked to be cinnamon rolls. He handed them to Namjoon and then pulled out some napkins. “He’s going to be okay.” He said. “Jimin’s a trooper.”

“Yeah, he is.” Namjoon agreed and then glanced at the clock. His eyes tightened slightly.

“You know,” Seokjin said as he forced a cinnamon roll into Yoongi’s hands. They were still warm and covered in frosting. “When Jimin was four, he was hospitalized for three weeks. Don’t ask me what for, the only medicine I know is aspirin.” He laughed a squeaky laugh at his own joke. “A nurse told me he was her favorite patient. He was the only kid she knew that smiled through everything, even when it hurt.”

Yoongi glanced at the doors that led to the inside part of the pediatric neurological wing. “He’s always smiling.”

“Yeah,” Seokjin sighed and then bit into a cinnamon roll, sticky frosting smearing onto his upper lip. He glanced over at Yoongi. “Eat Yoongi.” He prompted. “You need the energy.”

Yoongi glanced down at the cinnamon roll. He wasn’t particularly hungry with his stomach all tied into knots, but Jin also went to all the trouble. He pulled off a piece and popped it into his mouth. “These are good.” He said around sticky sweet pastry. He washed it down with some coffee. That hit the spot. He thought as he let the warmth put some feeling back into his fingers.

“I know.” Seokjin said and smiled a little. Namjoon absently chewed on his own cinnamon roll as he stared at the clock. “I baked them. He bent over to the bag on the floor. “I brought,” Seokjin pulled out Cards Against Humanity. “A game.”

“I love this game.” Namjoon said, finally averting his eyes from the clock. He finished his cinnamon roll and then pulled the box into his lap. “Do you have the expansion packs?” He asked and started to pull the lid off the box.

“Of course.” Seokjin said.
Yoongi felt himself deflate a little. “Thanks, Jin,” he said sincerely. “We needed this.”

Seokjin’s smile grew a little. “I know.” He said and glanced at the doors, his smile fading just a little. “I know.”

Chapter End Notes

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And you can find me on twt
“Hope,” Namjoon read as he held the black and white cards in his hands. “is a slippery slope that leads to…” He picked up the white card. “A disappointing birthday party.”

Seokjin’s lips pulled back to reveal gritted teeth and Yoongi snorted dryly. “That hits,” Yoongi signed, his smile over his face but his eyes tired and worried. “way too close to home.”

“I felt that one in my soul.” Namjoon said, being all too reminded of Seokie’s failure of a birthday back in February and picked up the other stack. “Depression is a slippery slope that leads to…”

Yoongi’s eyes averted to his cell phone on his lap and Namjoon stopped to watch him answer the incoming FaceTime, his face twisting happy as he held up the phone. “Hi, Taehyungie.” He answered and moved in his seat so Namjoon could see Tae’s eyeball and part of his nose. “You have to move the camera back a little. Dad can’t see your mouth.”

“Daddy,” Tae signed with one hand. He looked like he was walking by the way his bangs were moving. “Nini made chocolate chip pancakes.”

“She did?” Yoongi asked.

“Yeah,” Tae said. “In the shape of Mickey. Seokie got sad that you weren’t here to share so I asked Nini to call you.” He got up on a dining room chair. “When are you coming home?”

Namjoon resisted the compulsion to look up at the clock. He had broke his promise to himself that he wasn’t going to stare at the clock the whole time, knowing each tick, tick, tick of the second hand just felt like a razor blade being poked into his brain. But, that’s where his eyes went anyway as he watched it, praying for anyway it could go faster so the worry could be lifted from his shoulders and pulled out of his husband’s dark eyes.

“Well,” Yoongi started to sign and then his hand froze mid-air. “Well, one of us will probably stay here with Chim so he doesn’t get lonely.”

“Can we see Chim?” Tae angled the camera so that Hoseok was in frame. He smiled his wide, beaming smile when he caught Yoongi and waved.

“In a couple of days. He’s going to have to sleep for awhile to get better.” Yoongi explained gently.

“Is Chim okay?” Hoseok’s eyebrows screwed together.
Namjoon felt the compulsion again and gave into it this time, glancing up at the clock. They had an hour left. “He’s okay. He’s still in surgery.” Namjoon signed quickly.

“Can I talk to Nini?” Yoongi requested.

“Okay,” Tae said and slid off the chair. He passed by Jungkook who was hopping around, his hair flying around on his head. “Bye Daddy. I love you.” He signed and handed the phone off.

“I love you too.” Yoongi said and Namjoon signed behind him.

“Good morning.” Namjoon’s mother-in-law signed in the camera.

Namjoon averted his eyes to the clock again. Only a moment had passed by. He sighed and twisted in his chair, feeling restless and anxious. He felt a tap on his leg and looked at Seokjin, who had cards in his hand. Namjoon accepted them with a little smile. “Thanks.”

“He’s going to be okay.”

“I know.” Namjoon said and looked at the clock again, watching the hand tick by. “I just want it to be over.”

“How have the kids been?” Yoongi asked his mother as he watched her prop the phone up on the counter as she worked over something on the stove.

“Good.” She said. “Uh, Kookie had a moment this morning when he couldn’t find you.”

“Is he okay now?”

“Yeah,” She smiled a little. “Seokie distracted him with dancing.”

“How is Hoseok?” Yoongi chewed on his lower lip.

She sucked in a breath. “Also a little upset that you weren’t here this morning.” She picked up the phone and spun it to show Hoseok sitting at the dining room table popping grapes into his mouth from his plate. “But, when Jungkook became upset he was a good big brother and calmed himself down to help.”

“His therapist said he’s getting good remembering the techniques she taught him to calm himself down.” Yoongi smiled proudly.

“We’re doing well, dumpling.” She said. “Focus on Jimin, okay? We’ll be here.”

“Okay, eomma.”

“And, I just want to let you know how proud I am of you.” She said. “Your boys are kind and loving and a reflection of their amazing fathers.”

Yoongi blushed at the praise. “That’s all Namjoon. The only thing I’m teaching them is snark.”

“And your sense of humor came from me, so really I am teaching them that.” She smiled
teasingly.

“Ah, that’s right.” Yoongi said and ran his fingers through his hair, his eyes going to the large doors that housed the pediatric neurological wing of the children’s hospital they were in. They whooshed open and Dr. Patel emerged, his fingers untying the knot of his surgical cap. Yoongi’s heart skipped three beats. “The surgeon is here,” Yoongi said quickly. “I’ll call you later.”

“Okay, bye. I’ll—,”

But, Yoongi had hung up on her as they all snapped to attention. Yoongi felt the last 6 hours of anxiety compound in him all at once. He clamped his lips together, feeling like a tea kettle about to burst.

The surgeon smiled gently. “He did great. We completely tied the aneurysm and he’s in recovery now.”

Namjoon and Yoongi both deflated at the same time, their forms melting into each other as relief flooded through them. Yoongi inhaled air completely for the first time. “That’s great.” Namjoon said after the moment of just…breathing. “Thank you so much, doctor.”

“My pleasure.” He said. “A nurse will come grab you when he’s been set up in his room.”


Yoongi just laced his fingers through Namjoon’s and smiled. He was fine. He sighed. Jimin was fine.

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He was not fine.

“Oh, baby.” Namjoon said as they entered Jimin’s room to a face that was wrapped all the way around in gauze so tight he looked like a bowl of risen dough that needed to be punched down heating red with tears. “Oh, baby. You’re okay.”

“Ouch.” Jimin squeaked, his hands rising weakly to where his stitches were. He had gauze wrapped tightly around his head too. A helmet of white bandage. “Ouch.”

They had been warned by the nurse that got them that Jimin would probably be upset for the rest of the day out of confusion from coming out of anesthesia and pain and being jostled and whatnot. Yoongi used the rhythm of their quick steps on the tile to put his frayed nerves back together.

“I’m so excited to see him.” Namjoon had signed, almost bouncing like a giddy child down the hallway. “He’s going to get a million kisses and cuddles and I’m just going to hold him and tell him how much I love him and—,”

But, they have both froze in the doorway. Jimin looked so small huddled at the head of the bed, his head all wrapped up and his face twisting with tears. My baby boy. Yoongi had thought, his breath catching. That’s my baby boy.

“Ouch.” Jimin croaked.
And then they both bolted right to his side.

“You’re okay.” Namjoon was repeating, his fingers tracing gently over his arm. “You did so well, Jimin. It’s all over now.”

Yoongi brushed tears from his face, feeling his heart clench to see him in pain, his lower lip pouting out and his fingers touching his bandages. But, it was over now. He’ll get better and it’ll be okay.

Jinm’s head turned towards the touches. He turned his head and winced. “Daddy?”

Both Yoongi and Namjoon got into his face, brushing their lips against his cheeks. He was salty. “Hi, sweetheart.”

“Daddy.” Jimin smiled a little, his eyes finding them. He winced again and pouted. “Ouch.” He said and sighed.

“I know.” Yoongi murmured against his forehead. “It sucks. But, we’re right here. You’re just fine now.”

You’re just fine.

“I got to get to work.” Seokjin said as he put a stuffed chick in Jimin’s arms. A nice nurse had come in with some high-velocity pain medication and Jimin was currently orbiting the ionosphere, his mouth open and low groans emanating from him. Yoongi had pulled up a chair next to his bed and was giving him kisses and wiping his mouth of drool. “Keep me updated?”

Namjoon got to his feet from where he had sat down in the green vinyl chair next to Jimin’s bed. “Thank you for coming.” He pulled Seokjin into a hug before he could shyly decline it. “It means a lot to the both of us.”


“Can you say ‘bye-bye?’”

Jinm managed to get his hand up but it thumped back down and he turned slightly towards Yoongi, groaning again. Yoongi pressed his lips to his chubby cheek that was squished out because of bandages. There were a bunch of stuffed animals circling him now. Guardian soldiers ready to comfort their Jinm.

“You’re okay. I’m right here.” Yoongi took Jimin’s silky cloth that he remembered to pack and rubbed it on his cheek. “You’re okay.”

Seokjin left for the day, leaving both Namjoon and Yoongi and the random nurse that would pop in to do their job checking bandages or dropping off food or dumping things in Jinm’s IV line.

Namjoon started a waiting of a different kind. Instead of staring at the clock, he stared at Jinm.
Instead of staring at the hands moving around the face, counting the seconds. He counted eyelashes and the amount of time his fist opened and closed. He watched him fall in and out of sleep as he started healing from his surgery, greeting him every time he opened his eyes to love. He preferred this version of waiting. At least this version he could be right here next to his baby.

Soon it was lunchtime and the staff gave Jimin a tray of easy foods to eat.

Namjoon played airplane with Jimin, spooning rice pudding into his open mouth. Yoongi cleaned his face of anything that didn't make it in and held his hand.

“I know it’s not ice cream.” Namjoon said to Jimin as he continued to feed him. “I tried. They said it might give a brain freeze so you have to wait a couple of days for that.”

Jimin’s lips pursed out as he chewed and swallowed. His eyes squinted a little and he started to babble, his eyebrows furrowing dramatically under the line of the bandages. Yoongi caught the dribble of rice pudding with a napkin and smiled. “There he is.” Yoongi said, his smile stretched wide over his face. “There is our Chim.”

“Chim.” He grabbed the sheets that were covering his body and ripped them off. “Daddy.” He said.

“We’re right here.” Yoongi patted his leg and fixed his blankets for him. Jimin tore them back again. “You gotta stay in bed, though.”

“He’s bouncing back so fast. Look at him.” Namjoon joked as he tried to coax some more food into him. “Already tired of the hospital.”

His fingers went to his bandages and gripped and Namjoon and Yoongi both ripped his hands away from his own head. “No, baby.” Namjoon said as he held Jimin’s hand down. “Don’t play with those.”

“You have to leave them alone.”

Jimin’s face heated red and he started to cry. Namjoon threw the spoon back into the rice pudding cup before abandoning it on the roll cart and holding Jimin’s hand. Fussiness was to be expected, but it still stabbed at Namjoon’s soul watching Jimin suffer, watching the confusion enter his eyes and not being able to explain that going through all of this was necessary.

“Shhhh.” Yoongi said as he lowered the head of the bed a little. “You’re okay.

“Should we ask for more pain meds?”

Yoongi signed “yes,” back with his fist as he gently carded his fingers through the patch of Jimin’s hair that wasn’t under bandages.

Namjoon hit the call button and rearranged his blankets around him. The nurse came in and dumped a syringe-full of medication into Jimin’s IV and he calmed down and started to sink towards sleep.

“You should go home.” Namjoon said after a couple of moments of watching Jimin fight unconsciousness. His eyes were at half-mast from the drugs and he chewed on his own fist.

Yoongi bristled up at Namjoon’s words, his eyes flashing. “I’m not leaving-.” He started to sign.
“Tonight.” Namjoon finished in sign. “Go get some rest in your own bed. I can stay here with Jimin.”

Yoongi’s form deflated. “I can stay here too.” He signed back. But, Namjoon could see the dark circles under his eyes and the way they had laid in bed wide awake and stewing in anxiety the night before catching up to him.

“I know,” Namjoon glanced up at the television that was playing some old sitcom. “But, the other boys need us too.”

Yoongi winced. “My mom said that Jungkook was pretty unhappy when he couldn’t find us this morning.”

Namjoon rubbed his forehead. “It’s going to be a rough couple of weeks.” He said. “But, the worst is over. Now, we just have to take it a day at a time.”

Yoongi nodded. “I can go home tonight and then come back first thing tomorrow morning and-,”

“Don’t rush.” Namjoon looked down at Jimin who was still awake, but stoned and happy now. “With the amount of morphine in Jimin’s system, he probably doesn’t even realize we’re missing.” He joked.

Yoongi’s lips hitched up into a little smile. “That’s true.” He ran his fingers down Jimin’s arm. “He’s on cloud nine.” He sighed. “One day at a time.”

Namjoon reached across Jimin’s bed and gripped Yoongi’s hand. “It’s not going to be easy, but we’ll get through it.”

Yoongi’s eyes locked with his. “We always have.”

“Daddy!”

Yoongi squatted as he came through the front door to accept Tae’s hug. Hoseok was quickly on his heels, crushing his body into Yoongi’s shoulder and making unsure, anxious noises. “Hi, babies.” Yoongi gripped the both of them, pressing kisses to heads and breathing in strawberry shampoo.


“Is Chim okay?” Hoseok signed. “And Dad?”

“Where’s Daddy?”

Jungkook interrupted by shooting into room from the back hallway, barreling full sprint into Yoongi’s embrace. He hugged around Yoongi’s neck tight, sobbing lowly under Yoongi’s hands. Yoongi pulled away and cupped his face.

“Why are you crying?” Yoongi raked his long hair out of his eyes and watched him sniff and cough.
“Kookie missed you.” Yoongi’s mom stepped into the entryway.

“You’re okay.” Yoongi let himself fall onto his butt, pulling Jungkook into his lap. Jungkook was pretty go with the flow, but this routine shakeup was definitely getting to him. “I’m right here.” He rubbed up and down his back.

“Daddy,” Tae rose on his toes. “Where’s Chim?”

“He’s in the hospital.” Yoongi signed.

Tae deflated. “When is he coming home?”

“He’s got a couple of more days.” Yoongi said. “He’s doing okay, though. The doctor’s just want to make sure he’s good to go before they release him.”

Tae started to pout, his form deflating a little. “But, I miss him.”

Yoongi jerked to comfort him, but couldn’t move with Jungkook clinging to him. He watched Hoseok move in. “It’s okay, Tae. He’ll be home soon.” He signed.

That didn’t stop Tae from jamming both of his fists into his eye sockets. Hoseok anxiously wrung his fingers and looked at Yoongi. Yoongi glanced down at Jungkook, who was breathing through his stuffed up nose, tears still rimming his lashes. Yoongi sighed and glanced up at his mother. “Sorry.” He breathed lowly. He didn’t really know what he was apologizing for. But, he felt the need to apologize anyway.

His mother just placed her hands on her hips and shook her head. “Come on, dumpling.” She motioned. “I made dinner. Let’s get you something to eat.”

“Jimin,” Namjoon sang as he leaned over Jimin’s roll guard. “Can you say ‘bye-bye’ to Daddy?” He held up the cell phone to get Jimin into view on FaceTime.


“Bye-bye, baby. Goodnight.” Yoongi said on the small cell phone screen. He was already in bed, Jungkook curled on his lap and Hoseok tucked against his side. Tae had already talked to Chim - that’s what prompted the phone call to begin with - eliciting the biggest smile Namjoon had seen on Jimin all day once he heard Tae’s voice.

“Goodnight, Yoonie.” Namjoon signed.

“Goodnight, Joonie.” Yoongi signed back with a little smile. “I’ll see you tomorrow. I love you.”

“I love you too.”

They ended the phone call and Namjoon turned to Jimin. He had just finished a lavish dinner of alphabet-shaped noodles in some sort of red meat sauce and a cup of apple juice, had been jostled by the nurse that made him cry, had more medicine dumped into his IV - which he tried to pull out at one point - and watched three episodes of Full House with Namjoon.
“You have had a busy day.” Namjoon said, catching drool with a washcloth he was given. “Are you ready to go to sleep?”

Jimin’s head turned and he reached out towards Namjoon.

“You want to finished your pudding first?” Namjoon had collapsed the roll guard so he could sit next to Jimin on the bed, being extra careful of his lines. He loaded the spoon up with a little pudding and handed the handle to Jimin. “Let’s finish dessert and then we can go to sleep. Huh?”

Jimin brought the spoon to his own mouth, missing and smearing most of it on his cheek. He got a little of it in his mouth, causing him to giggle and smile as he waved the spoon towards Namjoon to load it up again.

“Daddy.” Jimin held out his spoon. “Ball?”

“Ball?” Namjoon repeated. “No ball. We have to finish dessert and go to sleep.” He propped his head up and watched Jimin feed himself another spoonful of pudding. It would be easier just to feed him, but Namjoon didn’t want him to lose the skills he had picked up in school.

“Ball?” Jimin asked again. Namjoon wiped the chocolate ring from his face and replaced the spoon in his hand with his silky. He threw it towards his feet and giggled.

“You want to play so badly.” Namjoon smiled and blew a raspberry under his chin, being extra gentle. “Sleep all day and play all night, huh?” He pretended to eat his hand.

Jimin just beamed, the bandages pressing on his forehead, making his smile extra squinty. Namjoon dotted kisses on his cheek. “I love you so much.” Namjoon said and pulled back to look into his face. “Can you say ‘love you?’”

Jimin focused on him for a nanosecond, his lips parting. And then he ripped into a big smile. “Daddy.”

“That’s me. And you are Chim.”

“Chim.” He beamed and Namjoon kissed his cheek.

Namjoon pulled back, cleaning up the pudding cup and rearranging stuffed animals and tucking Jimin into bed. He finally yawned and winced with the movement before sighing and settling. Namjoon turned him slightly and got a pillow under his side - like they do at home - when he felt a touch on his arm. He looked next to him at the night nurse - this older, uptight lady that wasn’t half as good as the dayshift nurse.

“What are you doing?” She asked.

“I’m getting Jimin on his side so he could sleep.” Namjoon didn’t really have inflection, but he really hoped that his tone came out sounding like a ‘duh.’ “Like we do every night.”

“You’re going to pull his IV doing that.” The nurse said as she pulled the pillow out from underneath him.

“He needs to sleep at an angle.” Namjoon argued. “He’s always slept at angle so he doesn’t aspirate drool.”

The nurse’s forehead crumpled. “He doesn’t need to be turned on his side.”
“What?” Namjoon asked, genuinely confused. “We’ve always turned him on his side. He can’t do it himself.”

“Well, don’t.” She scolded. “It can pull his lines and put pressure on his incision.”

Namjoon watched her huff away before turning back to Jimin and pursing out his lips. That didn’t sound right. They *always* turned him on his side. That was one of the first things Hazel taught them. He sighed and glanced at the door where he could see the nurses’ station. He didn’t want to mess with Jimin’s healing, however. And they were the professionals. He covered him in blankets and kissed his cheek before retiring on the rollaway that was brought to the room. He guessed that if Jimin needed him, he would be right there next to him.

Always right there.

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!

And you can find me on twt
Namjoon was sitting in a white room. The only other thing besides himself in the room was a small row of gray chairs and a gray carpet. It was white and empty otherwise. He was confused momentarily over where he was and started to get up when a touch had him whipping around. He breathed out a sigh of relief when he saw the familiar, slightly slouched form of his husband. “Yoongi,” he breathed. “You scared me.”

“Can you believe we are here?” His grin was wide over his face, showing off his top row of teeth and gums.

“Here?” Namjoon asked, confused. “Where is here?”

“The hospital.” Yoongi signed. “For our grandchild.”

“Grandchild?” Namjoon looked around the room. So this was a…waiting room? Why did it feel so empty and cold. And where was… “Where is Jimin?”

Yoongi’s smile evaporated and his eyebrows furrowed. “Jimin…he…”

Namjoon woke up in a start, air blowing out of him like a balloon. It was a dream. He thought. Just a dream. His thoughts chased by the sudden realization that he wasn’t the only person in the room.

He looked over to a couple of scrub-dressed staff members huddling around Jimin’s bed. Concern blew up inside of him like a solar flare and he slid off of the rollaway to see what the problem was. “Is everything okay?” He asked cautiously.

Nobody turned to answer him. He moved to see what was going on past them, but they hovered like bees around a honeypot, blocking his view. Namjoon watched them lower the head of Jimin’s bed and unwind stethoscopes from around their necks. A weight of fear and dread dropped down into Namjoon’s stomach, making him nauseous.

“Please,” Namjoon said. “Is he okay?”

One of them hit a button on the wall and Namjoon could see a light flashing outside the door. The weight suddenly made it hard to breathe in air as he started to panic.

“Please.” He stepped forward, his fingers finding a shoulder. “Please tell me.”

The person he touched turned around. Namjoon could finally see past her into Jimin’s bed - to where Jimin’s lips were turning blue and he had spaghetti-colored vomit on his cheek and hospital gown.
“…come and get you.” Namjoon caught the nurse saying.

“What’s wrong with him?” Namjoon demanded, the knots in his stomach tightening.

“Sir,” She started pushing Namjoon towards the door, her gloved hands on his forearms. “Please, wait outside and someone will come get you when we are finished.”

“Did he have a seizure?” Namjoon just demanded, only really catching about a third of what the nurse was saying over the static in his head. He was too focused on the way a nurse had started doing chest compressions on his baby. They were doing chest compressions on Jimin. “Is he okay? Why are his lips blue?” Desperation filled him up, ballooned him out, made him feel like was going to pop.

His last question was answered when he watched a group of nurses and a doctor come screaming down the hallway with a crash cart. Namjoon moved out of their way and watched from the doorway with horror as they all circled around Jimin’s bed.

Namjoon had stood at the end of a gun at point-blank range. Namjoon had been in a car accident that rolled his family vehicle six times and killed both of his parents. Namjoon had been beat thrice by one foster father hard enough that he was pretty sure he sprained his ankle. Namjoon had - in comparison to others - been through some scary shit.

Nothing, nothing, beat the black ice of fear he felt watching his son flatline.

It was the type of fear that made every single second come through in vivid technicolor. It was the type of fear that stole the feeling from your joints. The type of fear that banished thoughts. The type of fear that made crushed you in like an empty soda can.

It was the type of fear that consumed you.

He stared - his mouth open and his legs rooted to the ground - as the doctor pulled off the paddles of the defibrillator. Namjoon thought for a second he was still in a dream. Because where else would he have watched them do this? TV? A movie? Definitely not real life. This wasn’t real life. It couldn’t be. The way the doctor loaded the paddles up with goo. The way everyone took a half-step back. The way Jimin’s body popped off the bed.

It wasn’t real. It couldn’t be real.

The fear told him it was real. The fear that was snaking around Namjoon’s middle and his throat, choking him out and making it hard to inhale air. He felt himself back up, trying to get away from it. He hit the wall and pressed his fingertips into it as Jimin’s body popped again. Everyone stopped to watch the monitors around his head, sighing a little when the screens showed what they wanted.

He watched the nurses and doctors shift around, pulling the bed from the wall. He watched the way they urgently spoke to each other, their faces grave. He watched them insert a plastic tube into Jimin’s mouth and then he couldn’t watch anymore. His eyes clamped shut on their own and he prayed that he was still in a dream. That he was going to wake up and Jimin was going to be fine.

A touch startled him and he jumped, hitting the wall with his body. He opened his eyes to a nurse.

“Sir,” She said, looking concerned. “I’m gonna have to ask you to-,”

“Is Jimin alright?” He demanded. “Is my son okay?”
“He had a seizure and it…grew complicated.” She said quickly and Namjoon wasn’t even sure if he got that right. “Please, take a seat in the waiting room and we will-,”

Namjoon’s skin erupted into flames at the prospect of him leaving Jimin’s side. During this? “I’m not going to anywhere.” He shook his head. “That’s my son.”

“Sir, we need room to-,”

“Is he okay?”

“We will have some more answers for you in a bit, okay?” She said and motioned to the door. “Please.”

Namjoon clenched his fists and smashed his teeth together but conceded and shakily moved to the hallway. He watched a squeeze-thing being affixed to the tube in Jimin’s mouth before the nurse pulled the curtain, blocking his view.

Namjoon sunk against the wall, gripping the wood chair rail that ran the length of the hallway to keep himself from melting into a puddle on the floor and violently ran his fingers through his hair. He had been three feet away from Jimin. Why didn’t he wake up? Why didn’t he sense that his child needed help?

He choked out a sob. This was all his fault. He was right there. He was right. There. He could’ve intervened. He could’ve…done something. Got help sooner. Or something.

But, he didn’t. And now his baby coded? Flatlined? He…died.

He died.

And they brought him back. And now what?

He sucked in a breath. What should he do? He couldn’t think. It just felt like his head was full of static. Jimin. Jimin was front and center. He was…dead. He had died. But, they defibrillated him back. But…

Namjoon glanced into his room before shakily pulling his phone out of his hoodie pocket. He paused as another wave of grief and guilt washed through him, tears making it impossible to see his screen. He pressed his hand to his mouth as he tried to pull himself together. If he called Yoongi like this, it’ll just cause him to panic. He had to be strong.

But, who would be strong for him?

Yoongi answered the phone on the first ring.

He knew he should’ve been sleeping. But, he had Hoseok pressing his toes into his ribcage and Jungkook curled behind him overheating him like a hot water bottle and Tae sighing in his sleep as they all had piled into bed together. And Yoongi had really come to terms with the fact that he probably would not get any sleep while Jimin was in the hospital. The anxiety buzzing in the back of his head wasn’t going to let him.

So, when his phone rang that he had a FaceTime shortly after one am, he answered on the first
“Yoongi,” Namjoon said, his face puffy and red. He was crying. Yoongi stopped breathing. Fuck. Namjoon was crying. Something happened. Something happened. Something happened.

“What’s going on?” Yoongi demanded as he carefully untangled himself from bed. He basically sprinted to their closet and yanked a random hoodie off the shelf and threw it on before finding his slides.

“Um,” Namjoon raked his fingers through his hair. “Jimin had a seizure and…” His face started twist and he choked out a sob. “And I think he flatlined because they brought the cart in with the paddles that you see in, like, Grey’s Anatomy and-,”

Yoongi froze, pulling his head through his hoodie and focusing on Namjoon, unsure if he heard that right or if the sudden ringing in his ears from panic was making him hallucinate audibly. “What?” He signed.

“He…” Namjoon’s hand flipped with the sign for ‘died’ and Yoongi actually felt a wave of nausea wash over him. He gripped the wall of the closet for support as dread pulled him down to the ground. “But, they brought him back with the paddles. I don’t know what’s happening now. They kicked me out of the room.”

“I’m on my way.” Yoongi managed, trying to will away the bile burning in the back of his throat. “Just hold on, okay? It’ll be okay.”

Namjoon nodded. “Okay. I’ll call you if anything else happens.” He signed and then disconnected.

Yoongi jogged through his house, gathering his wallet and keys. “Eomma,” He said as he emerged into the living room where his mother was sleeping on their pull-out. He shook her awake. “Eomma, Jimin had an emergency. I’m going to the hospital.”

“Is everything okay?” She asked as she sat up and squinted.

“I don’t know.” Yoongi said, his breath catching again. He couldn’t sit and dwell, however, as much as his mind wanted him too. He had to get to the hospital. He had to get to Namjoon. He had to get to Jimin. “I’m going now. The kids are asleep.”

“Okay,” She nodded and followed Yoongi to the garage door. “Drive safe, dumpling.”

Yoongi started to heave breaths as he got into the SUV and missed the push-to-start on the dash the first time he went for it. He gripped the steering wheel. Focus. He ordered himself, fighting off the impending panic attack. Your family needs you.

His resolution wavered as he approached the massive children’s hospital and up to the seventh floor, jogging through the hallways with a loud slap, slap, slap of his sandals against the tile flooring. Please be okay. Please be okay.

He found Namjoon outside of Jimin’s hospital room - his fingers gripping the wood chair rail - and his face. Yoongi ran right into his arms without any warning. Namjoon stiffened and then melted a second later when he recognized who it was. “Yoongi,” He breathed. “This is all my fault. I was three feet away from him and-,”

“No,” Yoongi said fiercely, panic bubbling over inside of him a little. It came out more forcefully than he meant. “This is not your fault, Namjoon.” He said and signed.
Namjoon’s eyes widened slightly, but then carded his fingers through his hair. “I watched him…code.” He started to sob. “Nobody’s updated me yet. I don’t know what’s going on.”

Yoongi just pressed into him again, feeling ice cold with fear. He felt his fingernails dig into Namjoon’s arms and tried not to focus too hard on the fact that he almost lost his baby. “It’s going to be okay.” He whispered, knowing full-well that his deaf husband couldn’t hear him.

A doctor - not Patel, so Yoongi assumed the night shift doctor or whatever - came out of the room looking grave. Something wrenched violently in Yoongi’s middle and he felt a wave of nausea wash over him again. His vision started to tunnel and he had to focus hard on not collapsing like a house of cards onto the floor.

“We had a bit of scare, but Jimin is currently stable.” He began and Yoongi shakily signed his words. “He had a seizure. This can be a risk after anesthesia even on an anti-seizure medication just due to stress and swelling and whatnot. Some vomit got into his lungs, cutting off his airways-,”

Namjoon clumsily jerked forward like all of his limbs suddenly grew their own sentience and were moving on their own. “That nurse.” He hissed.

“What?” Yoongi signed.

“She said that it was going to pull his line being on his side.” Namjoon said and shook his head. “I should’ve put him on his side and then this wouldn’t-,”

“Stop it.” Yoongi cut him off. “Stop blaming yourself. This isn’t your fault.” He turned back to the doctor. “What now?”

“The lack of oxygen is what caused him to crash.” Yoongi’s fingers went cold and he had to flex them to get feeling back into them to interpret the next part. “We brought him back and have intubated him.” The doctor said.

“What does that mean?” Namjoon asked.

“He’s currently on a machine that is breathing for him.” He said. “We’re going to try and clear his airways but…” The doctor winced a little. “His blood pressure isn’t…stable. And if it gets too high we put him at risk for a stroke.”

“Stroke?” Yoongi blurted. Strokes are what middle-aged men who ate McDonald’s six out of seven days of the week had. Not his seven-year-old son. Not his little boy.

The doctor nodded. “But, if we don’t clear his airways, he will develop pneumonia.”

Yoongi and Namjoon shared a look, disbelief and panic mirrored in their eyes.

They were kicked out to the waiting room while they got an X-ray of Jimin’s chest. Yoongi had sat down in the empty waiting room chair, the thin gray padding turning into his own version of
hell. He ran his fingers through his hair and massaged the hollows under his ears, trying to fight through ringing in his head.

Namjoon was pacing around, mumbling to himself in sign, his eyes watering again. Yoongi watched him walk tight circles, looking half-mad. Yoongi had never seen him so...unraveled. He never panicked. He was always the light when it was most dark. The star of hope in the night sky.

The ringing increased in Yoongi’s head and he fought the urge to cover his own ears. Instead he waved his hand to get Namjoon’s attention.

“This isn’t your fault.” He signed.

“Yoongi,” He signed back. “I watched him crash. I watched them bring him back. I watched them paddle him like in the movies.” He signed and then jammed his fingers in his eyes.

“What happened with the nurse? Last night?” Yoongi signed, his hands calm even thought he felt like there was a whole hurricane twisting inside of him.

“I was getting Jimin ready for bed. I put him on his side and then the nurse came in and told me not to do that. That it could put pressure on his wound and stuff and put him back on his back.” Namjoon signed. “And I left him like that because ‘she’s the professional’ or whatever.” He shook his head. “I should’ve just put him back on his side. I’m his dad, right? I know better than some stupid nurse.”

Yoongi scrubbed his eyes. “This isn’t your fault.” He echoed in sign. “You were just...doing as you were told.”

“You keep saying that.” Namjoon argued. “But, it feels like my fault. I was right there. And I didn’t...” He dropped his hands and shook his head.

Yoongi pulled himself to his feet. “He’ll be okay.” He signed.

“Are you sure?” Namjoon asked, his eyes wide and scared. The ringing in Yoongi’s head grew louder and he could feel himself edging towards a panic attack.

“He has to be.” Yoongi whispered.

Namjoon felt like breaking down. And he guessed he was already. But, he kept trying to pull himself together, trying to listen to his husband that repeated “this isn’t your fault,” like a broken record, trying to be strong for Yoongi. For Jimin.

So, he spent the time they followed the nurse back down the hallway stitching himself back up, sniffling back tears, pulling himself together. He can do this. Jimin was front and center. He had to focus on him and not the guilt that was trying to drag him to the floor. He was stronger than this. He had to be stronger than this.

But, not strong enough for he saw in that hospital room.

Jimin was in his bed, like Namjoon had left him. He had his bandages. He had that strange tubular pillow-thing that surrounded his head. But, he now had a tube in mouth, clear and plastic
held in place by a blue mouthpiece that was velcroed around his face. There were more machines and screens now, cycling through numbers and graphs as they all did their jobs in the fight for Jimin’s life.

_This is all of your fault. Namjoon thought. This is all of your fault. You weren’t there for your son and now he’s barely hanging on. This is your fault._

A pain in his hand caused him to come back to earth and he looked down to Yoongi’s eyes wide as he took everything in and his fingernails digging into the back of Namjoon’s hand. His breathing was rapid and shallow as he started to

“Yoongi,” Namjoon whispered and wrapped his arm around Yoongi’s shoulders. _I’m sorry. I’m sorry._ He wanted to say but didn’t. Yoongi just pressed his palm over his mouth and turned into Namjoon’s embrace, burying his face into Namjoon’s shoulder.

“He’s asleep,” The nurse said. “Under sedation so he doesn’t fight the ventilator. Once the doctors finish looking at the x-rays to see where the food he inhaled is, then we can start clearing it out.” She turned and started fiddling with lines.

“Thank you.” Namjoon mumbled back numbly, his eyes falling back on Jimin. He looked so small under the sheets, under the harsh fluorescent lights. Too small.

The nurse stopped on her way out, casting them a sympathetic glance. “Kids are resilient.” She said. “They bounce back quickly.”

“But why,” Namjoon felt tears choke him out as he stared at his son. “Does he have to bounce back at all?”

Chapter End Notes

don’t hate me don’t hate me don’t hate me don’t hate me don’t hate me don’t hate me don’t hate me don’t hate me don’t hate me don’t hate me don’t hate me don’t hate me don’t hate me don’t hate me don’t hate me
chapter warnings: panic attack

As a writer, I love suspense. As a reader, I also love suspense lol. But, I also hate not knowing what comes next. So, I'm trying very, very hard to get these next chapters out quickly so you guys know what happens next!

A good background song to this chapter is ocean eyes by Billie Eilish

Yoongi felt like his worst nightmares - the ones that would find him in the darkest nights - were coming alive. He, honestly, couldn’t believe that this was happening. That he was watching his baby boy fight for his life.

Yoongi felt like his feet were floating, that the pattern of the tile floor was swirling, that he wasn’t actually here. This was a mistake. Another nightmare he was going to wake up from in his own bed. He was going to roll over and find Jimin on the video baby monitor sleeping with his hand pressed under his cheek, drool making a stain on his pillow case.

But, he didn’t wake up. He didn’t wake up when he approached the bed that fenced in Jimin on both sides with roll guards. When he entered the bright, white light that made Jimin’s cheeks look pale and his eyelids rosy. When he heard the whooshing and sighing and beeping of the machines around him.

Yoongi didn’t wake up when he slid his fingers under Jimin’s. And that’s how he knew that this wasn’t a dream. This was reality. This was their reality.

Yoongi traced each line that fed out of him, starting with the ventilator tube that stuck out of his mouth and traced to a machine that had a large screen that danced between bar graphs. To the monitor clipped to his finger. There was a blood pressure cuff that automatically started to fill with air. And all the IVs feeding into his arm.

Yoongi gripped the roll guard to keep himself from floating away or popping like a balloon or throwing up. He was vaguely aware of Namjoon on the other side of the bed, lowering himself down on a chair and running his fingers through his hair again. Yoongi glanced at all the machinery again - everything foreign and cold and clinical - and became hyperaware of how overwhelmed he felt. How useless he felt.

And he dove headfirst into a panic attack.

“Yoongi,” Namjoon was back on his feet, somehow in front of Yoongi. He didn’t touch Yoongi - he knew that they made them worse. But, his hands hovered over him as Yoongi started chasing breaths, feeling pulled down into a deep, dark sea of dread. He couldn’t see the surface. He couldn’t find air. He just felt wave after wave of panic pulling on every cell, dragging him towards the ground.
“Sit.” Namjoon ordered and Yoongi was pushed into a chair. His face was cupped and Yoongi squirmed under the contact a little, the skin-on-skin contact feeling like it was searing into his flesh. “Yoongi, breathe.” Namjoon said.

But, Yoongi couldn’t breathe. His eyes just darted around Namjoon’s face, catching his bloodshot eyes and his red nose and then fell past him to Jimin, sedated and intubated in bed. Yoongi felt overwhelmed again. He had failed Jimin. They both had failed Jimin. They failed their jobs as parents. They lost the race between them and Jimin’s own body. Their little boy that relied on them for so much was counting on them and they failed them. And now he was paying the price by fighting for his life.

Yoongi sobbed, thrashing out from underneath Namjoon’s hands. “Don’t touch me.” He snapped and Namjoon’s eyes widened a little in surprise. He dropped his hands.

“I’m sorry.” Namjoon whispered, and dug his fingers into his eye sockets as he squatted in front of Yoongi’s chair. "I'm sorry."

Yoongi wanted to grab him back, pull him in. He wanted to hold his husband and tell him that they would make it through this. That they were in this together. That they could be stronger than this. That they were stronger than anything.

But, he couldn’t. He just continued to drown.

Yoongi excused himself to finish his panic attack in the hallway, dodging Namjoon who as he tried to follow him out. Yoongi didn’t like being touched during his panic attacks, but he usually didn’t mind if Namjoon was there, ready to give him comfort when they were over. But, he didn’t want that this time. “Stay here with Jimin.” He had ordered as he stumbled out of the room.

Namjoon felt like a reverse Midas. Instead of gold, everything he was touching was turning to dust.

Namjoon pulled up a chair to Jimin’s bedside. He counted his breaths and watched the screens around his head cycle. “I’m sorry.” He whispered, using a fingertip to brush Jimin’s warm knuckles.

He watched a tear trace down Jimin’s cheek and Namjoon learned that day that you don’t have to be awake to cry.

“Iseverythingokay?” Yoongi’s mother blurted in a rush before Yoongi had a chance to say anything. Yoongi could hear Jungkook’s low crying in the background.

He had slid to the floor of the PICU hallway to fold himself over and put his head between his knees. He forced himself to calm down and told himself that panicking was counterintuitive, that Jimin needed him. But, he was out in the hallway drowning under this weight that wanted to choke him out and churn the bile inside of him. Jimin needed him. But, they failed him - they failed him - and now...
He pulled out his cell phone and shakily dialed his mother’s number to update her on what was going on. She answered on the first ring.

“Um,” Yoongi sucked in a breath, trying to center himself. Trying and failing. “No.” He started to heave air again.

“Yoongi-yah, breathe. Inhale and exhale.”

_I can’t._ “He had a seizure.” Yoongi blurted. “And he, um,” Yoongi felt like his mouth had been stuffed with peanut butter and his tongue was stuck. “Inhaled vomit. They put him on a breathing tube.” He managed before he broke down again.

“Oh, no.” His mother breathed. “Oh, my sweet boy. Is he going to be okay?”

“We don’t know yet.”

“Oh.” She breathed, humming on the other line. “Stay strong for Jimin. Focus on him. I have everything under control here.” She said quickly. “Everything is going to be okay, dumpling. Okay? Just stay strong.”

_But, I don’t know if I can._ Yoongi thought, but managed a shaky “okay, thanks eomma.” Anyway before disconnecting.

He pulled himself to his feet at the same time he watched another set of medical professionals march down the hallway. “Are you here for Jimin?”

One of them - a lady - nodded. “I’m a pulmonologist. We’re going to try suctioning out some of the debris Jimin inhaled.”

Yoongi followed them into Jimin’s hospital room. He watched Namjoon rise from the chair next to Jimin’s bedside to give them room. It was the first time that Yoongi really saw Jimin’s room instead of his little boy in the middle of it all. All of his stuffed animals had either been moved to the vinyl lounger or knocked to the floor. His silky was on his roll cart that was up against the wall. Namjoon’s rollaway had been pushed to the side. It looked like a war zone and the fallout was his son.

He looked down and saw Mr. Ba at his feet. He bent over and picked up Jimin’s Christmas gift - his _favorite_ Christmas gift, even though he was pretty sure that Yoongi grabbed him on his way out of Target one afternoon as an afterthought - and clutched the bear to his chest as he watched them work around his son.

“What are they doing?” Namjoon asked.

“They’re suctioning Jimin’s lungs.” Yoongi signed, feeling a twinge of guilt for snapping at Namjoon earlier. He stepped closer to his husband so they were shoulder-to-shoulder, placing his cheek against him.

They both watched as they took a a smaller tube and stuffed it through Jimin’s ventilator tube, a large sucking sound breaking the silence. Jimin didn’t move, he didn’t even grimace as they tipped his chin back slightly and started Yoongi chewed on his lip as he watched reddish-gray…gunk come through the clear tube into a bag one of them was holding.

Namjoon stiffened. “His dinner.” He whispered.

“What?”
“He had a spaghetti dinner. He-,” Namjoon’s eyes tightened and his face twisted and he turned around and stumbled out of the hospital room.

Yoongi followed. “Namjoon.” He said and jogged after him, finding him in the hallway pacing in manic circles again. “Namjoon.” He put his hand on his arm.

“He had alphabet-shaped pasta last night.” Namjoon started signing, fast. “He fed himself with his spoon all by himself and I was so proud of him and he was so happy and…” He leaned heavily against the wall. “And that’s what they’re vacuuming out of his lungs now.” He pressed both palms to his forehead. “I think I’m gonna be sick.” He said aloud.

A nurse popped out of the room. “We are all done.” She said. “We’re gonna do another x-ray to confirm we got all of it.”

“Okay, thank you.” Yoongi answered for her and then turned back to his husband and watched him take a shaky breath in. “Namjoon,” He signed. “It’s not-,”

“It is my fault.” Namjoon cut him off. “I was…I was right there.”

“It’s not your fault. It’s that stupid nurse’s fault for not listening to you.” Yoongi signed back. “We,” He signed almost violently. “Are Jimin’s fathers and he is counting on us to be there for him when he wakes up.” Yoongi’s hands were shaking and he could tell he was heading towards another panic attack. He fought to get ahold of his breathing.

Namjoon pressed his hands to the side of his face, his breathing erratic as well. Yoongi just stared at him, unable to comprehend - for the thousandth time that morning - that they were here. That this is happening.

“Look, Yoon.” Namjoon said as he stomped into his studio waving an envelope. “Look what we got.” He looked excited.

Yoongi pulled off his headphones and hung them around his neck. “What did we get?” He signed.

Instead of answering, Namjoon just shoved the envelope under Yoongi’s nose. He glanced at the return label - California Department of Children Services - and knew exactly what it was. He felt his smile stretch over his face. “Our license.”

“We’re officially foster parents.” Namjoon said. “I’m gonna be a dad!” He hooted as he turned on his heels. Yoongi just chuckled as he watched him fondly, his chin in his hands.

Yoongi laced his fingers together and put them on top of his head to give his ribcage as much room as possible. He had no fucking clue when he started his whole process to become a parent that he would be here. But, yet, here he was watching his worst fears come alive, watching his husband come undone, watching his baby fight for his life.

Unable to comprehend any of it.

Seokjin was sitting at his desk attempting to use the spare forty-five minutes he had to quickly go through papers that were starting to pile up. He was in the middle of leafing through some school records when his phone buzzed. He picked up his work phone first thinking it was a pick-up or something. Nope. He set that one down and picked up his personal phone. He opened to a long text
Yoongi: Jimin had a seizure early this morning and have been put on a ventilator since he’s not breathing on his own. They’re trying to get him off of it now, but his oxygen levels keep dropping and his blood pressure keeps spiking.

Seokjin felt his breath catch as he triple-read that text. Jimin had a seizure? And he’s not breathing on his own? He was fine when he left the day before. What happened last night?

Yoongi: nobody’s smiling at us anymore and I think we’re going to get bad news.

“Oh no.” Seokjin started to rise out of his chair.

Yoongi: I don’t know if I can handle bad news Jin.

Seokjin tapped out a quick message back.

Seokjin: I’m on my way.

Seokjin popped out of his office into the main part of the agency building. He turned into his boss’ office. “I have to leave early.” He said quickly. “Something came up.”

“Is everything okay?”

Seokjin glanced down at the texts again. Nobody’s smiling at us anymore and I think we’re going to get bad news. Seokjin felt a flash of worry go through him. “It’s a family emergency.” He whispered and then ducked out of the office.

“Shhh,” Namjoon hushed on Jimin’s forehead. “You’re going to be okay.”

The doctor had come in saying that they got the stuff Jimin aspirated into his lungs and that they were going to start weaning him off the ventilator as as long as everything went okay, they could pull it out that evening and wake him up.

But, ‘okay’ never seemed to be the case with them.

Twice now, the screens above Jimin’s head had started flashing red and white, angry and urgent. Twice now, nurses and respiratory therapists had come in, tapped on the machines, frowned and left. Once, a doctor came in and listened to Jimin’s chest through their stethoscope. And a couple of time, stuff was dumped into his IV lines.

And all Namjoon could do was watch and pray and hope that everything was okay in the end. All he could do was try and ignore the hollow feeling in his chest and the guilt twisting his guts into knots. And sit. They both did a lot of sitting.

Yoongi sat on one side of the bed, a tube of chapstick between his fingers. A nurse had gave him a job of making sure Jimin’s lips didn’t dry out from the tube. Yoongi through himself into that post with everything he had, reapplying lip balm to Jimin’s lips every thirty minutes. It was a welcomed distraction.
Namjoon sat on the other side. They were told that even though Jimin was thoroughly sedated, that they should still talk to him, that talking would help.

So, that’s what he did.

“You know what Christmas is going to be like?” He asked lowly as he ran his fingers through the hair that was visible under bandages. “Do you realize how many presents you’re going to get after this? We’re going to max out our credit cards. We’re going to buy an entire toy section. We’re-
”

Movement caught his attention, but instead of a hospital employee dressed in scrubs, it was Seokjin looking slightly flustered and blushed like he jogged the whole way.

“Jin.” Namjoon said and rose to his feet. Yoongi did the same.

“Hey,” Seokjin glanced down at Jimin from the foot of his bed, his shoulders falling. “I got your text. How is he?”

“Well,” Namjoon smiled just a little. It was humorless and dry. “He hasn’t spiked a fever.” Yet.


Namjoon crossed the short space and hugged Seokjin. “Thanks for coming.” He said.

“Can I do anything for you guys?” He asked when he pulled away.

Namjoon glanced at Yoongi, at his hair that was a mess and the circles under his eyes. His shoulders were hunched like he was carrying a million pounds on his back. He assumed that he didn’t look any better. “Can you take Yoongi down to the cafeteria for some food? I can stay with Jimin.”

“I’m not leaving.” Yoongi bristled, his face flushing.

“It’s almost three and you haven’t had lunch yet.” Namjoon argued. “Or breakfast.”

“Neither have you.” Yoongi retorted. “You should eat. I’ll stay with Jimin.”

“Yoongi,” Namjoon felt his frustration flare. “Please. I’m worried about you.”

“I’m not leaving Jimin’s side.” Yoongi said. “I’m not even hungry anyway.” He went and sat back down, his hand clutching Jimin’s.

Namjoon rubbed his forehead and then opened his mouth to argue some more when a nurse - or whatever - came in looking apologetic. “Hi, folks.” She said. “We have to do bandage changes, so I have to kick you out for a moment.”

Namjoon watched Yoongi tense again like he was going to argue, but the fight blew out of him and he got to his feet and shuffled out of the room. Namjoon glanced at Seokjin, who smiled just a little again. “I guess we’ll all go to the cafeteria?”

Seokjin had two very, very exhausted, worried parents in front of him.
They all had food in front of them still wrapped in their plastic wrap. No food looked appetizing once it was wrapped a bunch of times in green cellophane. Especially in a hospital cafeteria. He started building a mental grocery list for a couple of casseroles they could toss in the oven for easy dinners.

Yoongi had his palms wrapped around a coffee cup and Namjoon just had both elbows on the table and his fingers in his hair. None of them looked at each other or Seokjin or…anything. Yoongi just stared at his coffee and Namjoon stared out of the window.

“Guys,” Seokjin knocked on the table to get Namjoon’s attention. “It’s going to be okay.”

Yoongi smiled gently. He still didn’t look up. “Thanks Seokjin.”

“No, really.” Seokjin insisted. “Jimin’s a tough cookie.”

“He is.” Namjoon agreed, his eyes coasting back to the window.

They lapsed into silence again. Seokjin knew that his words weren’t…absorbing. He sighed. “Can I do anything for you?”

Yoongi’s eyes tightened with his mouth and he grabbed his phone as he inhaled air. “I should call my mom and see how the kids are doing. Make sure Hoseok took his meds and Jungkook-,”

Seokjin placed his hand on top of Yoongi’s. “Why don’t I do that?” He suggested gently. “One less thing to worry about.”

Yoongi hesitated, his mouth tweaking like he was going to argue. He finally breathed out a sigh. “Thank you, Seokjin. We would appreciate it.”

“No problem.” Seokjin said. “If you just want to text me a list of things you want me to check, I can pop in at your place.”

Yoongi nodded, the tension releasing from his shoulders a little. Seokjin felt a little better as he stared at the two very, very exhausted, worried parents in front of him. He made a note to call Hazel, Jimin’s home nurse, and get her set up for when Jimin was ready to come home. He could swing by Whole Foods, whip up a couple of casseroles for their freezer and dinner for the both of them so they didn’t have to eat cafeteria food, be back at the hospital by six or seven to make sure they eat said dinner. That would work. He thought to himself. That would definitely work.

“Seokjin,” Namjoon said, bringing Seokjin out of his thoughts.

“Yes?”

“Do you know any good lawyers?”

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!

And you can find me on twt
I love Seokjin POV chapters. That is all.

“Good evening.”

Seokjin looked down at a tiny, older lady that had Yoongi’s nose. She was a whole head shorter than Seokjin but the wisdom and personality in her eyes made her seem taller than she was. Honestly, she reminded Seokjin a lot of his own mother and he felt a pang of homesickness. “Hey, there.” He greeted, hoisting the two metal pans of casseroles that were still a little warm to the touch. “I’m Seokjin.”

“Yes, Yoongi said you were coming.” She stepped out of the way and let Seokjin in. “How’s Jimin?”

Seokjin stepped into the house and set the casseroles on the kitchen counter. He sighed a little bit. When he left, things were much the same - his blood pressure wasn’t cooperating without the mechanical ventilation. As far as he knew, they were going to very, very slowly start to wean and see if that would help. They were told that the longer he stayed on intubation, the harder it would be to take him off of it. That is why it was imperative they got him breathing on his own again as soon as possible.

Seokjin relayed this to Yoongi’s mother.

She inhaled a deep breath and glanced out their back door where the sun was making its final dip past the horizon. “It’s-,”

“Nini!” Taehyung called and Seokjin listened to the slap of bare feet on their hardwood floor. Tae came into view, skidding to the stop as he took in the both of them with wide eyes. “It’s you.” He said and pointed. “Seokjin.”

“Hey, buddy.” Seokjin squatted to get to his eye-level. “How have you been?”

“Why are you here?” Tae’s mop of hair flew everywhere.

“I’m dropping off some food.” He pointed. “And seeing how my favorite gremlins are doing.” He tickled Tae’s tummy, eliciting his rectangular smile.

Tae turned his grandmother. “Nini, Jungkook is crying again.” He nibbled on his lip. “I-I tried to make it better by giving him a toy, but he didn’t want to play.”

“Where’s Seokie?” She asked.

“I don’t know.” Tae shook his head, but his chin tipped down and his eyes gave away that he wasn’t telling the whole truth.

Seokjin pulled out his phone. The first item on the agenda Yoongi gave him was making sure
that Hoseok was taking his medication. “Can you take me to Hoseok?” He asked gently.

Tae looked between the both of them before finally nodding. Seokjin straightened and followed Taehyung. Namjoon and Yoongi’s house wasn’t a mess, but Seokjin could see the life, the love that their house held with four children - random marks on the wall from crayons, shoes sitting in the hallway, framed pictures lining the walls from Hoseok’s dance and school and Disney World.

He was led into a shared room where there were two twin beds sitting side-by-side. Tae went to the closet and opened it up. “Seokie,” He said and signed at the same time. “Jin wants to talk to you.” He signed.

Seokjin squatted again when he watched Hoseok emerge from the closet, a Care Bear in his arms and his eyes wide and full of sad stars. “Hey, buddy.” He greeted, signing slowly. He had been practicing ASL with YouTube at home before he went to bed.

Hoseok waved back.

“How have you been?”

“Where’s Dad and Dad?”

“He said-,” Tae started, squatting with Seokjin and mimicking his pose.

“I got it.” Seokjin smiled at Tae, running his fingers through Tae’s bangs. He turned back to Hoseok. “They’re still in the hospital with Jimin.” Seokjin said and Tae signed it for Hoseok. “They’ll be home soon, though.” Seokjin nodded, feeling his stomach tie into knots. “They all will.”

Hoseok made a huffy sigh. “When?”

Seokjin inhaled a big breath of air as he thought about how he wanted to put this. He assumed that Namjoon and Yoongi would want to break it to them about Jimin’s condition in their own time, so he kept that to himself. Instead he gave a smile and rubbed Hoseok’s shoulder. “Very soon.” He signed. “Your dads wanted me to make sure you were taking your medicine. Are you taking your medicine?”

Tae signed that for him and he nodded. “Yeah,” Hoseok said and petted his Care Bear.

“Okay, good.” Seokjin tickled his belly. “You gotta take your medicine.”

Hoseok nodded. “It’s important.” He signed. “I know.”

“Have you been feeling okay, too?” Seokjin remembered Hoseok’s freakout outside of Space Mountain and then at the pool.

Hoseok stared at Seokjin for a long moment but then he nodded. “I miss Dad.” He signed and pouted.

“I know.” Seokjin signed back. “They’ll be home soon.”

Seokjin turned to Tae next. Make sure Tae’s not about to deflate. Seokjin wasn’t sure what that meant when he read the text message. But, he understood now as he watched Tae squat, his eyes wide as they darted between them and his hair a mess on his head. He seemed…stretched in multiple directions. “What have you been up to, Tae?” He asked.

“I’ve been drawing.” Tae said quietly. “For Chim.”
“Can I see?”

Tae got to his feet and they left Hoseok and Tae’s room and turned the corner into what Seokjin assumed was Jimin’s room by the age-level of toys, the changing table, and the roll guards on his bed.

On the floor was a half-circle of strewn papers. A box of crayons and colored pencils sat next to a little empty spot. Tae carefully tip-toed to that spot and dropped to his knees. He picked up one of his drawings. “I drew a chicken.” He said and handed it to Seokjin. “Because, um, at the animal kingdom, Chim liked the chickens and I,” He pushed a different picture forward. “I drew this flower for him and I drew-,”

Seokjin dropped to his knees, inspecting the art. “This is really great, Tae.” He picked up a picture of a face. “All of these are really good.”

Tae sat back on his heels. “I wanted to draw something for Chim to make him happy.” He said and looked down, his eyebrows furrowing. “Why did Dad leave really early this morning?”

Seokjin felt the knots in his stomach tighten. “Well,” He said, putting the drawing down. “Sometimes,” He started, trying to get this out right. “Sometimes, the hospital needs both parents there to make big decisions or…if something changes that the doctors may not have expected. So, that’s why your dad was called in really early.”

Tae nodded in understanding. “Did he have an e-emergency?” He stared Seokjin down so hard that Seokjin reflexively moved both of his hands in front of himself out of shame.

“Well,” Seokjin gave a nervous chuckle, but he ended up swallowing it down. “Sort of.” He said. “Chim just has a lot going on and needs both of his daddies right now.”

Tae nodded and picked up a drawing. “Here.” He said. “You can have that one.”

Seokjin accepted the paper gracefully. It was a rainbow with a big yellow sun in the sky. The sky itself was a mix of purples and blues. “Thanks, Tae.” He said fondly. “This is really-,”

Suddenly there was a rocket the same shape and weight of a preschooler that barreled into Seokjin, knocking him over with a grunt. Jungkook crawled onto Seokjin’s chest, making noises. They ended up nose-to-nose, Jungkook’s eyes making contact with his and then darting to the side. His face was puffy like he had been crying.

Seokjin recovered and sat back up, pushing Jungkook into his lap. Jungkook’s fingers writhed next to his head and he rocked a little. “Hey, Squirt.” Seokjin said, pushing Jungkook’s hair out of his face. “How are you?”

“Jungkook’s been sad.” Tae answered for him. “He ran around the house this morning trying to find Dad and cried when he couldn’t find him.”

“Yeah?” Seokjin asked as he inspected Jungkook. *Let Jungkook know we’ll be home soon* was Yoongi’s instructions. His little buddy looked okay, despite the old tears in his eyes. “You know they’ll be home soon.”

Jungkook didn’t respond. But, his eyes tightened a little and he tangled his hands up and stuffed them under his chin as he rocked in Seokjin’s lap. Seokjin looked up to Hoseok in the doorway, his cheek pressed up against his Care Bear. He rubbed Tae’s shoulder and Jungkook’s back and let his eyes coast around Jimin’s room that was full of Fisher Price toys and stuffed animals.
“They’ll all be home soon.” He repeated. *Hopefully.*

Seokjin got back to the hospital a little after seven with a dinner of chili shrimp and rice. It felt way different now as he confidently made his way through the labyrinth of hallways and nurses’ stations and waiting rooms up to Jimin’s room on the seventh floor. The first time he was here, he somehow made it onto the pediatric oncological ward and only realized it when the children started missing their hair.

The first time he was only slightly nervous for Jimin, now his stomach was tied into so many knots he felt like he could be sick.

He pushed that aside as he took in Jimin’s parents - Yoongi trying to sleep with his face pressed against Jimin’s roll guard, his fingers tangled with Jimin’s. Namjoon was sitting on the other side, his eyes on a television that was playing the news. They both looked exhausted. More than that. Drained. Spent.

“Hey,” Seokjin greeted quietly when Namjoon’s eyes flicked to him.

“Hey,” Namjoon greeted back and got to his feet. “How were the kids?”

“They were okay.” Seokjin said as he placed the paper bag full of dinner on Jimin’s roll cart. “Your mother-in-law seems to have it under control.”

Namjoon let out a little sigh. “That’s good.” He nodded. “Thank you for doing that.”

“Of course.” Seokjin said and glanced at Jimin. He was….very much the same. Seokjin glanced at the machinery around him. He just looked so small. Too small to be where he was. “How is he?”

Namjoon ran his hands down his face. “They are doing a ‘wean screen,’ but,” Namjoon glanced nervously up at the monitor above Jimin’s head. It had his vitals on it. “I don’t know. They’re unsure. It’s a waiting game at this point.”

“He’ll be okay, Namjoon.” Seokjin said firmly. A little more firmly than he felt. He turned to the food he brought and pulled out his tupperware containers. Yoongi shifted - probably from the smells - but ended up just curling his arm under his head, grimacing, and settling again. “I’m glad he’s getting some rest.”

Namjoon glanced at Yoongi. “Yeah, me too.”

Seokjin handed Namjoon a container of food. Namjoon offered his chair to be polite, but Seokjin waved him off and told him to sit. Namjoon sat down and popped open the container lid. He ate a couple of bites with his chopsticks and then reached over and smoothed Jimin’s hair back off of his forehead, his eyes going sad.

“He’ll be okay, Namjoon.”

“Pardon?” Namjoon put his eyes back on Seokjin.

Seokjin opened his mouth to repeat himself, but Namjoon’s eyes dropped to his food container and he ended up placing it on roll cart. He pressed both palms to his face. “The cardiologist came in earlier to talk to us about his blood pressure and how that getting him off the ventilator too early may
cause him to stroke.” He started, his eyes still averted downwards. “And, you know, he was polite and professional when he talked to us. But, I could see it. I could see how he just…” Namjoon shrugged. “Probably looked at Jimin’s mile long medical records and his disabilities and stuff and thought ‘what’s the point?’” Namjoon looked up his eyes full of tears.

Seokjin felt his throat close and he jerked forward a little bit. “There’s a lot of-,” He started, but Namjoon interrupted him.

“I thought about that alot - what the point was. Why go through all of this when we know we might have to do it again in a year or two years? Why put him through pain he doesn’t understand to give him a life he…may not be actually happy with?” Namjoon rubbed his face and shook his head. “Are we just being selfish?”

“Namjoon.” Seokjin whispered and glanced at Jimin again. He inhaled a short breath. “When Jimin was four, I assigned him to a family,” Seokjin winced. “Who wasn’t that well educated in disabilities. They were young and enthusiastic, but they weren’t…equipped for Jimin. And I visited a couple of weeks later to see how he was doing and he…” Seokjin motioned, trying to find the words. “Jimin’s like a flower. He’s delicate, but with love and attention, he can bloom so bright and happy. And he wasn’t blooming with them, Namjoon. He was quiet and…sad. He just sat in his chair and didn’t engage. But, he’s blooming now. He’s found his roots and his sunshine. He’s watered everyday.” Seokjin said, eliciting a little smile with his joke from Namjoon. “And he’s blooming now. He’s happy and thriving. He’s learned so many new words. More than he’s ever had as long as I’ve known him. You’re a gardener of a whole flower field now with him. And he’s so beautiful.” Seokjin bent to get at Namjoon’s eye level. “That’s not selfish.”

Namjoon sniffed and wiped his nose that was starting to go red at the tip. “Thanks, Jin.” He turned and mushed Jimin’s hair again. “I just love him so much. And I know other people just see ‘disabled’ when they look at him. But, I don’t care about that. I’ll change his diaper in my nineties if it means he gets a long and happy life with us.”

“That’s all he needs,” Seokjin nodded, feeling a warm fondness blast through his veins. “Is someone who sees the why when everyone else does not.”

Seokjin watched from Namjoon’s chair as Namjoon coaxed Yoongi to wake up for dinner, his arm on Jimin’s roll guard and the symphony of medical equipment noises behind him. Jimin’s helmet of bandages had been replaced with a long strip that covered his bald spot on his head and his dark hair fluttered in the breeze of escaped air from the ventilator.

“Baby,” Namjoon was squatting in front of Yoongi. “Can you wake up? Seokjin brought dinner.” He said gently, his fingers carding through Yoongi’s hair.

“Just a couple of more minutes.” Yoongi grumbled back lowly.

“I know you’re tired, but the food will get cold.”

Yoongi sighed and opened his eyes, his head automatically shifting for Jimin. He fixed Jimin’s bear that was starting to fall over next to him and sat up. Yoongi’s hair was a stack on top of his head and his eyes squinted as they focused on Seokjin. “Hey, Jin. How’s, um, how’s it going?” He mumbled.

“I’m good.” Seokjin said. “The kids are fine.”
“The kids.” Yoongi said, waking completely up. “The kids. Um, is Hoseok taking his meds?”

“Yep.”

“Tae isn’t trying to mother everyone?”

“Well, he is. But, he seems okay.”

“Jungkook isn’t full nuclear?”

“He’s a little confused, but he’s fine.” Seokjin nodded. “You’re boys are fine. They’re good kids. Strong and resilient.”

Yoongi rubbed his cheek and nodded. “That’s good.” He said and looked at Jimin again. “I wish I could say the same about myself.” He whispered.

Seokjin shifted. “Why don’t you guys get some air that isn’t circulated through a vent.” He smiled. “I can stay here with Jimin.”

Yoongi tensed like he wanted to argue, but Namjoon wrapped his arm around Yoongi’s shoulders and forced him to his feet before he could protest. “That sounds like a great idea.” Namjoon agreed, grabbing the food containers on his way out. “We need to have a chat anyway.”

Yoongi looked slightly confused and his eyes sharpened in disagreement, but he let himself be led out of Jimin’s hospital room. “Call us if anything happens.” He said over his shoulder before they disappeared.

Seokjin picked up the remote from the roll cart and turned up the volume of the television mounted on the wall across the room. He half-followed the evening news, half-watched Jimin’s slow breaths. “You’re an easy person to keep company with, Jimin.” He said, gripping Jimin’s hand. “And a good listener, huh?”

He ran a thumb across Jimin’s chubby knuckles.

“You know,” Seokjin said. “I’m not super into…relationships? I don’t know. Google says I might be aromantic, maybe even asexual since I’m not….” He blushed and let his sentence fall off. “You’re a little young for that talk. So, I won’t go there. I think, personally, I just don’t like the idea limiting yourself because of your partner.” He glanced at the door. “I think, however, if I were to find someone, I would want a relationship like your daddies’.“ He looked back at Jimin, touching his cheek. “With love that comes as reflexively as breathing.”

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!

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Hope

Chapter Notes

We are almost at the finish line guys!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Yoongi let himself be led down the hallway to the waiting room of the neurological ICU. There weren’t many people there at that hour - Yoongi assuming if someone were waiting they were down in the cafeteria since it was dinner time. He sunk down into a thinly padded waiting room chair and Namjoon took a seat next to him.

“Thanks.” Yoongi said when he was handed a tupperware container. He had thought he wasn’t very hungry - his stomach still churning like an angry sea, making him nauseous - but, his almost two days of not really eating caught up to him and Seokjin’s cooking smelled so appealing that he started shoveling food into his face.

Namjoon ate too. Slower than Yoongi, his eyes studying the industrial carpeting that was the same color as the chairs as he got lost in his thoughts.

Yoongi waved to get his attention. “Did anything happen while I was asleep?” He signed.

Namjoon shook his head and signed “no,” a couple of times. “Just Seokjin came back being an angel.” He signed.

“He is an angel.” Yoongi agreed as he looked at his home cooked meal. “I want to adopt him too.”

Namjoon sucked in a breath like he was gearing up to lecture or something. He dropped his chopsticks in his container and placed the whole thing on his lap. “I’m sorry,” He signed. “For not…”

Yoongi stopped his hands. “If you’re going to apologize again for this morning, I will punch you in the face.” He pretended to punch Namjoon’s chin. “It wasn’t your fault.”

Namjoon cracked his neck, but his eyes softened a little and his shoulders released some of the tension they were holding. “I keep trying to tell myself that.” He signed back.

“Don’t try.” Yoongi shook his head. “It just…wasn’t.” He shrugged. “There’s a million ways Jimin can have a medical emergency. It’s just the risks we take when we enter this hellbox.” He felt his stomach twist into knots again as he spoke his fears aloud. Suddenly, he wasn't hungry anymore.

Namjoon’s fingers ran through Yoongi’s hair, smoothing down and pushing it out of his eyes. “I love you.” He said and pressed a kiss to Yoongi’s forehead.

“I love you too.” Yoongi signed back. “I’m sorry for snapping this morning at you.” He signed. “I wasn’t….I’m not handling any of this very well.” He sucked in a breath. He put both of their containers on the small coffee table that housed old, dog-eared magazines in front of them.

Namjoon’s arms wrapped around Yoongi’s shoulders and he settled into the embrace with a
sigh, trying to fight off intrusive thoughts and the cloud of anxiety that was trying to choke him out.

“You’re handling this just fine.” Namjoon said after a moment.

“You too.” Yoongi signed and then played with the end of Namjoon’s sweater sleeve. “We need to be united, though. Handle this together as a united front. Me…snapping doesn’t help anything.”

“You were having a panic attack.” Namjoon defended. “It’s okay, Yoongi. You don’t have to be Super Dad all the time.”

“You either, though.” Yoongi whispered, remembered the way Namjoon was struggling to pull himself together that morning after Jimin’s emergency. After he watched their son flatline on the table and was brought back. He remembered the way he almost started to gag when they suctioned his lungs.

Namjoon inhaled a big breath again. “That’s something else we need to talk about.” He signed and then rubbed Yoongi’s hands. “We need to…take care of ourselves too. Camping out in the hospital not eating or sleeping isn’t going to do us any good. One of us should go home and get some rest.”

Yoongi’s mouth popped open as the anxiety cloud strangled him for a second. “I’m not going anyway.” He signed firmly.

“Yoongi-,”

“No.” Yoongi shook his head. “You should go home. You’ve been here for over two days. You need to rest. Get a shower, at least.” Yoongi pretended to fan himself from Namjoon’s smell.

Namjoon’s face tightened with his hands. “I don’t…”

“I know.” Yoongi rubbed his arm sympathetically. “I know. But, we have three other little boys at home that miss us,” He sighed. “And that should know what is going with their brother.” He pulled out his phone from his hoodie pocket that was starting to ring. He stood immediately to his feet when Seokjin’s number flashed. “Seokjin’s calling.”

Yoongi and Namjoon jogged back into Jimin’s room. Seokjin was on his feet, Jimin’s hand in his as he stood next to the bed. There were a couple of familiar and new faces from the staff. After almost a whole day, Yoongi had interacted with so many people - doctors and nurses and respiratory therapists. A social worker came in to visit with them. A volunteer for something or another. Even the hospital chaplain came around with literature. He was over talking to people in scrubs who treated his son like a job and not a human.

“Evening.” He said curtly to the ICU doctor that was on shift at the moment and the nurse that was currently hooking up a bag of brown stuff to a port in Jimin’s stomach.

“Good evening.” He said. “I’m sorry if I was interrupting dinner, but I just wanted to come by and let you all know that we are going to start weaning Jimin off of sedation.”

“What does that mean?” Namjoon asked, his eyes wide on the doctor.
"We're going to wake Jimin up." The doctor said. "It's a long process, but the weaning of the ventilator hasn't had any incidences, so we're thinking that there really isn't a need for him to be asleep anymore."

Yoongi glanced at Jimin. He hoped waking him up meant that it was a turn in the right direction. "Okay, thank you."

The doctor's voice softened slightly. "It'll be better on his kidneys if he no longer has that in system circulating with everything else. And," He made a face like he was trying to figure out what to say. "Kids bounce back faster than adults. Having him awake might speed up that process a little."

Yoongi nodded in agreement. "Okay."

The doctor glanced at Namjoon. "His lungs look good. Hopefully we can pull the tube tomorrow and get him back on the track of healing."

The doctor left and Yoongi looked at Namjoon. Namjoon looked back at Yoongi. There was the same gleam mirroring in their eyes. The same white hot iridescent sparkle.

Hope.

“Daddy!”

Taehyung was the first in Namjoon’s arms as he came through the garage door. Tae gave him the tightest hug he could manage, his face pinching with exertion as he squeezed. Namjoon hugged him back, feeling a million times better holding a little soul in his arms, breathing him in, feeling his heartbeat against his palm.

He felt someone else on his waist and looked down to Hoseok as he hooked his long fingers in Namjoon’s sweats pocket and looked up at him with his big, sparkly eyes. “Hi, boys.” He greeted as he squatted. “How has it been going?”

“Daddy,” Tae said and signed. “Where is Jimin?”

Hoseok just wormed himself against Namjoon’s chest and buried his face into Namjoon’s neck, hooking both of his hands behind Namjoon. Namjoon rubbed his back. “Jimin’s still in the hospital.” He signed. “He’ll be home soon, okay?”

Tae pouted. “I want him home now.” He started to tear up. “I miss him.”

Namjoon pulled Tae in by his wrist. “I know.” He signed. “I do too. But, there’s no reason to cry.” Tae rubbed his face.

“B-but,” Tae argued, sniffling with the back of his hand against his cheek. “Seokjin said he had an emergency.”

Namjoon stiffened and Hoseok felt it and pulled back. “What’s wrong?” He signed under his chin, looking between the both of them, anxiety alight in his eyes.
Namjoon fell to his knees and sat back on his heels. Seokjin had told them that Tae - being the observant boy that he was - asked him if there was something wrong. He skirted around the subject, but his kids were smart. They knew something was up. He squeezed both of their fingers before holding up his hands to sign. “Jimin….” He started, trying to figure out how to explain. “Last night, he had a seizure and something happened that stopped him from breathing.” He signed slow. “The doctors helped him by putting him on a machine that helps him breathe. This is good and bad, okay?” He glanced between both of their faces, their eyes large and wide on him. “It’s good because it’s giving him time to rest. But, it’s also bad because he can’t be on the machine forever.”

“Is he going to be okay?” Hoseok asked.

Namjoon nodded. “We think so. But, you guys have to be good boys and be patient, okay? Stuff like this can’t be rushed. We just have to let the doctors do their jobs.” He dropped his hands, hoping he explained that okay.

Tae rubbed his eyes. “I just want him to come home.” He signed.

“I know-,”

“It’s okay, Tae.” Hoseok signed and he disconnected from Namjoon, his hand rubbed Tae’s shoulder. Namjoon watched the interaction, his chest swelling with warm fondness as he watched his eldest take care of his brother. “He’ll come home soon. Do you want to play a game or something?”

“No.” Tae signed and turned, slinking towards the hallway.

Hoseok looked at Namjoon, his fingers wringing a little. “Tae’s been sad all day long.” He signed. “I don’t know what to do.”

“It’s okay, Hoseok.” Namjoon pulled him in for a hug. “Everything will be better once Jimin comes home and we get back to normal.” He pushed his dark hair out of his eyes. “Are you doing okay?”

Hoseok’s lower lip started to tremble and his eyes filled with tears, but he sniffed a big sniffle and held himself together. “I’m okay.” He signed.

“You can talk it out.” Namjoon prompted. “Like Dr. Greene taught you.”

He shook his head and pushed himself away from Namjoon. “I’m okay.” He signed again and turned around.

Namjoon sighed and got to his feet, finally entering his house fully. There was a light smell of…something. Something spicy? His stomach flipped in concern for his youngest and he looked around for Jungkook and his mother-in-law.

He found them on the back veranda, sitting in the porch swing under the light that was buzzing with moths. Jungkook was playing with his Bop-It and Yoongi’s mom was rocking slowly as she watched them play.

“Hey,” Namjoon greeted lowly.

Jungkook’s eyes snapped up immediately and he ditched his toy and slid off the swing into Namjoon’s waiting arms. He bunched Namjoon’s shirt into his fists and dug his face into Namjoon’s shoulder. Namjoon hugged him tight like he liked.

“Kookie missed you.” Yoongi’s mom said.
“I see.” Namjoon pressed his nose into his hair and gave him a kiss on the head. “I missed him too.”

“How is Jimin?” Namjoon’s mother-in-law asked.

Namjoon nodded and glanced at the last fading light of the sun. “They’re starting to wean him off the sedation and wake him up.”

Her eyebrows rose with hope. “That’s good, right?”

“We’re hoping so.” Namjoon said and glanced into the house, his eyebrows furrowed as he recalled Tae’s upset face. “I think…” He started. “I think Jimin could use some brother kisses to help him get better.”

She smiled gently. “And Nini kisses.”

Namjoon nodded and pushed Jungkook’s hair out of his eyes. “I think tomorrow we will pay him a visit.”

“Chimmy!”

Yoongi was startled awake, his spine cracking like a cheap light stick from the odd position he fell asleep in. He was blinded by the morning sun coming in from Jimin’s window and then blinded again by Hazel’s bright pink scrubs. “Hazel,” He croaked and glanced over at Jimin, who was right where he left him the last time Yoongi fell asleep. “Hel-,”

“Oh no, Chim Chim.” She approached Jimin’s bed, her eyes taking all the machinery around him with analytical eyes. “What happened?” Her eyebrows furrowed and she looked like she was going to start crying.

“Um,” Yoongi rubbed his neck as he collected his thoughts. “He had a seizure in his sleep and, um, aspirated vomit into his lungs.”

“Oh no.” She repeated, her fingers brushing delicately on his cheek. “Was he on his side?”

“No,” Yoongi sighed and played with his hair, watching him make slow inhales and exhales. “A nurse put him on his back to sleep, saying that-,”

“A nurse?” Her face screwed up and flushed with Yoongi winced at her voice - which was high like wind chimes - piercing straight into his foggy, exhausted brain. “What do you mean a nurse?” She started to talk. “She didn’t read Chimmy’s chart at all? Or consult you guys? You’re his parents. His swallowing…he doesn’t…” She yanked on her ponytail, tightening it to her head in frustration and made a noise. “What was their name?”

Yoongi squinted at Hazel for a second as he thought about it. Honestly, these last couple of days were blurring together. The space-time continuum didn’t exist in hospitals. They were their own vacuum between the white, plain walls. “Trish…a?” He guessed. “I’m not sure. It was Namjoon who had the conversation with her two night ago.”

Her face flushed again as she looked at Jimin and then she looked at Yoongi and put on a big,
giant smile. “I’m going to be right back.” She said hyper-cheerily.

Yoongi felt his own eyebrows furrow as he watched her about-face and march out of the room, her ponytail swinging. He wondered what she was up to, but he didn’t have the processing energy to wonder that hard.

He instead turned his attention to Jimin, his eyes tracing the lines that were feeding into his arm.

The doctors were still set on taking Jimin off of sedation and assured Yoongi that he would probably start waking up in the morning. It was a slow process, they had said. It could take hours for him to open his eyes.

“Good morning, my angel.” Yoongi said as he applied lip balm to Jimin’s lips to keep them from chapping, even though they already were. “You’re going to come off of that tube today. You’re going to have it removed and take a big breath of air and you’re going to smile at your worried daddies and tell us that it’s going to be okay.” Yoongi hummed lowly. “And then your daddies will be able to take a big breath of air.” He exhaled, his chest still feeling tight with worry. “And then we can go back to breathing normally instead of…” Yoongi’s eyebrows furrowed and he felt himself choke up.

He hadn’t really cried yet. He did slightly during his panic attack and again when Jimin had his lungs vacuumed out. But, he was pretty sure that the absolute magnitude of what happened actually hadn’t settled in yet. He hadn’t had a chance to completely wrap his head around the fact that Jimin had died.

Yoongi’s worst fears when it came to Jimin was the inability to stay ahead of his medical conditions. And his fears were realized. He couldn’t stay ahead. It really wasn’t possible. Scares like these were inevitable. This nightmare was their reality. And Yoongi would just have to be okay with that. He had to be stronger than his apprehensions so he could fight for his son.

Yoongi just wasn’t sure he was strong enough.

“No, I don’t want to cry.” Yoongi complained to himself as he felt himself sob. He wiped his tears out of his eyes. He couldn’t be having a breakdown now. The nurses were going to be in for meds and vitals and he was going to have to talk to the doctor and Namjoon was going to come back. He pulled himself together. He could hold on for another couple of moments. At least, until Hazel left and-

Jimin’s eyelids fluttered and Yoongi was immediately on his feet, the exhaustion clearing as excitement took over. “Hi, baby.” He smiled - for the first time in almost 72 hours - as he craned to get into Jimin’s line of sight. “Hi, your daddy is right here. I’m right here. You’re okay.”

Jimin’s eyes opened completely…

…for about half a second and then they snapped shut.

But, that was okay. Yoongi gripped Jimin’s hand and continued to talk to him, new tears on his face. But, instead of tears of fear and horror and anxiety, they were tears of joy.
Namjoon finished tying Jungkook’s shoelaces in their living room. “Alright, bunny boy.” He kissed his head. “Are you all ready to visit your brother?”

Jungkook was wearing a cute, little hoodie and jeans. He had a toy in his hands and he raised on his tip-toes to show Namjoon.

Namjoon smiled at him. “Are you going to show Jimin your toy?”

Jungkook scrunch-smiled and nodded, his mop of hair flying in his eyes. “Play.” He signed and then held up his toy again.

Namjoon felt a pat and looked over at Hoseok, who wasn’t completely ready to go yet. Namjoon glanced at the cable box clock under the television. He wanted to get going to the hospital half an hour ago. But, breakfast took longer than normal and then Namjoon had to get the kids ready and three days of no sleep was catching up to him and he felt like he was trying to function in a bowl of jello. Frustration was building in his chest and he felt like a soda can about to pop. “Hoseok,” He signed. “Why aren’t your shoes on yet?”

“I-,” He started to sign, but then hesitated.

“Hoseok,” Namjoon prompted. “Go get your shoes on, okay? We gotta go.”

Hoseok scampered away and Namjoon ran his fingers into his hair. Jungkook squatted to play with his toy. At least one was ready. He had to get two more down. He turned to find Taehyung and ran into his mother-in-law dressed and ready to go. “Have you seen Tae?”

“I think he’s in Jimin’s room.”

Namjoon headed there, finding Tae sitting on the floor as he shuffled through papers. “Tae,” He flicked the lights on and off. “We gotta go, okay.”

“Okay,” Tae signed. “I’m just picking out which drawings I want to give to Chim.”

“I’m sure whatever you choose, he will love.” Namjoon said. “Be in the living room in two minutes with your shoes on, okay?”

“Okay, Daddy.” Tae said and got to his feet.

Last was Hoseok. Namjoon turned into the elder boys’ room and found Hoseok sitting on his bed, fingering one of his stuffed animals. Namjoon flicked the light and watched his son’s eyes snap on him. “Are you ready?” Namjoon asked.

Hoseok slowly got off of his bed and came around. His sneakers were on and he carried his stuffed animal. Namjoon paused to take in Hoseok’s anxious face and his large eyes and sighed with the feeling of a tension headache. “Baby,” He touched Hoseok’s face. “Are you okay?”

“I’m scared.”

“Scared? Why are you scared?”

“Because Tae was crying all day yesterday and Jungkook was upset.” Hoseok signed, little and scared. “And Dad left so early and…” He paused to slow his breathing a little. “What if Chim doesn’t come home?”

Namjoon felt every muscles in his back tighten. He almost wasn’t going to come home. “What
do you mean?” Namjoon asked. “He’s going to come home.”

“Are you sure?” Hoseok asked.

Namjoon nodded and groaned as he got to one knee. “Of course. I know everything. I’m your dad.” He signed and kissed Hoseok’s head. “You’re being a good big brother comforting Tae and Kookie.”

Hoseok smiled a little, lighting up with the praise. “Yeah?”

Namjoon nodded and pulled him into a big hug. “You sure are and I’m sorry everything is so crazy.” He signed once Hoseok had put his eyes on him. “It’ll get better. I promise.”

Hoseok nodded. “Okay.” He signed.

“Now, let’s go see your brother.” Namjoon said and got back to his feet. “He needs some love.”

Chapter End Notes

Please comment!

And you can find me on twt
Chapter Notes

Well, we are here, folks. The end. Thank you so much for taking this long, long journey with me! I hope that you enjoyed it as much as I did! <3

I want to thank thatbeingsaid, kukkiia, thumbsuckero68, LeeleeMc3887, prusfockers, bomnari, Rory_Mtz, Bmccray, foREVerauntingme, yellowzest, WintersSunshine, bananas_a, AgustDnD, Vee, Sarah and all my other loyal readers, commenters, kudos-givers, and bookmarkers. It was really YOU that wrote this story as all of your interactions inspired, drove, and motivated me through over 200K words <3

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I do have a big (read like 10K words and counting) teenage chapter planned. Keep on the lookout for that sometime in the future. :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Namjoon was surprised to see Jimin’s eyes open. He was more surprised to see Yoongi smiling - really truly smiling with his tiny teeth gums - at him as he made faces and cooed at him over the roll guard. “Hey,” Namjoon said, his arms around Jungkook, who was stimming with his fists. “He’s awake.”

Yoongi looked over, surprise lighting up his face as he took in his whole family in the doorway. “Hey,” He said as he readied his arms to accept Hoseok, who was barreling at him at the speed of light. “What are you all doing here?”

Namjoon smiled. “I thought Jimin could use some kisses.”

Yoongi was bent over at the waist, kissing Hoseok on the forehead. He accepted Tae’s hug next and Namjoon watched them embrace with Tae’s drawings caught between them. “I missed you.” Yoongi said and buried his nose into Tae’s hair.

Yoongi came over to Namjoon and Jungkook next. He forced Jungkook to take a kiss on his cheek - Jungkook, in turn, scrunched his nose. And then Yoongi hugged his mom and then kissed Namjoon.

“How long has he been awake?” Namjoon asked as he readjusted Jungkook on his hip.

“Not for long.” Yoongi glanced at Jimin again, sighing a little. Yoongi’s hair was a mess and his eyes were rimmed with dark circles and bloodshot. “He’s been in and out of consciousness all morning. And when his eyes are open, I know he isn’t one hundred percent with us yet.” His smile returned. “But, he's waking up and his numbers all look good.”

For the first time in the hellish three days that they had spent in the hospital, Namjoon felt his
chest swell. He felt like he was able to take in a full breath of air. Like he had been drowning all of this time and hadn’t even realized it yet. “That’s so great.” He choked up a little, unable to talk around the lump in the back of his throat.

“Daddy,” Tae waved. “What’s that tube in Jimin’s mouth?”

Namjoon approached with Jungkook on Jimin’s left side while Yoongi and the older boys took his right. “That’s Jimin’s breathing tube.” Yoongi explained lowly. “This machine is helping him breathe. And that’s his IV where he is getting medicine out of and that screen is showing his heart beat. And that line is connected to his belly, where he is being fed since he can’t eat with the tube in his mouth…” Yoongi pointed out to the boys, who looked at everything with wide, mystified eyes.

Namjoon turned his attention to Jimin, whose eyes were still open, but only just. His eyes were faraway and out of it. Namjoon used his one free hand to touch his cheek. “Hi, baby.” Namjoon cooed gently. “I’m so glad you’re awake.”

Jungkook pointed at Jimin and Namjoon tore his eyes away from Jimin to look at their youngest. He adjusted his shirt as he watched Jungkook take in everything with his wide eyes. “Do you want to say hi to your big brother?” Namjoon asked Jungkook.

Jungkook glanced at Namjoon and then at Jimin. “Jimin.” He signed and then pointed. “That’s Jimin.” Namjoon nodded. “He’s kind of sick right now. But, a kiss would help. Will you give him a kiss?”

Jungkook nodded, his hair flopping in his face. Namjoon bent over at his waist and held Jungkook out far enough that he could plant a little kiss on Jimin’s forehead. Jimin’s head turned toward the sensation and Namjoon straightened Jungkook in time to watch Jimin’s fingers slowly lift towards his mouth.

“No baby.” Yoongi forced his hand back down. “No playing with that, okay?”

Jimin’s hand curled under his cheek instead - a small gesture that was so normal and so Jimin that Namjoon choked up - and his eyes slid shut. Namjoon smiled despite the burn of tears in his eyes as he watched Jimin fall back asleep, knowing, finally, there was a dawn to this night.

“Thanks for bringing my toothbrush.” Yoongi signed when he got back into Jimin’s room. Namjoon had taken a seat on one of the plastic chairs next to Jimin’s bed, talking to Jimin as he fell in and out of sleep. Tae and Hoseok were sitting side-by-side on the lounger, playing their Nintendo Switch. Yoongi’s mom took Jungkook down to the playground since he was starting to get antsy and wanted to play with the screens hooked up to Jimin’s lines. “They were starting to go fuzzy.”

Namjoon smiled - really smiled - for the first time in a really long time. Yoongi didn’t realize how much he missed his husband’s smile. He was drawn to it like a moth drawn to a porch light. His hands cupped Namjoon’s face and he pressed a kiss to his forehead. “You’re welcome.” Namjoon signed back as he hooked his arm around Yoongi’s waist. “I thought you’d appreciate being able to
wash your face and brush your teeth at least.”

“You’re right.” Yoongi said as he raked his fingers into his husband’s hair. “I appreciate it more than life itself.”

Namjoon glanced at Jimin. “I’m so excited to take him home.”

“Me too.” Yoongi said. “I just want to hear his voice again.”

“See his smile.” Namjoon agreed.

“I-,” Yoongi started, but they were interrupted by a lady in an expensive-looking business suit, another hospital worker in scrubs and Hazel - who had disappeared a couple of hours ago. Yoongi had thought she had left. Her expression was pissed off, but on her sweet face, it made her look like an angry kitten.

“Good, um, morning.” The lady in the business suit said. “My name is Lisa, I’m the director of nursing here at Saint Nicholas’s.” She said as she spun her wedding band. “I was, um, made aware of the events that lead to your son’s current condition and I just wanted to apologize and let you know that the nurse that failed to do her due diligence in checking the patient’s chart has been…let go.”

Yoongi felt his lips roll into an ‘o’ shape. He knew Namjoon had taken down some lawyers from Seokjin. And he knew that once Jimin was okay, they would probably talk to them about malpractice since it was the nurse’s fault that Jimin had to be intubated in the first place. But, that wasn’t even registering on his radar at the moment.

“What did she say?” Namjoon shook Yoongi a little.

“Um,” Yoongi hummed. “They fired that nurse.” He signed to Namjoon.

“And.” Hazel prompted, her face flushing red.

“And,” The director looked nervous. “Please expect a call from our legal team in the next couple of weeks to discuss a, um, settlement.”


“I hope your son a speedy recovery.” She nodded and then quickly left.

Hazel uncrossed her arms as she watched the director book it out of Jimin’s room and then turned towards them, putting on her usually chipper demeanor. “Sorry for disappearing.” She said sheepishly. “I had to track down who was working that night, and then the charge nurse and then the DNS.” she said.

“You didn’t have to go to all that trouble, Hazel.” Yoongi rubbed Namjoon’s shoulder. “We were going to call our lawyer once Jimin was discharged.”

“No,” Hazel’s face flushed again. “That gross negligence needed to be taken care of. I called my dad who is on the board of directors for this hospital and had him threaten that stupid director and everyone under her’s job.”

Yoongi’s eyebrows rose in surprise. “Wow, Hazel. Thank you. We really appreciate it.” He glanced down at Namjoon. “You saved us a bunch of hassle.”
Hazel walked to the other side of Jimin and gently touched his face. “Well,” She shrugged, her big smile crossing her face. “I have to protect my Chim Chim and his daddies that he loves so, so much.”

Jimin finally came out of sedation around lunchtime and Namjoon only knew that by the way his fingers came up and wrapped around his tubing.

“No, sweet baby.” Namjoon forced his hands back down. All afternoon his chubby hands had been migrating up his chest and Namjoon was predicting that he was going to try and tug on his intubation line. “You have to leave that alone.”

Jimin’s eyes focused on Namjoon and his had rose to instead touch Namjoon’s chin. “Hello,” Namjoon said, making a big, fake gasp and smiling big and wide for him. “It’s nice to see you, Chim. Welcome back.”

Yoongi was down in the lunchroom with his mom and the other kids, leaving Namjoon alone with Jimin. Namjoon used the opportunity to talk Jimin’s sleeping ear off about everything - summer vacation and Christmas plans. He talked about how much he disdained seafood but was planning on taking Yoongi out on a date to that new seafood place in town anyway and how Hoseok was doing so well at being a great big brother and how proud he was of Taehyung and his huge heart and how Jungkook looked so cute falling asleep on Namjoon’s chest the night before.

He just wanted Jimin to wake up to love. His whole life he had woken up in the hospital to strangers. Namjoon just wanted to let his son know that he was here. That his daddy was here.

Jimin’s hand fell away from Namjoon’s face and his eyes slid to half-mast. Namjoon didn’t have to be a doctor to know that Jimin must be exhausted. He had been through so much.

“You’re the strongest person I know.” Namjoon said as he held Jimin’s hand to keep him from tugging on his line. “You’re my hero. When I grow up, I want to be just like Jimin.” He tickled Jimin’s chin gently.

Jimin just tilted his head slightly - mushing his hair into a black halo around his head - his way of telling Namjoon that he was going to be okay in the end.

“Hi, Chim!” Tae said excited as Jimin’s eyes opened again. “Hi! It’s TaeTae! It’s your brother.” He pushed himself up on the roll guard and tried to get into Jimin’s face.

Jimin’s eyes squinted slightly in what Yoongi hoped was a smile. Jimin was fully awake now, but still heavily drugged to make sure he wouldn’t panic on the breathing tube. He seemed to be taking everything in stride, however. But, he also had a lot of practice from hospital visits in the past.

Jimin would tilt his head towards noise and his fingers would try and grab at his tubing every once in awhile, but mostly he laid inert. Yoongi was so desperate to hold him. He just wanted to scoop Jimin up and cuddle him and nuzzle his chubby cheek and tell it was going to be okay.

Yoongi couldn’t do that, however. So, instead he held whatever kid that would sit on his lap. He cuddled a child and relished in the heat in his arms. He didn’t realize how cold he was in his soul without a baby to hold. The ice wrapped around his throat, choked him out, made it impossible to
breathe. But, as he thawed out while clutching one of his sons to his chest, he felt himself finally inhale full lungfuls of air. The sensation was intoxicating.

It was Hoseok, mostly, who didn’t mind cuddling up against Yoongi’s chest - his little fist against his heart-shaped mouth and his ear against Yoongi’s breast bone. He soaked in all the cuddles he had been missing. Finally, getting the emotional support he had been neglected the last three days. Yoongi could tell that Hoseok was finally taking his own full breaths too as tension released slowly from his small body.

Tae was pogoing between greeting Jimin every time he opened his eyes to telling Yoongi and Namjoon all about the last couple of days with Nini, subjects switching often and usually mid-sentence.

Namjoon was holding Jungkook on his hip as they stood in front of Jimin’s television set, watching music videos and bouncing. Yoongi’s mom had to take a phone call from the dog boarders and was currently out of the room.

“Be careful Tae.” Yoongi said as he threaded his fingers through Hoseok’s hair. “Don’t accidentally fall on Jimin.”

Tae put himself back on his feet. “Jimin, I drewed you some pictures.” He picked up one of his drawings. “See? I drew a whale in the ocean and he is bouncing. Did you know that whales are the biggest animals in the whole world? They can get so big!” He threw his hands - and the paper - in the air.

There was a sigh and Yoongi looked down at Hoseok. “Hi, baby.” Yoongi signed. “How are you feeling?”

Hoseok glanced up and smiled - big and wide and blinding. “I like your hugs.” Was all he signed back and then crushed himself tighter to Yoongi’s chest.

“I like your hugs too.” Yoongi said against his forehead and then kissed his nose.

There was a knock on the door and Yoongi looked up to a doctor in a lab coat and a nurse of some sort. Namjoon turned with Jungkook, his wrist locked in his grip so Jungkook couldn’t clock him in the face accidentally. “Good afternoon.” She said, smiling. Yoongi was never so thankful to see a stranger smile at him. “I think we are ready to pull Jimin’s tubing.”

“They’re going on?” Namjoon asked and Yoongi signed what the doctor just said to him. Yoongi placed Hoseok on the floor and they crowded around the head of Jimin’s bed, watching this poor hospital worker like a hawk as she touched on the screen and then undid the velcro around Jimin’s face. Jimin’s arm came up and waved towards them, his eyebrows furrowed in discomfort. Namjoon smoothed his hair back and pep-talked him.

Finally, she pulled the tubing and they all snapped their eyes to the screens above Jimin’s head. And waited. Yoongi felt the air freeze in his chest and his heart beat pick up speed as they watched for any sign of distress or abnormality or…anything. They waited for anything.

But, nothing came except for a small, gravelly “daddy.”
Yoongi’s eyes went back to his baby - his lips pursed out in a very Jimin-esque expression and he felt tears prickle his eyes. “Hi, sweetheart.” He murmured and touched his cheek. “You’re okay. We’re right here. We love you.”

“Chim,” Namjoon said at the same time. He was actually crying, tears making red, angry lines down his face as he folded his body into Jimin’s line of sight. “Hi baby. We love you so much.”

“Everything looks okay.” The doctor nodded as the nurse wound a nasal cannula around Jimin’s face, hooking him up to oxygen. “His o2 sats are good and steady. We will continue to monitor him closely though.” She said and they both left.

Jimin fingers went right to the cannula and Yoongi intercepted his hand. “No, baby.” Yoongi said. “Don’t play with that okay?”

Jimin’s head craned to get Yoongi into his line of sight. He smiled his squinty, sunshine smile when he finally saw him. And Namjoon almost sprinted around the bed to stand next to Yoongi so Jimin could see them both at the same time.

Yoongi watched Namjoon wipe his face before repeating “I love you, I love you,” over and over to their baby that was knocking on death’s door only a couple of days ago. He watched and felt a huge knot unwind from the middle of Yoongi’s being. The knot of fear and dread. Yoongi was the type of person to always jump ten years into the future. He was always going to be anxious about future hospital visits. About staying ahead of Jimin’s needs.

But, he knew now that Jimin - and really, his whole family - was capable of withstanding anything. As long as they had each other and they had that love that bound them, they were imperishable. He knew that now. And that gave him a lot of peace. That calmed the storm of anxiety in the back of his mind.

“Hi, Chim!” Tae greeted as he hopped with a big smile over his face. “You can talk again! Yay!” He reached out his hand to touch his head and Namjoon intercepted it.

“No, TaeTae. He’s got stitches on his head that are still healing, okay?” Namjoon signed and said gently. “You can pet his hand.” He guided Tae’s hand to Jimin’s. “You want to give him a little kiss, Kookie?” Namjoon said and bent over so Jungkook could give his cheek a little kiss.

“I love you.” Hoseok said slowly, reaching on his tip-toes next to his taller little brother. “I love you, Chim.”

“Lub. You.”

Yoongi froze. And Namjoon froze. Both of them became pillars of stone as they computed Jimin’s squinty smile that was slightly chapped and red from the tubing and his breathy giggles and his hand that was trying to reach towards Tae.

“Lub you.” Jimin said again.

“Did he just say-,” Namjoon started to ask.

“He just said-,” Yoongi said at the same. “I love you.”

Jimin clapped his chubby hands together and let out a big giggle like the whole thing was hilarious to him. Like this was his plan all along.

Yoongi unfroze first. “I love you too, Jimin.” He said and leaned over to peck Jimin’s
forehead, his chest filling with air like he was a balloon and he was going to float away. “I always have and I always will.”

“Lub you.” Jimin just repeated, his voice the sweetest, purest music to Yoongi’s ears.

Jimin was discharged a full week after of taking him off of intubation, after the stitches in his head were removed and were replaced instead with a liquid bandage that was going to help prevent scarring.

The first couple of days home were rough between Jimin’s feeding tube they now had to contend with for the time being as Jimin healed, dealing with a child that was sore and fussy, and their three other children with their own set of needs. But, even when Namjoon and Yoongi would haunt the hallways of their own home, a child in their arms, and their eyes glazed over and tired, they would still smile at each other. Because, being home was a million times better than being in the hospital. A trillion times better.

After that, besides a slight change in routine that now included Hazel again as she helped out with Jimin in the mornings and more visits from “Uncle” Seokjin, summer break turned into the vacation it was meant to be.

And soon, Namjoon found himself on the deck of his own pool under the slight haze of clouds that was California’s June Gloom, watching his older boys jump in and out of the pool. Jungkook was trying to climb Seokjin like a tree in the water, one foot on their ex-case manager’s forehead, a squirt gun in his hands. And Jimin was a towel burrito in Yoongi’s arms as Namjoon and his husband both sat side-by-side on their porch swing watching their kids have fun.

He glanced at Yoongi, who had a bucket hat on and his arms around a dozing Jimin, his big, gummy smile over his face as he laughed at Seokjin’s distress of being Jungkook’s human diving board and felt himself start to smile too.

“What?” Yoongi signed, catching Namjoon’s eyes.

“Nothing.” Namjoon said as he surveyed his backyard. He shrugged and motioned around. “I’m just…happy.” He smiled again, feeling himself sigh out of contentment. Looking at each masterpiece that he didn’t create, but called his own all the same. “My family’s joy is my happiness. I’m just...this life we created. It's beautiful and I love it and I love you.”

Yoongi smiled back, his lips quirking. Instead of responding, he freed one hand and slipped his fingers between Namjoon’s. Namjoon stared at their laced fingers for a second before looking into Yoongi’s eyes. “I’m glad,” Yoongi said, cinching his other arm around Jimin tight. “That I get to walk this path hand-in-hand with you.”

Namjoon rocked their porch swing and sucked in a big breath.

He was glad too.

~Finished~
As always, comment if you would like!

I also have a stan twitter for BTS if you would like to get connected here!
Chapter Notes

So, I was going back and forth between posting these "bonus chapters" as their own separate story like a lil sequel or just adding them on here. I decided to just add them on as extra chapters because I'm really lazy. I do want to remind you to pay attention to the tags because I may (probably) will add some because teenagers are dumb and do dumb things!

“Sleepyhead.” Namjoon tried to sing-song as he ran his fingers through his husband’s hair that had been dyed a dark color but his silver roots were starting to show. “It’s time to wake up.”

“Five more minutes.” Yoongi signed back without really picking up his fingers.

“But, he’s out of surgery.” Namjoon said. “The nurse just came.”

Yoongi cracked open his sharp eyes at that. He squinted one and rubbed his face before turning towards Jimin - who was snoozing in his wheelchair, his chin pressed against his stuffed animal and the hood from his sweater up to protect his ears from the draft of the waiting room.

Namjoon groaned as he lifted himself from a squat position to his full height, his joints popping. He glanced at Jungkook who had the iPad in his lap and was currently deep into some game app. Taehyung - being the independent fourteen year old that he was - was at home in bed still.

“Up and at ‘em.” Yoongi scratched at Jungkook’s head and he rose without tearing his eyes from the screen. Namjoon got Jimin and they followed the nurse that got them.

Namjoon and Yoongi were pretty used to regular visits at the children’s hospital. However, it was usually in the pediatric neurological section - a wing they had memorized now due to Jimin’s TBI and it’s party favors. They were in a new part now. Orthopedics.

However, even though it was a different part of the hospital - and a different kid that was undergoing surgery - it didn’t stop the clench in Namjoon’s heart when he walked into the hospital room to an unhappy, drowsy, and pained little face in the hospital bed.

“Hoseok,” Yoongi signed. “How are you feeling?”

Hoseok scowled, his apple cheeks that were holding onto whatever last bit of baby weight it could puffed out. “Hurts.” He signed groggily and then his hand went to his knee that was all bandaged and elevated, his face wincing.

“Nope.” Yoongi intercepted his hand. “Don’t touch.”

Hoseok threw himself back on his pillows, defeated and very, very unhappy. He was unhappy to have this surgery in the first place. Because an ACL reconstruction meant he would be out of this year’s dancing competition season. Out after having an amazing dance season last year that not only got him a scholarship, but a post that went viral on Facebook, and a spot on Ellen where he got to show off his passion of dance despite being deaf.
He had plans to go to America’s Got Talent and was potentially being scouted for performing arts schools. But, a dance injury - that didn’t even really have to do with dance, he was just goofing around for TikTok with his friends - ended up tearing his ACL in two places.

Namjoon resisted turning this into a now, you’re going to be more careful in the future, right? teaching moment. He assumed that Hoseok learned his lesson when the orthopedic surgeon said that he would need an 3 to 6 month break from dance for proper healing and Hoseok cried on the way home.

“You want to sit in the lounger?” Namjoon directed Jungkook, who looked up at him with his wide, curious eyes. “Lounger?” Namjoon repeated and Jungkook nodded and took a seat in the mint-colored lounger in the corner of the room.

“Do you need anything?” Yoongi fussed - like he did with Jimin when he was in the hospital. “The doctor said you can have sips of water and ice chips. Are you in pain?”

Hoseok signed no.

“Do you want to put in your hearing aids?” Yoongi produced the case from his hoodie pocket.

Hoseok gave a huffy sigh and his face twisted again. “I want to go home.” His eyes rimmed with tears.


“You’ll go home later today, okay?” Yoongi said and smoothed Hoseok’s hair down and then fixed his sheets.

Namjoon turned towards Jimin - who was still snoozing - and pulled the stuffed animal he thought to get while he was in the gift shop out of the bag that was hanging from Jimin’s wheelchair handle. A little stuffed flamingo. He put it in the crook of Hoseok’s elbow as he started to fall asleep, thinking that Hoseok resembled more like his baby that he would cuddle with so many years ago and not the high-energy, explosive teenager he was now.

Yoongi sat down next to Jungkook on the lounger, raking his dark, thick bangs out of his eyes. “How are you doing?” He asked, both of them knowing that Jungkook’s threshold for the smells of the hospital were not the best.

Jungkook glanced up. “Okay.” He signed and shrugged, but he lifted the edge of his hoodie over his nose anyway as he refocused on his iPad. Yoongi rubbed his arm.

“I can pick up prescriptions on the way home.”

“That’ll probably be good.”

Jungkook’s hand started to go in a stim, flapping uneasily in front of his face. He blinked hard.

“Are you sure you don’t want to go outside? It’s okay if you have to.”

Jungkook realized what he was doing and stopped, placing his fingers on his ear. Namjoon leaned his weight on Jimin’s chair and put his hand on his waist. “Jungkookie-,”

“I’m fine.” Jungkook signed quickly and then rolled his eyes.

Yoongi and Namjoon shared a look. Jungkook had gone to two camps over the summer - a
sleep-away camp for autistic teenagers and a day band camp that his middle school hosted.

Jungkook came home…different after band camp. In the car rides home he would explode with stims and would be nonverbal and unsociable and just generally in a bad mood. Like, he was stopping himself from stress-relieving while at camp. They tried to get out of him why he felt the need to not stim. All he confirmed was that it wasn’t a bully. He wouldn’t tell them anything other than that.

“Well,” Yoongi said, looking extra small next to Jungkook who just went through a growth spurt. “Starting the school year with a recovering ACL graft is going to be fun.” He leaned back, his bucket hat falling low over his eyes.

“I know.” Namjoon signed from across the room. He looked at Hoseok - who was dead asleep with his mouth open now. “He was looking forward to his driving permit.”

“And dance.” Yoongi added quickly and then looked at Jungkook. “You ready to go home, Kookie?” He asked out loud. “And I can stay here with Hoseok?”

Jungkook didn’t respond right away. But, that was okay. He always needed just a couple extra moments to process. He finally nodded, his eyes flicking up from his iPad. “I’m hungry.”

Yoongi giggled a little. “You’re always hungry.”

Tae rolled over, felt himself roll onto his phone, rolled back over and then picked up his cell phone to check the time. 8:12. That was way too early. He resisted the urge to chuck his phone onto the bedside table between his and Hoseok’s beds and go back to sleep, but a text caught his eye.

Daddio: Hoseok’s out of surgery. Everything went well.

Well, that was good. He knew that Hoseok was stressing over his surgery. And when Hoseok stressed, everyone suffered. They had a rule that they were forbidden to leave the dads on read. Tae tapped out a message back and then checked social media.

He scrolled Instagram, his lips quirking out as he swiped picture after picture of friends on vacation in cool places like a Spain and India and Rio De Janeiro. And those who weren’t traveling were actually doing things on summer vacation - camping and the beach and concerts.

Tae dropped his phone on chest and sighed as he stared at his ceiling. Where did he spend the majority of his summer vacation? Not traveling to different countries. Not camping. Not the beach. Not to concerts.

He spent it at the doctor’s office waiting room. Mostly. Or physical therapist’s office waiting room. Or in the waiting room of the dialysis center. Or at the hospital ER when Hoseok tore his knee.

And now he was a week away from his sophomore year of high school and he had nothing to show for it except for a low death-to-kill ratio on Call of Duty and a million hours clocked in at waiting rooms. He was going to have to write an essay explaining what he did over the summer and it could be summarized in two words - I sat.
He picked up his phone again and texted his best friend Mark complaining that he hadn’t done anything all summer except for sleep and play video games and tag along to doctor appointments.

**Mark: well let’s do something then**

Tae thought about it for a second before tapping back a **like what?**

**Mark: let’s go to a theme park**

Tae chewed on the inside of his cheek. He could probably convince the dads to let him do that. Probably not Disney. But, maybe…Six Flags? That was right above them in Santa Clarita. Yeah. Just him and his friends. Doing something except for stare at the television in waiting rooms. **Anything** except for stare at the television in waiting rooms.

**Me: let’s do it.**

“Who has the cutest belly ever?” Namjoon said as he finished up changing Jimin on the floor of his bedroom, tickling his belly but being careful of his PEG line that he got most of his nutrition through now. Jimin giggled, smiling his soul-crushing, open-mouth, eye-squinting smile.

Jimin had his hands around a squishy stress ball that helped keep his wrists and fingers strengthened and was hunting around with his limited field of vision. “Tae.” He said. “Tae!”

“Oh,” Namjoon said as he got Jimin’s pants back on and cuffed the bottoms until his little feet popped out. “Going back to school is going to be an adjustment for you.” He said and sat Jimin up to adjust his shirt. Namjoon tried to be extra careful as he got to his feet and then hoisted Jimin up back into his chair.

A pain shot through Namjoon’s lower back and he rubbed the sore spot with his fingertips and waited for his muscles to stop seizing. They had a Hoyer lift because Yoongi was not allowed under any circumstance to lift Jimin anymore himself after a compression fracture in his vertebrae a couple of years ago. But, Namjoon was so use to just lifting him. And they couldn’t bring the Hoyer with them in public. It was just how it was.

The lights flashed and Namjoon looked up to Jungkook in the doorway. “Hey, Kookie. What’s up?”

Jungkook’s fingers fluttered for a second before he signed “breakfast is ready.”

“Thanks.” Namjoon said and then smoothed Jimin’s wheelchair cowlick down. “You hear that, Chim?” Jimin turned his head towards his name. “Breakfast.”

“Eat?” Jimin asked as his played with his fingers.

"Yes, baby. Good job. We’re going to eat!" Namjoon pushed Jimin to the dining room where Tae was already sitting at the table, texting and eating pancakes as fast as he could go. Jungkook was at the skillet finishing the pancakes - his favorite food item to make beside packaged ramen without seasoning. He brought the plate to the table and set it on the surface.

“Thank you for making breakfast, Kookie.” Namjoon said out loud after he got Jimin’s table insert snapped into place.
Jungkook picked up a pancake and rolled it up. “You’re welcome.” He signed before stuffing it into his mouth.

“Did you thank your brother for making breakfast?” Namjoon asked Tae, whose nose was top of his phone as he texted at the speed of light.

“Thanks brother.” Tae said as he reached blindly for the Nutella.

“Tae!” Jimin yelled, causing Tae to look up from his phone.

“Chim, I’m right here.” Tae said.

“Chim.” Jimin’s fists slammed down on his wheelchair table. "Play. Ball!"

Namjoon put a pancake into Jimin’s chubby fingers and watched him automatically put it in his mouth before turning and spearing a couple for himself. “Tae, can you look at me?”

Tae’s eyes glanced up.

“When Hoseok comes home tonight he’s going to be groggy and out of it, so make sure that you keep the bass-y music and stuff to a minimum.” He signed.

Tae’s eyes rolled slightly and Namjoon exhaled a small sigh. Teenagers. “I know.” He signed back and his eyes went back to his phone.

Namjoon rapped his knuckles on the table. “And Tae, can you pretty, pretty please hang out with Jimin today? He misses you.”

“Okay.”

“You’re his best friend.”

“Okay,” Tae signed, rolling his eyes again. Boy, was that getting on Namjoon’s nerves. “Can I go to Six Flags with Mark and probably Melody on Saturday?”

“Six Flags?” Namjoon’s eyebrows furrowed.

“I have my own money for my ticket and food and stuff.” Tae added quickly. “And Mark said his mom is cool to pick me up and drop me off.”

Namjoon smeared a heavy layer of Nutella on his pancakes and then reached for the syrup. He mulled it over. He didn’t see why not. Six Flags was only maybe half an hour away and Tae would be in a group. “Will there be a chaperone?”

“Yeah, Mark’s mom was going to take his little sister.” Tae said. "Not like we need one, though. I'm fourteen."

“Six Flags.” Jungkook interjected. “I want to go to Six Flags.”

“With what money?” Tae said back.

Namjoon glanced at Jungkook and Hoseok popped into his mind as well. And while Hoseok wasn’t really a roller coasters person and was going to be on crutches he knew that he would balk if Tae got to go to a theme park and he didn’t. “Let me talk it over with Dad.” He signed noncommittally.
“Please,” Tae begged. “Mark’s mom has to know soon so she knows which car to take. Please?”

“Let me talk it over with Dad.” Namjoon just repeated. “Hoseok just had surgery. It’s going to be like every other surgery where the household gets flipped for a little bit, okay? Let’s focus on one thing at a time.”

Jungkook started to rock in his dining room chair. “One thing at a time.” He echoed out loud, like he was punctuating Namjoon’s sentence for him.

Yoongi did laps - like he always did on discharge day - around the room, making sure he wasn’t forgetting anything. Luckily, this wasn’t a two- or three-week stay like Jimin tended to go through. This was a one day in-and-out surgery. They barely gave Hoseok time to sleep off the rest of the anesthesia before they had him up to teach him how to use crutches properly and how to redress his wound.

“Dad.” Hoseok groaned out loud from the wheelchair that was going to be used to take him to the front doors. “You’re making dizzy.”

Yoongi stopped when he was satisfied that they hadn’t left anything behind. “Okay.” He said. “I think you’re ready to go.” He signed.

Hoseok looked tired. But, Yoongi knew his son. He knew by the way his shoulders were tensed and his fingers tight said that he was ruminating on something. Something that was causing his anxiety to flare. And Yoongi knew it was one thing and one thing only.

“Baby,” Yoongi said bending at the waist to get into Hoseok’s face. “You’ll dance again very, very soon, okay?”

Hoseok let out a huffed sigh. “I just can’t believe I’m missing competition season.” He signed. “Neil said that he was talking to scouts from Julliard. In, like, New York.”

“Okay,” Yoongi squished Hoseok’s face up. “You are only a sophomore, okay? You don’t have to worry so hard about college yet. Stop trying to grow up so fast.”

“But, Dad.” Hoseok groaned aloud. “That’s not how dance works. If I don’t get in now, I’ll be too late.” His eyes rimmed with tears. “And I’m not good at anything else.”

“That’s not true and you know it.” Yoongi said.

Hoseok started to protest, but he was interrupted by an orderly who had come to collect them both. Yoongi picked up the discharge packet and they were wheeled to the front of the hospital, Yoongi’s fingers raking Hoseok’s dark hair off of his forehead.

The drive home was quiet and Hoseok made it a point not to talk by keeping his fingers wrapped around his crutches and his eyes aggressively trained on the windshield. Yoongi stopped to pick up Hoseok’s prescriptions of anti-inflammatories and pain meds from their pharmacy and a dinner of In n’ Out for everyone.

When they got home, Yoongi helped Hoseok out of the car and followed him as he hobbled
his way up the driveway to the front door.

Yoongi was greeted with Jungkook and Jimin singing. Or well, Jimin was singing and Jungkook was harmonizing as he paced around the living room with his weighted vest on and his fingers twisted in front of his face.

“Jungkook,” Yoongi said as he kept one eye on Hoseok as he carefully turned the corner towards the bedrooms. “You can skateboard or swim if you’re feeling antsy.”

Jungkook shook his head. “Music.” He said.

“Why don’t you practice for band? Or on the piano?”

Jungkook’s eyes squinted as he mulled it over and then started for his own bedroom. Yoongi watched Hoseok turn into his bedroom and then turned towards Jimin, who had been set up with his frame of PVC pipe that had multiple dangly toys on it that he hit and play with. “Where’s your dad, Jimin?” Yoongi asked and then glanced outside into the backyard.

Namjoon was outside, dressed in shorts, skimming the pool with a net on a long pole. His skin was sun-kissed in the low twilight and on display in a loose tank top. Despite being married for thirteen years, Yoongi’s heart still skipped in his chest.

“Hey,” Yoongi waved from the doorway, catching his eyes. “We are home.”

“How is he?” Namjoon asked as he tapped out the skimmer net of leaves.


Namjoon pouted. “Poor guy.”

“We got dinner.”

“Okay.” He plunged the skimmer into the pool. "I'll be in in a second.”


Yoongi knocked a mobile, causing it to sing. Jimin’s face lit up as he craned to see the bright colors and Yoongi’s face. He clapped his hands and gave a big giggle.

Yoongi went down the hallway, stopped to listen to the sound of drums and then went to his eldest boys’ room.

Tae had his long, thin body sprawled out on his bed as he played Call of Duty. Yoongi watched the closed captioning of his chat flicker across the screen - including an expletive about fucking someone’s mother - and rolled his eyes. Hoseok was sitting on his bed, removing his dance studio hoodie and ran his fingers through his hair that was sticking up on end.

Yoongi flicked the lights on and off. “Dinner time. Make sure you wash your hands. And make sure Jungkook washes his too.”

“I just got into bed.” Hoseok whined in sign.

“You don’t have to come to the table.” Yoongi said. “If you don’t want to.”

“Can I not come to the table?” Tae asked with a little smile.
“No. Both of your ACLs are fine.” Yoongi said.

After ten minutes of gathering Jimin and tearing Jungkook away from his marimba and getting Tae off of the video games, they finally all gathered - even Hoseok who didn’t want to be left out - at the dining room table.

“This is delicious, Dad.” Tae said. “Did you make it yourself?” He snickered around his In n’ Out burger.

“Stop being a smartass.” Yoongi shook his head as he popped fries into his own mouth and then picked up Jimin’s half a burger from his tray and tried to get a couple of bites into him. “Who is teaching you these things?”

“You are.” Namjoon giggled. “You teach him how to be a smartass.”

“It’s true.” Tae said. “I only learned from the master.”

Yoongi rolled his eyes and checked on Hoseok, who was only half-heartedly eating his dinner, his eyes tired and drooping and Jungkook who had his burger in one hand and his iPad in the other.

Namjoon elbowed Tae in the arm. “Ask your dad now what you want before we get busy with baths and tube feedings and stuff.”

“What?” Yoongi asked.

Tae inhaled. “Can I go to Six Flags with Mark and Melody on Saturday? Mark’s mom is going to be there.”

“Do you have money for a ticket?”

“Yes, I have leftover birthday money.”

Yoongi shrugged. “Yeah. I don’t see why not.” He glanced at Hoseok and waved. “Do you want to go to Six Flags on Saturday?” He signed.

“No.” Tae groaned. “Mark only invited me.”

“Okay.” Yoongi said. “That doesn’t mean we can’t also go to Six Flags. You know that Jungkook likes rollercoasters. And Jimin likes the stimulation.”

“Jungkook had a meltdown the last theme park we went to.”

“It smelled like fish.” Jungkook cringed and blinked hard.

“I don’t really want to go to Six Flags.” Hoseok interjected in sign. “It’s hard walking around on crutches. And I don’t like rollercoasters.”

“We can rent a wheelchair.”

Hoseok scowled. “No thanks.” He shook his head. “Besides, I think Holly and McKenzie want to take me out as a get-well present.”

“See?” Tae insisted. “He already has plans.”

“Okay.” Yoongi signed. “That’s fine, I guess.”
“Yes!” Tae cheered. “Thank you. Thank you.” He pulled out his phone from his pants pocket only to have Namjoon yank it out of his hand.

“No phones at the dinner table.” He admonished.

Yoongi sighed. *Teenagers.*

Chapter End Notes

please comment!<3

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!