Mint and Poppy

by Alette

Summary

After an angel's mistake, Chae Hyungwon is stuck sharing the body of a Yoo Kihyun, a small, grumpy guy he's never met before. What happens when he and Kihyun start falling for two different men, while they're in the same body?

Now with Vietnamese, Italian, Burmese, and Spanish translations! ^^

Notes

Firstly, I want to apologize for the awful summary. Recommendations encouraged.
Secondly, I want to apologize to the fandom as a whole for inflicting my novel-length fanfic on them.

Hope you enjoy :)
Morning and Scroll

Chapter 1

The sharp buzz of the alarm cut through the cold morning air. A hand stuck out of the blankets nearby, picked up the alarm clock and threw it against the wall. The clock bounced off the wall harmlessly and continued ringing on the floor, like some sort of screeching zombie from hell.

Hyungwon groaned and forced himself out of bed. He padded over to the alarm clock and turned it off. He hated the damn thing and how it refused to break, but it was the only thing that could get him out of bed.

Well, he was out of bed. Hyungwon checked the time on the hell clock. It was 8 am. He groaned again. Whoever had thought up morning classes was either soulless or a robot.

He dragged himself to the bathroom and made a mental check of the day's schedule while he washed up. A class at nine, another at eleven thirty, and he was done with university for the day. He'd meet up with Changkyun for lunch, and then start the afternoon shift at the store.

Hyungwon got dressed, and then took a look at himself in the mirror. Small, pretty face with large eyes, beautiful lips, and short dark hair. Handsome matched with everything, he was told, but that didn't mean he should dress like a hobo. He had on a pair of black skinny jeans that made his long legs look even longer, and a light soft knit sweater in snow white. He wore a long dark blue coat to keep off the February chill, shoved some gloves in his pocket and some bread in his mouth, and he was ready to face the outside.

The outside in this case was the thin alley that led to the block of two-room apartments, one of which Hyungwon lived in. His apartment wasn't much, but it was warm. It was freezing outside. Hyungwon blew out his breath through his lips and watched as it misted in the winter air. As he walked down the street he put on his gloves, and then took out his phone and earphones.

Taeyang accompanied Hyungwon in his ears as he reached the main street. He crossed, and then Crush started up as he waited for the light to change at the next crossing. And as he listened to lines about love and fate, someone tapped on Hyungwon’s shoulder, and he turned around.

Hyungwon knew he was good-looking. He'd been told so all his life, he'd be an idiot to think everyone was lying to him. He was a good-looking guy, and he knew another good-looking guy when he saw one.

The guy who'd tapped him on the shoulder was more than just regular handsome. He looked about Hyungwon’s age, in his mid-twenties or younger. His skin was so white and flawless it almost shone in the morning light. His hair was a dark, rich brown, cut short on the sides and roughly pushed back. His lips were the sort of pink so many cosmetics ads strove for, and his dark eyes radiated warmth.

Hyungwon took one earphone out. “Yes?” He was much nicer than he usually was to someone who interrupted his music.

“You shouldn't do that,” the handsome stranger said. “Walk around with headphones on. It can be dangerous.”
Hyungwon was oddly touched, but kind of offended as well. He could take care of himself without help from strangers, no matter how attractive they were. “Thanks,” he said, keeping his tone polite, “but I think I'll be okay.”

“I’m serious, though,” the other man said, and he looked like he meant it. “You should be careful.”

There were a million snipes in Hyungwon’s head in reply to that, but the guy sounded so sincere that instead he nodded and pulled his earphones off. The stranger smiled at that, and Hyungwon did not regret his decision.

The light turned red, and the two of them crossed together. On the other side, the stranger turned left while Hyungwon turned right, and he felt a little twinge in his chest to see him go. *There goes a storybook meeting that ended up in nothing. Regretful, but typical.* Hyungwon wasn’t really a pro at romance, anyway.

He’d walked a little way down the sidewalk when he realized his earphones were tangled up in one of his coat buttons. He stopped where he was and started untangling them. He stood still by the side of the road, head down, hands busy.

Hyungwon didn't hear the people yelling, or the screech of the bus tyres until it was too late. He didn't even feel the impact, which was a blessing.

White. Everything was white. Why was everything white?

Hyungwon blinked once, twice, and then brought his hands up and rubbed at his eyes. His hands felt curiously light. Every part of him felt light, like he was floating.

“What’s going on?”

The voice was soft, pretty, but still definitely male. It was the voice someone took when they talked to a sick or emotional person.

Slowly a figure distinguished itself from the pure white. It was a man, a young, pretty one. He had soft features, and soft blonde hair that fell across his forehead. His eyes were large and expressive, and he was dressed in all white– loose, white trousers, and a figure-hugging white top. His flawless, pale skin reminded Hyungwon of a morning memory that seemed so long ago.

“Chae Hyungwon?”

But even as he said it the answer came to him. Hyungwon stared wide-eyed at the blonde stranger, and his expression confirmed it.

“Yes,” the man in white said. “You were hit by a swerving bus. I'm sorry.”

Hyungwon continued staring as thoughts rushed through his head. “But I told Changkyun I'd meet him for lunch,” he said finally.

“I'm afraid you'll have to miss it,” the blonde stranger said with an apologetic smile. “You'll be missing all your appointments.”

“Are you trying to be funny, you wannabe-angel?” Hyungwon snapped. “I’m not in the mood for jokes. In case you can’t tell, I'm *dead.* That kind of dampens a person's sense of humor, so forgive me if I don't break a rib laughing.”
The assumed angel glanced around, panicked. “That’s not supposed to happen,” he said awkwardly.

“What, most dead people like jokes about being dead?” Hyungwon asked sarcastically.

“No, you shouldn't be so emotional,” the angel said, still awkward.

“I shouldn't be emotional? I died!”

“Exactly, you should've left most of your emotions behind with your body,” the angel. A scroll which definitely wasn't there before was in his hands. He opened it up and read through it. “You’re definitely Chae Hyungwon? You sure?”

“You’re asking me?” Hyungwon was in disbelief. “Yeah, I'm me. I'm pretty sure.”

As the man in white peered at his scroll, the reality started washing over Hyungwon. “I can't believe I'm dead,” he said aloud. “So much stuff I never got to do. And now I never will. I'm only 22, dammit.” He stopped and corrected himself. “I was 22.”

“Hold up,” the angel said suddenly. “You're 22? You should be 38.”

“I’m 22,” Hyungwon said. “I’m pretty sure about that too.”

“That’s not what the list says,” the blonde said, shaking the scroll. “Chae Hyungwon, born 1978, due to die today.”

“I was born in ’94,” Hyungwon said slowly, “not ’78.”

“Oh,” the angel said, and then, “Oh.” And then once more, “Oh.” He cleared his throat. “Well I have some news.”

“Let me guess,” Hyungwon said acidly. “Some idiot made a mistake. I'm not really dead.”

“I’m not an idiot,” the angel said indignantly, and then cleared his throat again, gathered himself and said calmly, “Congratulations 22-year-old Chae Hyungwon. You're alive.”

Hyungwon tried not to let it show, but relief rushed into him when he heard those words. He was alive. He was alive. It was like the reality of death only reached him after he’d realized he was alive.

“If you'll wait a moment,” the angel was saying, “you’ll be back in your body in a moment.” He smiled again, looking sincerely sorry. “I hope we don’t see each other again for a long time.”

Hyungwon wanted to get one last word in, but he suddenly couldn't speak. A numbness had set in all over, and he felt impossibly light. He was floating. He was floating back to his body…

The sharp buzz of the alarm cut through the cold morning air. A hand stuck out of the blankets nearby, picked up the alarm clock and threw it against the wall. The clock hit the wall and broke into pieces, and there was silence.

Even in his half-sleeping mind, Hyungwon celebrated. He'd finally defeated the demon clock.

He pulled his body out of bed and walked into the bathroom with his eyes still closed. But when he reached for the sink he found nothing but empty air. Confused, Hyungwon rubbed his eyes and opened them.
He was not in his bathroom. He was not in any room in his apartment. He looked around, confused. He was in someone's apartment, but not his own. Hyungwon started walking around.

The apartment was bigger than his own, and neater too. The kitchen was well organized and pristine. The bathroom looked like a horde of strict cleaning ladies had been through it.

Where the hell am I? How did I get here? Hyungwon thought of the last thing he could remember. He was walking to university, there was a cute stranger, and then… and then…

Hyungwon passed by a mirror on the wall, and then stopped dead in his tracks. Had he just seen his reflection…?

He turned back to the mirror, looked into it, and almost fainted.

The face looking back at Hyungwon was not his face.
Hyungwon stared at the unknown face in the mirror. That wasn't him.

He reached his hand up, and sure enough the image in the mirror did too. His small, soft cheeks were gone, replaced by a tight face with firm cheekbones. His large expressive eyes were small and sharp. The ebony hair was now chestnut, and when he pushed it away, he saw two moles on the forehead, where the devil had his horns.

Hyungwon dropped down to the floor and sat there cross-legged, feeling his face with his fingers. It didn't feel like his face. It felt like the face he saw in the mirror.

And now Hyungwon finally noticed his body. His model proportions were gone. The body he was in now was small and short.

Thoughts rushed through his head, but the same one came back over and over. Where is my body?

He lay down flat and closed his eyes. Maybe I'll just wake up from this nightmare… any second now…

And then someone cleared their throat.

Hyungwon opened his eyes and sat up to see a guy sitting on the table nearby. A blonde young guy with a pretty face and an awkward smile.

“You,” Hyungwon growled.

“Me,” the angel said, still smiling awkwardly.

“You did this.” It wasn't a question. Hyungwon knew. Just like he knew he hadn't been dreaming when he thought he'd been hit by a bus. Here was the proof. Rage started bubbling up inside him.

“Not… on purpose,” the angel said with a look that was uncomfortable and guilty. “Yeah, I messed up, but it was an accident.”

“That makes it alright then,” Hyungwon said sarcastically. “I’m stuck in some random guy's body, but everything's just peachy.”

“It’s not permanent, don't worry,” the angel said quickly. “It’s just… complicated.”

“I’m all ears,” Hyungwon said. The anger was still there, and he tried to push it down.

The angel shuffled in discomfort and then started. “With your soul away from your body for so long, your body kind of… closed itself. So when your soul was sent back, it couldn't get back in, and ended up in this body.”
Hyungwon sat silently. He took a couple of deep, steadying breaths and then asked, “Why this body? I don't even know this guy.”

The angel shrugged. “Who knows? Not me. Maybe his body's compatible with your soul.”

Hyungwon looked down at the short body. “I doubt it.”

“Anyway,” the angel continued, “you have to live in this body while we get everything sorted out, and then you can get back to yours.”

Hyungwon thought this over a moment and then said, “What about the… owner of this body? Is he dead?”

“Oh, heaven no,” the angel said happily. “He just has to… share with you for the time being. One day it's your turn, the next his, and on and on.”

“What? Why?”

"The soul gets a little detached during deep sleep," the blonde explained. "So your soul will take a backseat. Then the next time the body sleeps it will fight back for the steering wheel."

That sounded like bullshit. *But how much of this makes sense anyway?*

“I don't know anything about this guy, how am I supposed to live in his body?” Hyungwon demanded. “I mean, what the hell is his name?”

The angel shrugged again. “I don't know. I don't spend time on Earth, spying on people.”

“Okay then,” Hyungwon said after a pause. “What's your name?”

The angel looked around, picked up a nearby magazine and rifled through its pages. “What's this guy's name?” He pointed at a picture on the page.

It was some idol group member. “Lee Minhyuk,” Hyungwon read aloud.

“You can call me that,” the newly-named Minhyuk said with a bright smile.

But at that moment Hyungwon’s mind was on something else. He could see. Whoever this guy was, he didn't need glasses. Hyungwon had needed glasses nearly all his life; real thick ones too, which was why he usually wore contacts.

“What're you thinking about?” the newly-named Minhyuk asked.

“He doesn’t need glasses,” Hyungwon said. “I don't need glasses.”

Minhyuk beamed at him. “See, there’re upsides too.”

“Shut up,” Hyungwon snapped, all of a sudden unbelievably angry. “I've had enough of your positive-mentality bullshit. This sucks. There is no upside.” He took a deep breath. “When can I get my own body back?”

“It’s difficult to be sure,” Minhyuk answered. “Three weeks. Maximum four. At most, five.”

“You keep making the numbers bigger,” Hyungwon said through gritted teeth.

“Just preparing you for the worst,” Minhyuk said with a sunny smile.
Hyungwon took a deep breath, trying to calm himself. It didn't work. “If you get chirpy on me again,” he said in a low, dangerous voice, “I will kill you. I am serious. I will murder you. Can angels die? You will find out. I will put my hands around your pretty neck and—”

“Actually,” Minhyuk said with a little laugh, “they’re not your hands.”

“Shut up,” Hyungwon growled, “or I will shove your halo so far up—”

A creak from another room interrupted him, and the two in the room froze. More sounds followed. Footsteps.

“Who is that?” Hyungwon hissed. “Does Tiny have a flatmate?”

“I don't know,” Minhyuk whispered hurriedly.

Hyungwon didn't think Tiny did. He hadn't seen another bedroom, or even another bed. This was an uninvited guest.

A nearby baseball bat looked like a good weapon, and Hyungwon picked it up. He was pleasantly surprised to find Tiny’s body was a little stronger than his own.

“What are you doing?” Minhyuk whispered as Hyungwon crept past him.

“Protecting Tiny and myself,” he answered. “Now for once, just shut up.”

The intruder wasn't trying to be quiet. He was in the kitchen, walking around freely. Hyungwon moved fast but quiet. The guy was tall, and pretty big too. Big enough to toss Tiny around, at least. Hyungwon was glad for the bat.

He was close to the guy when he must've made a sound, because the intruder turned around and said, “Kihyun?”

Too late. Hyungwon already swung, but tried to pull back at the last second. He hit the stranger right in the head and he fell, unconscious.

“Oh, wow, messed up, huh?”

Hyungwon turned around to find Minhyuk standing right behind him. He had his lips pursed and was looking at the unconscious figure on the floor. “Seems like he's a friend of yours.”

Hyungwon ignored him and bent down. The guy seemed alright, just out cold. Hyungwon was glad. It meant he could think.

Alright, so this body belonged to a Kihyun. The guy he had just knocked out was this Kihyun’s friend. What else?

A brain flash came to Hyungwon. He left the kitchen and went back to the bedroom. There, by the bedside table, was what he was looking for: Kihyun’s phone.

It didn't have a lock code, thankfully. Hyungwon first went to his contacts, and there, at the top of most frequently called, was a number marked Shownu-hyung. Weird name. Nickname, obviously. Hyungwon was willing to bet that was the guy on the kitchen floor. He looked like a Shownu.

“Oh, that's smart,” Minhyuk said from right over Hyungwon’s shoulder. Hyungwon ignored him and opened Kihyun’s KakaoTalk. Most recent: Son Hyunwoo (Shownu). Profile picture confirmed Hyungwon’s guess. He decided to go through the rest of Kihyun’s phone later. He wanted to be
there when Shownu woke up.

Hyungwon returned to the kitchen, looked down at the unconscious figure, and rearranged his thoughts. He thought of moving Shownu, but decided Kihyun’s skinny arms wouldn't be able to do much. Eventually he got a glass of water from the tap and dumped it on Shownu’s head.

There was an immediate reaction. Shownu groaned and slowly sat up, rubbing his head. “What just happened?”

“I thought you were a thief,” Hyungwon said, and that was the truth. “You should've knocked.”


“Fine,” Hyungwon answered casually, and then added, “I didn't sleep well.”

“You seem… different,” Shownu said, getting up with the aid of the kitchen counter.

Hyungwon felt panic shoot through him. Was it that obvious? How did this Kihyun act, anyway? He wished he'd spent more time looking through his phone.

Eventually Hyungwon decided to go the safe route and said, “I’m sorry I hit you, hyung.”

Shownu laughed and said, “I’m just surprised you managed to knock me out.”

Kihyun’s hyung was a good-looking guy, with broad shoulders and a smooth, handsome face. He looked about as tall as Hyungwon– Hyungwon’s real body. His smile seemed to eat up his features, and made him look incredibly innocent.

Hyungwon didn't know how to respond to that smile. He'd just knocked the guy out, why would he be smiling? He decided to keep his mouth shut.

“Okay, then,” Shownu said. “Where’s breakfast?”

“I don't know,” Hyungwon answered automatically.

Shownu looked puzzled. “Aren’t you going to cook?”

Hyungwon stared at him. Cook? He could cook ramen and that was it. What if Kihyun was a great cook? How was Hyungwon going to manage with his zero-level skill?

“You know, hyung,” he said, “I’m actually feeling kind of sick. I think I'm going to skip breakfast and just go back to bed.”

“What’s wrong?” There was concern in his voice, and awkwardness too.

“Nothing’s wrong,” Hyungwon said, and that was the most monumental lie he had ever told in his life. “I just think I'll go back to bed.”

“Do you want me to make you breakfast?” Shownu asked. “I can stay, if you want.”

“No, it's okay,” Hyungwon said, waving him away. “I’ll be fine if I just sleep. Sorry.”

Shownu looked uncertain, but gave in. “Alright. I'll call you later.”

“Ohay,” Hyungwon said, shepherding him to the front door. “See you.”
As soon as Shownu was out the door Hyungwon breathed a sigh of relief. He'd survived one situation, and he was already tired. How was he going to manage this for five weeks?

“That was close.” Minhyuk had suddenly appeared behind him. “Although I doubt he would've believed you even if you tried to tell him the truth. He seems like a nice guy.”

Hyungwon nodded absentmindedly. He was thinking about what he should do next. He went back to Kihyun’s bedroom and picked up his phone. The day was Saturday. Which meant Hyungwon had been hit by the bus the day before. And his body…

“Where’s my body?” Hyungwon asked Minhyuk, who was sitting on the bed.

“In some hospital, probably,” the angel answered. “Officially, your body's probably in a coma.”

Hyungwon sat down and processed this information, and then grabbed Kihyun’s wallet and headed for the door.

“Hey, where are you going?” Minhyuk asked, following him.

“To find my body,” Hyungwon said, looking through Kihyun’s wardrobe for a coat.

“You don't even know where it is.”

“I do,” Hyungwon said. “By law, an ambulance has to take you to the nearest hospital. So I'm at the Lady Mary Memorial.”

“Oh, you're smart,” Minhyuk said, and he sounded like he meant it. Hyungwon ignored him. He didn't recognise the neighborhood Kihyun lived in, but it didn't matter. He took a taxi all the way. It wasn't Hyungwon's money anyway.

He asked for his room number, and went up to the second floor. The sound of his thudding heartbeat filled the elevator. Minhyuk was standing right beside him, and Hyungwon was surprised he couldn't hear it.

The two of them got off the elevator, turned a corner, and Hyungwon saw Changkyun sitting on a chair in the hallway.

Hyungwon was so elated to see a familiar face he almost screamed. “Changkyun!”

Changkyun raised his head and stood up, a confused look on his face as Hyungwon barreled into him. “I am so glad to see you,” he said, holding him in a hug.

“Hyung?” Changkyun's mature, handsome face was colored with caution. “Are you okay?”

“No of course I'm not okay,” Hyungwon said, letting him go. He was eye-to-eye with the kid now. “Damn it, I'm so short.”

“Kihyun-hyung, are you okay?” Changkyun asked, now concerned.

That jolted Hyungwon back to the present. He was Kihyun to everyone, even to Changkyun. Which meant…

“Wait,” he said. “You know me?”

Changkyun glanced around as if looking for a hidden camera. “Yeah,” he said slowly. “We met up just a couple of days ago, hyung.”
“Great,” Hyungwon said. “Tell me all about myself, but later. I need to see somebody.”

He started towards his room, and Changkyun followed, asking, “You know Hyungwon-hyung?”

“In a way,” he said, and opened the door.

The hospital room was large, well-lit and airy. Hyungwon’s body lay on a bed near the window, and it was not alone.

There was a man sitting by the bed, young, with dark brown hair cut close on the sides and pushed back at the top. His lips were pink, his eyes exuded warmth. And his skin was white and flawless like the memory of a winter morning.

Hyungwon stared, surprised into speechlessness. The dark-haired stranger noticed his presence and stood up. He locked eyes with Hyungwon, and it was like he was looking into his soul. And then he finally spoke.

“Kihyun?”
Hyungwon still couldn't speak. He simply stared at the other man, his lips clamped shut.

“Kihyun?” The not-stranger was walking towards him now. “What are you doing here?” He glanced at Hyungwon’s immobile body and then asked, “Do you know him?”

*Say something,* Hyungwon told himself, but he couldn't. The sight of this person had shaken him. It all felt like fate, and he didn't like it.

Finally, Hyungwon swallowed and said, “Yeah, I know him.”

“Hyung, you know *him*?” This was Changkyun, asking about the brown-haired stranger.

Honestly, Hyungwon didn’t, but it seemed Kihyun did, so he replied, “Yes.” He shook his head to try and clear his thoughts and said, “Do you mind if I spend a few minutes alone with… Hyungwon?”

Changkyun looked uncertain, but nodded and left. It touched Hyungwon how protective the kid was, even though he knew this Kihyun. The dark-haired stranger gave one last look at Hyungwon’s body, and then followed the kid out.

As soon as Hyungwon was alone in the room with his body, he felt his knees go weak. It was difficult for him to approach the hospital bed. It took him a moment to actually look at the body on it.

Seeing his own body unconscious in front of him sent a strange feeling down Hyungwon’s spine. He felt oddly empty as he watched his own body. *I’m pretty good-looking,* he thought, and his words sounded empty even in his head.

“Are you okay?”

“You’re back?” Hyungwon asked without turning around. “You disappeared pretty quick back there.”

“I didn't want your friend to see me,” Minhyuk said, walking up to the bed. “Was that Changkyun? He’s cute.”

Hyungwon couldn't even narrow his eyes at him. He couldn't tear his eyes away from the figure on the bed.

“Must be weird for you,” Minhyuk said. “Seeing your own body like that.”

“Your commentary isn't helping,” Hyungwon snapped. He collapsed onto the chair by the bed. It was still warm. “How am I gonna survive without my body?”

“I’ll help,” Minhyuk said brightly. “You’ll be fine. It's not forever.”

Hyungwon found he couldn't even be angry at the angel. He groaned and put his head in his hands. Minhyuk walked over and put a comforting hand on his shoulder.

*My hands are so small,* Hyungwon thought, and the thought almost brought tears to his eyes. He considered crying. He hadn't cried in years, but this was Kihyun’s body anyway. Kihyun could bawl his eyes out, Hyungwon didn't give a damn.
He was aware of Minhyuk removing his hand, and a moment later he heard the door open. Hyungwon raised his head, hoping it was Changkyun.

It wasn't Changkyun. It was the stranger. Hyungwon’s stomach twisted when he looked at him. He reminded him of that morning that seemed a lifetime ago.

“I’m going now, Kihyun,” he said. “Are you going to stay?”

Hyungwon nodded. He didn't trust himself to speak.

The stranger stood where he was in the doorway in silence, and then burst out, “I am so sorry. This is my fault.”

His voice cracked a little, and Hyungwon heard it. He stood up. “Nothing’s your fault,” he said. *It's that angelic bastard who stole some idol’s name. It's his fault.*

The stranger’s lips were quivering now. “His headphones… I saw him, he was…”

Hyungwon couldn't take it anymore. “Nothing’s your fault,” he said again, more firmly. “Stop feeling sorry for yourself. The guy's in a coma, let's save some pity for him.”

The other man stared at him, and then nodded. He rubbed at the corner of his eye with his fingertip and said, “You’re right. You'll be staying?”

“Yes,” Hyungwon said, regretting being so harsh with him. He wanted to say sorry, but settled for an apologetic smile.

The stranger didn't look bothered, and said, “See you.” He gave a nod of farewell and left. A second later, Changkyun entered the room.

“Kihyun-hyung,” he said a little awkwardly, “you mind if I see Hyungwon alone a moment?”

“I have something to tell you,” Hyungwon said quickly before he lost the nerve.

“Can it wait?” Changkyun looked unwilling.

“No,” Hyungwon answered immediately. He had to tell somebody. He couldn't do this alone. He took a deep breath and said, “I am Hyungwon.”

Silence. Awkward silence. And then:

“Hyung, that's not funny,” Changkyun said seriously. “Hyungwon-hyung is in a coma and no one knows if he'll ever wake up.”

“I will,” Hyungwon said. “When my soul can get back inside my body. For now, I have to share Kihyun’s body.”

Changkyun was not amused. “Seriously, hyung, stop.”

“No, it's true,” Hyungwon insisted. “There was a mistake, I wasn't supposed to die, but by the time my soul was sent back it couldn't get back into my body. So now I have to live in Kihyun’s body.”

“Hyung, enough,” Changkyun said, and Hyungwon could tell he was getting angry.

“Just listen,” he said. “I’m Hyungwon. I'll go back to my body in three weeks. Maximum four. At most, five.”
"Hyung," Changkyun said in a low voice, “I like you but I swear to God if you don't shut up I will punch you."

Hyungwon looked around for a solution, and then finally, in desperation, burst out, “When you were eleven you once laughed so hard you wet yourself, and I had to sneak out clothes from my house for you.”

Changkyun’s expression changed from anger to surprise, and then to suspicion. “Did Hyungwon-hyung tell you that?”

“No, I am Hyungwon,” he said with an exasperated sigh. “Your ideal type was once Hero Jaejoong in drag before you found out he was actually a guy. One time you threw up in a McDonald’s bathroom, and we ran out without eating anything because you were too embarrassed to stay there.”

Hyungwon watched Changkyun’s face go through a range of expressions, from suspicion all the way to uncertainty. “Ask me anything,” Hyungwon said. “Only things Hyungwon would know.”

Changkyun bit his lip and then asked, “What did I dare Hyungwon-hyung to do when he was 19?”

Hyungwon groaned. “Did you have to ask that?” He took another deep breath and said, “I went to our usual convenience store and bought a box of tampons and…” he grimaced, “I told the cashier they were for me.”

Changkyun’s mouth dropped open, and then he said slowly, “Hyungwon-hyung?”

“The cashier thought I had some weird fetish,” Hyungwon whined, still caught up in the horrifying memory. “100% that was what he thought. I could see it on his face.”

“How did this happen?” Changkyun asked, dazed. “You… what about Kihyun-hyung?”

“Sit down,” Hyungwon said. “Let me tell you the whole story.”

He did. He didn't skip a single detail, not even about him meeting the pale-skinned stranger.

There was a long silence after he was done, and then Changkyun said, “Wow.”


“So you only get to live every other day?”

“That’s what Minhyuk says,” Hyungwon shrugged. “Sounds better than living no more days.”

Changkyun nodded solemnly. “What are you going to do now?”

“I don’t know,” Hyungwon said, and that was the truth. “Should I try and pass off as Kihyun? He probably has a job.”

“He does,” Changkyun told him. “He works at some call center. You should probably call and ask for the day off.”

“I would if I knew who to call,” Hyungwon said. “Kihyun can survive one skipped day, right? You know him, how is he?”

"I don't know him that well," Changkyun said. "Jooheon-hyung knows him, I just know about him, see him around."
Hyungwon thought this over and then asked a question he'd been harboring. “Do you know that guy? The one who was in here.”

“He said his name was Shin Wonho,” the kid said. “I don't know him, but I guess Kihyun-hyung does.”

“I guess,” Hyungwon said, thinking. Shin Wonho. Maybe it wouldn't be completely terrible to be Kihyun for a while…

“Are you gonna go home?”

Hyungwon jolted out of his thoughts. “Home? My home?” He thought about it. “You have the spare key, right?”

The apartment was so familiar, and strange at the same time. For one, everything seemed taller.

Hyungwon opened his closet and sighed when he saw his beautiful wardrobe. So many great clothes that he could no longer wear…

“I took the day off,” Changkyun said, pulling off his coat, “so I can stay with you.” He hesitated and said, “This is all so crazy.”

“Tell me about it,” Hyungwon said. He was staring at Kihyun’s fingers. So short. Which meant…

“Hyung, what are you doing?” Changkyun asked uncertainly as Hyungwon started taking off his shirt.

“I need to know what I'm working with here,” he said. The cold set off gooseprickles on his bare skin as he looked at himself in the mirror. No abs. Of course. Hyungwon started undoing his belt now.

“Whoa, hyung, I think that's enough,” Changkyun said quickly, rushing forward and grabbing Hyungwon’s wrist.

“For today, this is my body,” he said, trying to shake the kid off.

“Yeah, but it's still Kihyun-hyung’s in the end,” Changkyun said, still holding on. “Think of it this way. Do you really wanna stare at another guy’s naked body?”

Hyungwon raise an eyebrow at that, and Changkyun quickly said, “Okay, forget that. Try and respect Kihyun-hyung’s rights.”

“You're right,” Hyungwon said, deciding to check when Changkyun wasn't there.

“I'm guessing you haven't had breakfast yet,” he said. “I'll fix something up for you.” He sounded like he was trying very hard to pretend everything was normal.

That's what he did. For the rest of the day, Changkyun acted like Hyungwon still had his own body, and Hyungwon was grateful. He almost enjoyed the rest of the day, until he lay down to sleep and got a call on Kihyun’s phone from Shin Wonho.

Hyungwon stared at the phone. Should he answer? He found that he already had.

“Hello?” That seemed a good thing to start with.
“Hey,” came that almost-familiar voice. “I heard you weren't feeling well. You okay?”

_Which means Wonho and Shownu are friends._ For some reason, that seemed weird to Hyungwon.
“Yeah,” he answered. “I’m okay, just needed a rest.”

“You sure? Do you want me to come over? I could make you dinner.”

He sounded so concerned over a small thing. Hyungwon thought he should be irritated, but he was
touched. “I’m fine,” he insisted. “Go to sleep.”

“Okay,” Wonho said uncertainly, and then in a more normal tone, “See you tomorrow.”

“See you,” Hyungwon said, and ended the call. He stared at the phone until he realized, no, he
wouldn't.
The sharp buzz of the alarm cut through the cold morning air. A hand stuck out of the blankets nearby, picked up the clock and shut it off. Yoo Kihyun sat up, yawned, stretched. He was awake.

He was also being watched. He turned and almost had a heart attack when he saw Im Changkyun sitting in a nearby chair, watching him intently.

“Changkyun-ah?” Kihyun said cautiously, now fully awake. “What are you doing in my apartment?”

But even as he said it, he realized he wasn't in his apartment. He wasn't in any place he knew. He wasn't even wearing his own clothes.

“What the hell is going on?” Kihyun asked, pulling at the oversized clothing. “What am I wearing?”


“Of course I am, who else would I be?” Kihyun was confused, and now he was getting irritated. “Where is this?”

“This is Hyungwon-hyung’s apartment,” Changkyun said. He took a deep breath. “Just sit right there, and try and listen with an open mind.”

Kihyun listened. That didn't mean he believed any of it. By the end he decided Changkyun wasn't trying to lie to him, he actually believed what he was saying.

“Okay, that's very nice,” Kihyun said in a soothing tone as he considered getting the number of a mental facility. “And I don't mind being kidnapped, really, but I need to get home now.”

“Hyung, I'm telling the truth,” Changkyun said desperately. “Check the day. It should be Saturday, right?”

Kihyun didn't bother. He found some of his clothes nearby and was already changing. He heard Changkyun sigh in frustration and then walk away.

The apartment was a freaking mess. Calling it a pigsty would be insulting to pigs. Kihyun shook his head disapprovingly. He'd been in Changkyun’s home, the one he shared with his roommate Jooheon, and it was better than this.

He found his way to the living room, where Changkyun was waiting for him. “You won't believe me no matter what I say,” he said solemnly. “I didn't believe Hyungwon-hyung either in the beginning. Just call me when things start getting weird, okay? Or when a pretty blonde appears in your apartment.”
“Things are already plenty weird. “I’ll do that,” Kihyun said, and walked past him and through the front door.

After a little wandering to find the main road, he walked the rest of the way home at a brisk pace. He had his keys on him, thankfully, but there was no need. Shownu was already there.

Kihyun’s phone started ringing as he walked through the door, and stopped as Shownu caught sight of him. “Where were you?” he asked. “I was worried.”

“It’s a long story,” Kihyun said honestly. “I’ll tell you over breakfast. What do you want? Omelette okay?”

Shownu nodded and then asked, “You feeling better? I should’ve called yesterday, but I thought maybe you didn’t want me to.”

“I was with you pretty much all of yesterday,” Kihyun said, walking into the kitchen. “And I’m fine. Haven’t been sick in years, you know that.”

“Yeah, no, it’s just yesterday morning you said you weren’t feeling well,” Shownu said. “Also, Wonho told me about what happened to your friend. I’m sorry.” This last part sounded awkward.

Kihyun stopped and turned full attention on him. “What? What friend?”

Now Shownu looked as confused as Kihyun felt. “The friend you went to see in the hospital,” he said slowly. “Hyungwon, Wonho said his name is.”

“I didn’t go to any hospital yesterday,” Kihyun said, but now he didn’t believe himself. “I had classes, and then went to work. You were with me.”

“That was Friday,” Shownu said. “Yesterday was Saturday. Are you okay?”

Kihyun quickly pulled out his phone and checked the day. Sunday. Not Saturday. And now he was remembering Changkyun’s insane story. No way…

“You mind having breakfast somewhere else today?” Kihyun turned an apologetic smile on Shownu. “I need to get my brain in order.”

“Sure,” he said. “Are you sure you're okay, though?”

“I’m fine,” Kihyun said, and he was trying to convince himself as much as Shownu. “I’ll call you later.”

Shownu left, but not willingly. When Kihyun was finally alone, he dropped down to the floor, thoughts whirring through his head.

Alright. So I can’t remember anything I did yesterday. Doesn’t mean I’m going crazy.

And that’s when a voice right by his ear asked, “Does he come for breakfast everyday?”

Kihyun screamed. The voice screamed. Kihyun whirled around to find himself face-to-face with a blonde, pretty young man dressed all in white.

His first thought was about what Changkyun had said. His second he said aloud. “You are a hallucination.”

“Well that’s rude,” the other man said, offended. “I am definitely real. My name is Lee Minhyuk. I
am a sort-of angel.” He said this last bit with a flourish.

“I don’t care who you are,” Kihyun said angrily, getting up, “but get out of my apartment. Now. How did you get in here?”

"I teleported," the blonde said with a bright smile. "And I think I should stay. You're sharing your body now, and I have to help you out."

"Not this bullshit," Kihyun growled. "Is this a joke? Did Shin Wonho put you up to this?” He looked around, expecting to see Wonho pop out of some hiding place. "Wonho-hyung, very funny, but that's enough."

"This isn't a joke," Lee Minhyuk said seriously. "What Changkyun said is all true. It should be impossible, but there are two souls in your body."

Kihyun was now starting to get freaked out. This Minhyuk guy looked serious, as serious as Changkyun had. As serious as Shownu had when he'd told him about Hyungwon in hospital.

That, more than anything, told Kihyun something was up.

"You say you're a sort-of angel," he said, suspiciously. "Prove it."

Minhyuk sighed. For a while, nothing happened. And then Kihyun blinked, and Minhyuk was gone.

"Behind you."

Kihyun spun around to find Minhyuk standing behind him, a broad smile on his face. "Proof enough?"

"Yeah." Kihyun's knees suddenly felt weak. He chewed the events of the last half hour over. "This Hyungwon is in a coma?"

Minhyuk nodded, his smile dropping so fast it was almost comical. "He'll wake up eventually, when his soul leaves your body for good."

"Alright," Kihyun said. "I think I'd like to see him."

Lady Mary Memorial Hospital wasn't far. Kihyun went up the elevator to the second floor, not knowing what he expected to see.

He certainly didn't expect what he saw, which was Wonho sitting by the patient's bed.

"Hey," Wonho said, getting up as Kihyun entered the room. "Back again today?"

Kihyun didn't remember being there the first time, but nodded. And then working off the cue, "You too."

Wonho nodded. "I feel kind of connected to him, for some reason."

"I know how you feel," Kihyun said, walking up to the hospital bed. He took a good look at the patient.

Chae Hyungwon was tall and good-looking enough to make Kihyun kind of bitter. He had dark brown hair that fell over his forehead a lot like Kihyun's did, but his face was small and soft-looking,
and he had a wide mouth with full lips. *He looks kind of like a frog,* Kihyun tried to console himself, but he had to admit it was a handsome frog.

*We have to live in one body and it just had to be mine.*

Kihyun suddenly realized he'd accepted the ridiculous story. Looking at Chae Hyungwon's body had just cemented the story as truth somehow.

"You must've known him well."

Wonho's words brought Kihyun back to the present, and he sought for the right words before outright lying, "Yeah."

"You should've talked about him at least once," Wonho said, a touch reproachfully. "I would've liked to have known him, maybe." His face darkened.

"No, he's an asshole," Kihyun said, and felt he was justified. *Bastard looks like that and he's still trying to take my body.*

Wonho stared at him in disbelief. "How can you say that? We don't know if he'll ever wake up."

"He will," Kihyun said, and feeling kind of bad, squeezed Wonho's shoulder in a comforting way. Wonho was a great person and a great friend, but he had a habit of taking things onto his shoulders, burdening himself. Too much empathy. Kihyun, fortunately, had no such problems.

"Thanks," Wonho said, putting up a smile. "Hey, you should've told me you weren't going to work yesterday. We had to cover for you."

*Of course.* "I thought I would, but then decided not to," Kihyun shrugged. "Thanks, though."

There was a silence as Wonho watched Hyungwon's calm face, and then he asked, "Can you tell me more about him? You were close, right?"

Kihyun stared blankly for a moment, cogs turning in his mind, and then he said, "Ask me again tomorrow, I'll tell you then."

Wonho raised an eyebrow and said, "Okay. I'm going to get some breakfast. You coming?"

"Not today," Kihyun said. "I'll see you later, okay?"

Wonho shrugged and left, leaving Kihyun alone with Hyungwon's body, but not for long. Minhyuk reappeared a second later.

"So this is him," he said. "Kind of okay-looking, eh?"

Kihyun narrowed his eyes at him. "The guy's in a coma, and you're concerned about his looks. I see." *Okay-looking to you, since you look like* that. Kihyun knew okay-looking. He was on the handsome side of okay-looking. Minhyuk and Hyungwon were both past that range.

"You okay?" Minhyuk asked. "Hyungwon kind of freaked out when he saw himself."

"I'm okay," Kihyun said, and surprisingly he meant it. Alright. He had the soul of a coma patient in his body. So long as he stayed calm, he could handle this. What he needed to do now was prepare.

Kihyun took a fast walk home. Then he got out an unused notebook and a pen. He opened the first page and wrote in big letters: **INSTRUCTIONS.**
"That's a good idea," Minhyuk said, right over Kihyun's shoulder. Kihyun ignored the comment, but let him stay there. He started the list.

*Shownu-hyung comes over for breakfast every morning. Check the fridge for something I'll have made the night before. Do NOT cook for him.* Kihyun looked at that, and then underlined the last line. He did not trust Chae Hyungwon's cooking skills. If Shownu and Wonho were any indication, good-looking guys were useless at cooking.

*Sometimes he comes for dinner, too. Just try and convince him not to.*

*I have class every morning at 8:30. Hyung will take you to campus but you have to find the classrooms yourself. Map and timetable on the bedroom door.* He made a mental note to draw one later.

*Don't talk to anyone in class. Take notes. Go to the cafeteria for lunch. Don't try to hang out with anyone.*

*After class I have work. Shin Wonho will take you.* Kihyun thought of writing a description of his job, but ended up writing, *Ask him for help.*

*Be CLEAN. He'd seen Hyungwon's apartment. He underlined the word CLEAN twice.* Kihyun paused and then wrote, *Do NOT do anything weird with my body.* He was single, which made things easier.

"It may be too late for that," Minhyuk said all of a sudden.

Kihyun put the pen down. "What?"

"Well I followed him almost everywhere yesterday," he said. "I'm pretty sure he looked at you naked."

Kihyun thought this over. "That's alright. As long as he didn't get naked in front of other people."

Minhyuk laughed awkwardly. "You're… a weird person."

Kihyun shrugged this off and continued with the list. *Don't go through my phone or iPad unless you absolutely have to.* He stopped a moment as he thought of what to write, and then decided to write everything he could think of. He'd filled up two pages before Minhyuk groaned, "This is boring."

"Then go somewhere else," Kihyun said, listing food that wasn't good for his digestion.

"I got nowhere else to go," Minhyuk whined. "I'm not sure I'm even supposed to be seen by anyone else. I'm getting into a lot of trouble just helping you guys out."

"Why do I feel all this is your fault anyway?" Kihyun said, not looking up from his list. The silence told him he was right.

"I didn't do it on purpose," Minhyuk said eventually.

"Yeah, I figured." Kihyun reviewed his list. It looked complete. He paused, and then added, *Be good to Shownu-hyung.* He had no idea why he'd written that, considering Kihyun himself wasn't good to Shownu, but it seemed necessary.

Minhyuk seemed to find it funny and started laughing, but Kihyun ignored him. He was getting good at that. He had something actually important to do. He picked up his phone and scrolled through the
contacts before finding the one he wanted and calling.

It rang twice and then, "The blonde showed up, huh?"

Kihyun sighed. "Yes."
The ringing of a phone pulled Hyungwon out of sleep. He blindly felt around for it on the bedside
table, and then answered the call with a slurred, "Hello?"

"Hyungwon-hyung, you have to wake up. You'll be having a guest in a couple of minutes."

"Changkyun?" Hyungwon's mind was starting to clear up. "What guest?"

"Kihyun-hyung's friend."

Reality hit Hyungwon like a wave. He looked at his hands. Small, with short fingers. Kihyun's
hands.

_It wasn't a long, convoluted nightmare. I'm stuck in this Tiny's body._

"Right, Shownu," Hyungwon said, climbing out of bed.

"Shownu-hyung," Changkyun corrected. "Also, Kihyun-hyung said he wrote you something. It's on
the bedside table."

"Right, thanks," Hyungwon said, spotting a folded sheet of paper.

"I'll be busy at lunchtime," Changkyun said, "but call me if you need anything. Good luck, hyung.
I'm hanging up."

"Thanks," Hyungwon said, trying to not sound miserable. "Bye."

He picked up the page and unfolded it. It was a letter.

_Chae Hyungwon,

I've decided to let you live in my body—_

Hyungwon stopped reading to give a snort. Like either of them had a choice.

_I've decided to let you live in my body, but we have to cooperate. I've written you a list of
instructions in the notebook on the table. At the end of every day you have to write down everything
you've done that day. That way I don't get any nasty surprises when I take back control the next day.
If we work together we might make it through this._

_Please remember I have a good reputation to uphold._

_Also, you owe me an alarm clock._

_Yoo Kihyun_

Hyungwon read through the letter a couple of times, and then picked up the notebook. He read
through the first page before giving up. He liked reading, but Kihyun had pretty much written a

He washed up and then got dressed, which took longer than usual. Kihyun's wardrobe looked like
the kids' section of a thrift store. Hyungwon picked out the least worst and wore it while thinking of
the diary entry he'd have to write. _Dear Kihyun, today I spent all of your savings on new clothes._
You're welcome.

He walked into the kitchen, expecting to see Minhyuk. Minhyuk wasn't there, but Shownu was.

That made Hyungwon uncomfortable. Wonho had been preoccupied at the hospital, but the moment Shownu had seen Kihyun's body he'd known something was up.

"Hey, are you feeling okay?" Shownu asked by way of greeting.

"I'm fine," Hyungwon said, trying to keep himself busy with the fridge.

"You seemed kind of… dazed yesterday."

_Kihyun probably had no idea what was going on._ Hyungwon quickly thought up a plausible explanation. "I'd been drinking the night before," he said, impressed at his own quick thinking.

"Without me?" Shownu sounded… hurt? Disappointed, at least.

Hyungwon faltered. What do you say in response to that?

Thankfully, Shownu let it go. "What's for breakfast?"

Some weird-looking thing Kihyun had made the night before, which tasted pretty good. They ate in a silence that made Hyungwon feel awkward, but which Shownu seemed completely comfortable with. Afterwards, Shownu did the dishes while Hyungwon fished out Kihyun's book-bag. It was heavy, but Kihyun's body was used to it. He thought for a moment, and then put Kihyun's instructions notebook in too.

"Let's go, it's getting late," Shownu said, waiting by the door. He let Hyungwon walk out first, and then followed.

They walked side-by-side. Shownu walked a little closer than Hyungwon thought friendly. More than once their hands knocked against each other, and Hyungwon found himself wondering whether he should take Shownu's hand in his.

_No,_ he finally decided. _I'm projecting._ He put it down to overfamiliarity and tried to ignore Shownu's knuckles lightly brushing against his.

When they pushed their way onto a crowded subway compartment, Hyungwon was aware of Shownu staying close, protecting him with his body. He instinctively reached for Kihyun's body whenever the compartment shook, and when another guy invaded Hyungwon's personal space, Shownu surreptitiously but firmly pushed the guy away. Hyungwon was touched.

_Kihyun is missing out. I'd date him._

Kihyun's university campus was all red brick and grey concrete, and looked intimidating. When Shownu left him at the front gate Hyungwon actually wished he'd stayed. They hadn't talked much during the journey, but Shownu's big, bear-like presence was oddly steadying.

Hyungwon took out the map he'd found on Kihyun's bedroom door. It took him a while, but he finally found the room he was looking for. Fortunately the lecture hadn't started yet, and Hyungwon made his way to an inconspicuous seat halfway down the hall. _Alright,_ he thought, when he realized no one was going to approach him. _Maybe this won't be too hard._

He realized how wrong he was when the lecture actually started.

Kihyun had neglected to mention he was majoring in genetic engineering. Hyungwon was a literature major. He sat blankly as the professor wrote on the whiteboard at lightning speed and
erased everything without a second’s pause. Take notes, Kihyun had instructed, but the only words Hyungwon understood during those two hours were ‘the’, ‘of’ and ‘and’.

Beyond any realms of possibility, the next lecture was worse. It seemed Kihyun was the overachieving type, because the professor kept asking questions and looking at Hyungwon to answer. Hyungwon had no freaking idea what the lady was on about, and started staring out the window so that he didn't have to make eye contact.

He had a free period after that, and sought out the library. In there, at least, no one expected Hyungwon to talk. He found a secluded table and took out Kihyun’s notebook of instructions.

Tiny (as Hyungwon not-so-fondly referred to Kihyun) had written every thing that had popped into his head. Favorite foods. Common hobbies. Favorite color. Hyungwon stared at that one. What was he supposed to do with that information?

He continued reading, until he felt someone's presence next to him. Hyungwon looked up, expecting to find Minhyuk. It was not Minhyuk.

"Hey," Wonho said, sitting down. "What're you reading?"

Hyungwon snapped the notebook shut and put it away. "Just notes," he said. That sounded believable, right? Kihyun was an engineering student. They pretty much breathed notes.

"Ah," Wonho said with a nod. He sat in silence for a moment, obviously thinking his next words over, and then said, "I'm asking you today, like you said."

"Asking what?" Please don't be anything class-related. If it was, Hyungwon would have to run away with a sudden stomachache, and he didn't want to do that.


Me? You want to know about me? Hyungwon warned himself he was getting too happy, but he couldn't suppress the smile that came on his face. It wasn't that farfetched. He had looked pretty good lying there, like a gender-bent Sleeping Beauty.

"Uh, Kihyun, you okay?"

"I'm fine," Hyungwon said, coming back to reality. He realized now he had a never-before-seen opportunity: to talk himself up as much as he wanted to a good-looking guy and still look humble. "Right, about Chae Hyungwon. He's a great person."

Wonho grinned. "Yesterday he was an asshole, and today he's a great person?"

Hyungwon fixed his smile on his face. Kihyun just got less likeable by the second. "He's both," Hyungwon said, and that was surprisingly accurate. "Nice to most people, but he has a… sharp sense of humor."

"How'd you guys meet, anyway?" Wonho asked with a smile. "I haven't seen him before, at work or on campus."

"Mutual friends," Hyungwon lied easily. "I don't think he liked me when he first met me."

"Does anybody?" Wonho raised his eyebrows, and that made Hyungwon laugh. A passing librarian gave him a sour, disapproving look, and as soon as she was out of earshot he and Wonho both burst
"Come on," Wonho said in a low voice, picking up his bag. "Let's go someplace we won't get death-glared."

Don't try to hang out with anyone. Hyungwon could see Kihyun's handwriting clearly in his head. But he picked up his book-bag and followed Wonho out of the library anyway.

The outside air was fresh and cold, and it felt like it washed out a person's lungs. They sat on the steps leading up to the main entrance. Hyungwon's breath misted in front of his face, and Wonho leaned and blew the mist away. Hyungwon found himself smiling.

"You're smiling," Wonho said with a disbelieving laugh.

It was endearing. Wonho's laugh sounded dopey, but that was endearing too. His soft white cheeks were tinged with red, from the cold or the laughter, and when he smiled the blush went all the way up to his eye-smile.

"What're you thinking about?" Wonho asked, fixing his hair. "You keep grinning."

Before Hyungwon could stop himself he grabbed Wonho's face with both hands. His cheeks were as soft as they looked.

"This is kind of weird," Wonho laughed awkwardly before pulling away. "What was that about? And your hands are freezing."

Hyungwon blew on his hands as he thought of what to say. The truth was all he had. "I wanted to see how soft your face was."

"I know I gained weight," Wonho said with a pout. "You don't have to rub it in. I told you I'll start working out again from spring."

"No, you look good," Hyungwon said honestly. "You don't need to work out." He wasn't usually so free with compliments, but they came easily right then.

Wonho raised an eyebrow. "That's a sudden turnaround. What's up?"

"I had a change of opinion."

But now Wonho was leaning in, peering closely at Hyungwon. "You seem completely different from usual," he said. "Like a whole other person."

He was looking deeply into Hyungwon's eyes as he spoke. It was like Wonho could see into him, see it was a different soul inside. Hyungwon tried to think, but those intent, dark eyes made it difficult.

"I feel like a whole other person," he said, slowly leaning away. A sudden thought came to him and he added, "After Hyungwon's accident."

Wonho backed away. "That makes sense," he said solemnly. He checked his watch. "It's almost lunchtime. I'm going to the hospital now; I'll head to work from there."

"I'll go with you," Hyungwon said. He had no desire to see his own soulless body, but he had no idea how to get to work. And he thought he should go.

The hospital was a short subway ride away. Wonho was not protective of Kihyun's body like
Shownu was, and that both disappointed and gladdened Hyungwon.

After they got off the train, on the way to the hospital Wonho stopped at a florist's and bought a small bouquet of lilies. "I know he can't see them or anything," he said in response to Hyungwon's look, "but I still think I should take them. I think maybe he'd like it."

*He can see them, and he does like it.* "I think you're right," Hyungwon said, trying not to smile.

When they got to the hospital, Hyungwon found he could not bring himself to enter his body's room. He waited outside it, uncomfortable and with a churning stomach, while Wonho went inside and set the flowers down. After a couple of minutes, Wonho came out, flashed an apologetic smile and said, "Sorry I took so long. You must've felt uncomfortable waiting out here."

Hyungwon shook his head. "I'm fine. Let's go."

Wonho smiled a gentle smile, squeezed his shoulder affectionately, and then the two of them left Hyungwon's body behind.

Hyungwon was exhausted. Kihyun's day was totally packed; he didn't have time for even a 10 minute nap. Not only that, but he worked the *worst* job in the world. Hyungwon thought he had it bad as a salesperson. Kihyun worked in tech support. And there were way too many idiots in the world. Fortunately, Hyungwon had found a method of dealing with them.

Well, now he was home– Kihyun's home, at least. Wonho had asked him for dinner and Hyungwon had agreed enthusiastically against his common sense. So he guessed he kind of deserved it when it turned out Wonho had invited six other people too, Shownu included. *At least no one noticed me that much. Wonho definitely didn't.*

Hyungwon changed, showered, and then raided the fridge for snacks. Kihyun kept his fridge well-stocked, and most of it looked good. It was so far the only thing Hyungwon liked about him. He took a bowl of pudding with him to bed, and once he was comfortable, picked up the notebook and a pen. Hyungwon put down the date, and then wrote freely.

> You could've given me some warning, Tiny. You're studying a hard subject I know nothing about. Get notes from someone else.

> Attended all your classes, went to work. Nothing much happened. I think I did alright as you. Was that all that happened? Hyungwon thought for a moment, about Wonho, about Shownu, and then started writing again.

> If you're dating someone, you HAVE TO TELL ME. It doesn't matter how secret it is. I have to know.

That was direct enough. Kihyun would get the idea. *Anything else?* Yes.

> Make sure you write down your own days. I don't want any 'nasty surprises' either.

> And also, buy your own damn alarm clock.

*Chae Hyungwon*

A thought sneaked into Hyungwon's head, of asking what Wonho's type was, but he shelved it.
Now was not the right time, and honestly he didn't know if the right time would ever come.

Hyungwon stared at the page a minute longer, and then put the notebook away. He finished the pudding, dropped the bowl on the floor and went to sleep.
Chae Hyungwon's handwriting was surprisingly pretty. Kihyun approved.

He did not approve of the nickname, though. Tiny? Kihyun was barely shorter than the average guy on the streets. Sure, Hyungwon was taller, but it wasn't like he was a giant either.

*And what's this about me dating?* He had clearly written in the instructions that he was single. Did Hyungwon not read them? Was Hyungwon the type of person who didn't read instructions? That was the worst type of person.

Kihyun put the notebook away, climbed out of bed and put his foot in a cold, sticky bowl. He swore, loudly, and then cursed Hyungwon silently. At that moment he could have walked all the way to the hospital to wring that skinny neck.

He washed up first, and then took the bowl back to the kitchen. Kihyun was surprised to find the sink clean and empty, but then remembered Shownu washed the breakfast plates. At least Shownu could be counted on.

French toast would be breakfast today, and he was almost done getting everything ready when Shownu walked into the kitchen. "Morning," he said.

"Morning," Kihyun said, looking back briefly. "Breakfast will be done in a minute."

Shownu got the plates ready and started on the coffee while Kihyun finished up. Less than three minutes later, the table was ready.

For the first time in a while, Kihyun marked how smoothly he and Shownu worked together. He only realized it the first time when Jooheon had pointed it out. Sometimes Kihyun didn't even need to ask Shownu to do something. He just knew to do it. But other times it was like their minds existed on two different planes. Kihyun had been friends with Shownu for years, and yet Shownu still surprised him every once in a while.

They ate in silence, until Shownu said all of a sudden, "You seem normal again today."

Kihyun almost choked on his toast. He carefully swallowed, and then asked, "Normal? How was I yesterday?"

"Different," Shownu said in his usual calm tone. There was a pause and then he said, "You ditched me for lunch."

*When that guy wakes up from his coma I am going to kill him.* "I was busy," Kihyun said. He hoped Hyungwon had a good reason. It was written clearly in the instructions: eat lunch at the cafeteria.

"Yeah, I know," Shownu said, still busy with his breakfast. "Wonho said you went to the hospital to visit your friend." He looked up. "You could've called me, though. I'd have gone with you."

There was another silence while Kihyun thought of what to say. He couldn't think of anything. Shownu didn't seem much bothered by it, though. He just shrugged and said, "It's okay. It's obvious you've been taking it kind of bad. You barely said anything at dinner, either."

Kihyun put up a smile. That was good news, at least. The less Hyungwon talked, the better.
"I'm just surprised you never mentioned him before."

There was no suspicion in Shownu's voice, but Kihyun felt himself panic anyway. He took a breath and tried to calm himself. "I did," he lied. "You don't remember? Hyungwon? He likes reading?" Changkyun had told him Hyungwon was a literature major, so that seemed like a good guess.

Shownu chewed thoughtfully for a moment. "Really?" he said eventually. "I don't remember. Sorry."

"That's fine, he's boring anyway," Kihyun said. That, he was sure, was a total lie. Hyungwon might've been any number of things, but he was not boring. Kihyun was certain of that.

Fortunately, Shownu dropped it, and they ate the rest of the meal without speaking. After breakfast they started for the campus. They walked in silence as they usually did, and a short subway ride later they arrived at the university. Shownu waved goodbye, and Kihyun went to class.

During class, at least, he could forget about Hyungwon and the whole situation. The problem was when he got a free period and went to the library. He sat down at an empty table, and looked up a second later to find a pretty blonde guy watching him intently.

"The hell," Kihyun said after he'd gotten over the surprise. "Do you have to just… appear like that?"

"I don't usually walk," Minhyuk said. "So get used to it." He smiled brightly with that.

Somehow Kihyun got the feeling Minhyuk wasn't as dumb as he tried to look. He was acting cute to make other people underestimate him. Kihyun did it too, sometimes, and he could recognize a master when he saw one. "For an angel, you're not that angelic."

Minhyuk frowned. "That's a mean thing to say."

"Think about it for a while," Kihyun said. "It's a compliment."

"Yeah, sure," Minhyuk said. "So how's it going? Hyungwon barely had a minute alone yesterday. I had to keep an eye on him secretly."

Something about that pinged Kihyun. It took him a moment to get it. "Wait… you spy on me?"

"Keep an eye on you," Minhyuk said soothingly. "And of course I do. This is a rare and serious situation. I can't leave you two unsupervised."

"Unsupervised? You're the one who shouldn't be left unsupervised! You got us into this mess!"

"Shh, quiet down, we're in a library," Minhyuk whispered. "I thought you were the one who lived on Earth?"

Kihyun grit his teeth. "You. Stop spying on me. Stop sneaking up on me. Just stop existing."

"Now you're just being mean to me on purpose," Minhyuk said, stretching himself over the table. "And I was going to tell you what Hyungwon did in your body."

"He didn't do anything out of the ordinary," Kihyun said. "Except go and see himself. That's fine."

That got a snort from Minhyuk. "You really think that's all he did?"

*He's trying to wind me up. Don't fall for it.*
Kihyun fell for it. "What else did he do?"

"Yoo Kihyun, how could you think so little of me?" Minhyuk said in fake outrage. "I'm a spy, not a tattletale."

"I will punch you," Kihyun said flatly. "In the mouth. I will. I'll knock all your pretty teeth out. You think I'm joking. Is this the voice of a guy who's joking?"

"Jeez, calm down," Minhyuk said. "You're just like Hyungwon. He threatened me too."

"It's the natural reaction to meeting you," Kihyun said, settling down.

"Actually, the two of you are kind of similar," Minhyuk went on. "I think you would be friends. You know, if you could meet."

"How fortunate for me," Kihyun said sarcastically. He was about to say something else, but the moment he blinked, Minhyuk disappeared. The reason for his quick exit was soon apparent.

Short hair dyed maroon. A cute, soft face with two thin but friendly eyes set in. A pair of dimples you could swim in.

"Hi, Jooheon," Kihyun said with a warm smile. "Classes going well?"

"Yes, hyung," Jooheon answered, still smiling that friendly smile. "I'm glad you're here. Got a new assignment."

Kihyun smiled and pulled up a chair. Jooheon was majoring in computer science engineering, and had a math course that semester. The two of them had known each other since high school, and Kihyun was happy to help out, whether his help was needed or not. He had a feeling Jooheon only asked for help to make him happy.

They had gotten through the first three questions when Kihyun said in what he hoped was a casual voice, "How's Changkyun doing?"

Jooheon put his pen down and sighed. "I don't know. This hyung he's close to was in an accident. He's in a coma, and apparently he might not wake up."

Kihyun just nodded at that, and Jooheon continued, "Changkyun doesn't seem worried. He keeps saying he's fine, but he seems kind of… distracted."

"That's unsurprising," Kihyun said honestly.

"I'm worried about him," Jooheon said with a frown.

"He'll be fine," Kihyun said. "Hyungwon too."

Jooheon looked at him, surprised. "You know Hyungwon-hyung?"

"Yeah, we're friends." Kihyun had told this lie enough times to be unfazed. "He'll be alright. He'll wake up eventually, you'll see."

"I hope so," Jooheon said, returning to his assignment.

Kihyun had said it confidently, but now a wisp of doubt set in. What if Hyungwon didn't wake up? Then what? Kihyun would live half his life. He imagined the two of them dating two different people, switching lives everyday. One day Kihyun would wake up next to Hyungwon's girlfriend…
He tried to get those thoughts out. Something like that would never happen. Hyungwon would wake up. Eventually.

"Hey, I'm going to the hospital later. Do you wanna go with me again?"

Kihyun looked at Wonho, and then glanced at Shownu. "No thanks," he said. "I'll probably go tomorrow." He was pretty sure about that.

Wonho nodded and then continued eating. The three of them were eating lunch like always, but Kihyun felt uncomfortable. He wanted to ask them what his body did the day before, but he had no idea how to bring it up without sounding crazy. He was finding it weird to be around other people now. Kihyun couldn't live even his half of his life.

He thought Wonho and Shownu could sense it too. Neither of them were chatty when there was food in front of them, but this was a different silence. Like deep inside they knew the guy they were sitting with wasn't the same person he had been yesterday. And it was driving Kihyun crazy.

"Kihyun, you okay? You seem kind of… distracted." This was Wonho, of course. Shownu was not usually so perceptive, except when you least expected it.

"Just thinking," he answered, and that was the truth.

"About…?" Shownu looked up.

"Yesterday," Kihyun said. That was the truth too, sort of.

To his surprise, Wonho started laughing. "I can't believe you seriously redirected all your calls to the boss," he said, still laughing. "His face when he tried to get you to apologize, and you said you had no idea who he was! I can't believe you called him a janitor."

Kihyun felt all the blood drain out of his own face. It was official. Chae Hyungwon was going to die.

"I thought you were going to get fired," Wonho continued happily. "His face got all purple. I thought that was something that only happened in books."

"Me too," Kihyun said, forcing out a chuckle. "I was insane yesterday."

"You weren't too bad," Wonho said with a smile.

Hyungwon says thanks, Kihyun thought to himself. He looked at Shownu. "And? Did I do anything completely uncharacteristic with you?"

"You barely spent any time with me," Shownu said after swallowing a mouthful. "So yeah, I guess."

"You were like a completely different person," Wonho said. "I can see you're feeling more like yourself today."

Don't get used to it, Kihyun thought bitterly. He had no idea about Hyungwon's personality, but according to Minhyuk they were similar. Kihyun doubted that.

He finished the rest of his lunch and stood up. "I have to go buy an alarm clock," he said. "I'll catch you guys later."
"What happened to the old one?" Wonho asked.

"I think someone threw it against the wall," Kihyun said as he jogged away.

The salesman had said the clock would not break, no matter what you did to it. It also had a sound like a banshee wailing as the alarm. Kihyun was satisfied.

He put it on his bedside table, and then climbed into bed, ticking items off his mental checklist. He had copied the previous day's notes from a kid who only wrote half of them and doodled for the rest of the class. He had apologized to his boss, a terrible encounter he did not want to have to repeat. He had even gotten a head start on the next day's lessons. Tomorrow's breakfast was all ready. Everything was in order.

Only after he was done with his checklist did Kihyun pick up the notebook. He read through Hyungwon's entry once more, and then started writing.

_Are you trying to get me fired? Why the hell would you call my boss a janitor?

Also, we don't leave dirty bowls on the floor like animals. At least put it in the sink, damn it. You'll attract ants._

When Kihyun was done with his scolding, he turned his attention to Hyungwon's points.

_Average day today. Didn't go to visit you today; Wonho-hyung will probably ask you again tomorrow. Helped Jooheon with an assignment. You probably know him, he lives with Changkyun.

Also, I am not dating anyone. Where did you get that from?_

He paused a moment. Was Hyungwon dating someone? Kihyun had no idea. He knew literally nothing about him, except that he was messy. _And he hardly knows anything about me._

Kihyun thought a little bit, and then wrote: _Just try and act like me, okay? I'm not the kind of person who would say their boss looks like a janitor._ For one, it would be insulting to janitors.

He thought a little and then started writing again. _I'll put down as many details of my days as I can. Use them as a guide. Act like me._

Kihyun started writing down everything he had done that day, not skipping a single detail. He wrote until he felt his fingers cramping, and then wrote more. He would do this every night, so he would have to get used to it. Kihyun just hoped Hyungwon would actually read everything and follow it.

He looked at the page. This time tomorrow, his body wouldn't be his anymore. It would be Hyungwon's, and he would probably be sitting in the same spot, writing his own entry.

The... change was imperceptible. Kihyun had hardly felt it. It was like he had just slept the whole day, except his body had been moving.

The pen hovered over the page. _Don't ignore Shownu-hyung._ The words were there in Kihyun's mind, but he somehow felt unwilling to write them down.

Eventually he settled on _Don't do anything weird_, closed the notebook and lay down to fall into a 36 hour sleep.
Yoo Kihyun's handwriting was just like Yoo Kihyun—small and neat. It meant he could write a lot in a small amount of space. And he had written a lot.

Hyungwon was in no mood to read any of it. He tried, though. He'd gotten through a description of one of Kihyun's classes before giving up. One thing was certain. Kihyun had been serious in the diary entry before this one. He wanted Hyungwon to act like him.

But Hyungwon was tired. He had only been Yoo Kihyun for a couple of days and he was already sick of it. When he'd woken up in the morning, for a second he had thought he was in his apartment, that this whole thing had never happened. But no. Kihyun had just bought the same alarm clock as the one in Hyungwon's apartment. It made Hyungwon want to just stay in bed the whole day. It made him miss his life. The only connection he had was Changkyun, and Hyungwon missed him terribly. He picked up Kihyun's phone and dialed the kid's number.

He picked up on the second ring. "Hello hyung?"

"Hey Changkyun," Hyungwon said. "You're up. Good."

"Oh, Hyungwon-hyung," Changkyun said. "It's you. I got confused for a second. It's your turn today, huh?"

"Yeah." For some reason Hyungwon didn't like the sound of that. His turn. "You're free for lunch today, right?"

"Yeah, sure," came the deep voice. "You want me to go to your— I mean, Kihyun-hyung's university?"

"Yes," Hyungwon answered. "Make sure you make it. I want to talk to you. About Kihyun."

Changkyun sighed. "I told you I don't know much about him. He's close with Jooheon-hyung, not me."

"You know him better than I do," Hyungwon said. "So you'll come?"

Another sigh. "Yes, hyung."

"Okay, now I have to go make breakfast for my uninvited guest. See you at lunch."

"See you."

Hyungwon hung up and started getting ready. Kihyun's wardrobe wasn't as bad as it had first looked, but the guy needed to buy some grown-up coats. Hyungwon found himself wondering where Kihyun kept his money. His wallet always had a fair amount of cash in it. He must have a stash hidden somewhere in the apartment, just waiting to be found. *I know what I'll be doing tonight, then.*

He heard Shownu's footsteps in the next room. Being around Shownu was a weird experience for Hyungwon. On the plus side, the guy was perfectly comfortable with silence, so Hyungwon didn't have to worry about making conversation. But Shownu also seemed very attuned to Kihyun's presence. Not only his physical presence, either.
He was in the kitchen, setting the table when Hyungwon walked in. Shownu looked up and smiled at him. "Morning."

"Good morning," Hyungwon said, half-genuine. Shownu had a charming smile, and he seemed liked a nice guy.

They stared at each other for a minute, until Shownu asked, "Aren't you going to make breakfast?"

"Right, breakfast," Hyungwon suddenly remembered. "Breakfast. Breakfast. It's in the fridge. You mind getting it out and heating it up?"

Another silence, and then Shownu said in tones of disbelief, "You want me to handle the food? Me?"

From his voice Hyungwon got that this was a very un-Kihyun thing to do, and said, "I'll let you, just for today."

Shownu grinned, said, "Alright," and went over to the fridge. Hyungwon sat down and watched. Kihyun was too harsh. Shownu wasn't that bad with the food. Hyungwon had a feeling Kihyun was harsh about a lot of things. Tiny people usually were.

The two of them ate breakfast in silence like before, and like before, Shownu cleaned up. It was almost a routine.

While they walked to the subway station, Hyungwon firmly kept his hands in his pockets. Kihyun might be alright with brushing his fingers against Shownu's, but Hyungwon wasn't.

The subway car was so packed he had no choice but to be pressed up against Shownu. Hyungwon tried to act casual, since Shownu was obviously unfazed, but it wasn't easy when every shake pushed his face against Shownu's neck. When they reached the university gates, just as they were about to go their separate ways, Shownu suddenly said, "You'll be having lunch with me, right?"

"Uh, no," Hyungwon answered, a little awkwardly. "I'm meeting up with a classmate. Sorry."

Shownu nodded. "How about dinner, then?"

Kihyun had mentioned this in his instructions, including what Hyungwon was supposed to do. "I'm not sure," he said. "I'll probably be tired and head straight to bed."

His answer made Shownu serious. "Are you really okay, Kihyun? You seem kind of… different." He frowned. "Also, you seem kind of… confused sometimes? Is anything up?"

"Nothing," Hyungwon said, way too quickly. "I'm alright. Really."

Shownu looked ready to say something, but instead sighed and said, "Just tell me when you tell me, then."

_Say something_, Hyungwon told himself, but Shownu was already walking away. Hyungwon watched him walk away, feeling the charge of an impending thunderstorm in the air.

"Please stop hugging me," Changkyun said uncomfortably. "People are staring."

Hyungwon let him go. "Sorry," he said, sitting down. "You're the first familiar face I've seen in a while. And I'm tired of being Yoo Kihyun. I want to be Chae Hyungwon for a while."
"I get it." Changkyun sat down. They were in a café right next to the university, and there was enough noise to prevent eavesdropping.

"You don't," Hyungwon groaned. "He studies genetic engineering. He's smart. And he has, like, two friends, and they know each other, so I can't even hide somewhere and pretend like I was with someone else."

"Isn't that better?" Changkyun asked, playing with a menu. "Less people to fool."

"No, it's worse," Hyungwon said, but he couldn't properly explain it. Shownu knew Kihyun so well, was so close to him, and he had a good sixth sense. And Wonho…

"But Kihyun-hyung is single, as far as I know," Changkyun mused, "so that's good."

"He's weird," Hyungwon said. "He's practically married, and it's weird. You want to know what he does everyday? He--"

"Stop, stop," Changkyun said, waving his hands. "You're literally gossiping about him now. You know you won't be in Kihyun-hyung's body forever. Five weeks, you said."

"Five weeks Minhyuk said, and I don't trust that guy."

Changkyun frowned. "You're not as… gentle as you used to be."

"It's this body." Hyungwon sighed. "This whole situation. I'm just… tired of it. I want to be Chae Hyungwon."

There was nothing Changkyun could say in response to that, so he said nothing. They sat in silence for a while, saying nothing, until Hyungwon clapped his hands together and said, "Let's order something. I'm hungry." Changkyun smiled at him, and started looking through the menu.

They talked as they ate, and Hyungwon liked it. He felt like himself as Changkyun talked about his classes and the ton of assignments he had to do. He felt normal. Until Changkyun suddenly said, "I went to see you yesterday. The doctors wanted to call your parents."

"And you stopped them?" Hyungwon asked immediately.

"Don't worry, I handled it," Changkyun said seriously.

Hyungwon was glad. His parents lived in Germany, and for the first time in a while he was thankful for it. It would break their hearts if news of his accident reached them.

"There were flowers in your room," Changkyun continued. "Lilies, and these other pink ones. I was pretty surprised."

"No, that's just Wonho," Hyungwon said with a shrug. "I think he brings some everyday he visits." He suddenly realized Changkyun was giving him a weird smile. "What?"

"Nothing," he said, still smiling that weird smile.

"Stop smiling like that," Hyungwon said, grinning despite himself. "I mean it."

"Wow, you're really great, huh?" Changkyun said, smiling even more. "Even when you're in a coma…"
Hyungwon laughed and shoved him. "Stop that."

Changkyun was laughing now too. "Tell me, hyung, which do you like better, Snow White or Sleeping Beauty?"

Hyungwon was going to shove him again when he heard, "Kihyun-hyung? Hey!"

He didn't recognize the happy, smiling guy approaching them at first. The maroon hair threw him off. But then he saw those dimples, those small eyes that disappeared whenever the smile appeared. Jooheon. Changkyun's friend and flatmate.

"Hey, hyung, Changkyunnie," he said easily. "When did you guys become friends?"


Jooheon had had black hair the last time Hyungwon had seen him, but apart from that he seemed the same. He smiled as easily as he did before, and he was smiling as he said, "Sorry to bother you guys, but I've been looking for you, Kihyun-hyung. It's about the assignment you were helping me with."

Hyungwon felt his stomach drop. "Maybe you should talk to me tomorrow," he tried.

"I have to hand it in tomorrow morning," Jooheon said with a bit of a guilty grin. "It's not much. Just one part doesn't match up." He sat down at the table and pulled out a notebook from his backpack.

It was math, the sneaky kind with letters. Hyungwon liked letters. But letters didn't belong in math. The sight of them almost physically pained Hyungwon. He looked to Changkyun for help, but the kid sat there unhelpfully. You major in aerospace engineering, you bastard, Hyungwon swore at the kid silently. Help me out here. But Changkyun was enjoying watching him squirm, and just sat there with a faint smile on his face.

"I… have to go," Hyungwon said quickly. "Yes. Now. Sorry I can't help, goodbye."

He caught one look at Jooheon's surprised face before hightailing it out of there. He was sure he could hear Changkyun laughing as he left. Once he was a good distance away and sure Jooheon wasn't coming after him, Hyungwon reviewed his options. It was around one, and Kihyun had all his classes in the morning. He didn't have to be at that hellhole known as the help center until around two-thirty. He didn't dare go back and talk to Changkyun. Which meant Hyungwon had some time to kill.

Before he was even sure what he was doing, he started towards the subway station. Lady Mary Memorial wasn't far by subway.

The car wasn't packed, but Hyungwon still had to stand the whole way. When he reached his stop, he started walking, and passed by a florist.

Hyungwon stopped. Would Wonho be there in his hospital room? He went everyday around lunch. There was a good chance of it, and Hyungwon thought he might have known that before getting in the subway car.

He bought a small bouquet of daisies. Kihyun had enough cash in his wallet for the extravagant bouquet of tropical flowers, but Hyungwon was feeling kind.

There weren't many people in the hospital, either. The floor his room was in was devoid of everyone but a couple of nurses. Hyungwon was glad. It meant no one watched him as he paced uncertainly
outside his room for a couple of minutes before he finally found the strength to enter.

It was… empty. Wonho wasn't there, only Hyungwon's empty body.

But it was full, too. There was Wonho's bouquet of lilies on the table by the bed, and beside it a fresher half-dozen of pink peonies. And by Hyungwon's body someone had put down a tied bouquet of tulips.

Hyungwon walked forward slowly, and picked up the tulips. They were still firm. *Wonho brought these today.* He lifted them to his face, closed his eyes and took a deep breath. He could almost see it in his mind's eye. Wonho walking among the flowers until he found the ones he wanted, picking them out and paying for them with a half-embarrassed smile…

*Chae Hyungwon, are you getting sentimental?* The words were in Hyungwon's head, but it wasn't his voice saying them. It sounded a lot like he imagined Kihyun's.

He snapped out of it and quickly put the tulips down. He turned and was about to leave the room when he stopped. Hyungwon picked up one of the tulips and put it in his coat pocket, trying to not look at his blank face on the pillow.

"Stealing from a coma patient? That's low."

"It's for me anyway," Hyungwon snapped.

Minhyuk shrugged. "I guess." He paused. "How are you feeling?"

Hyungwon felt the flower in his pocket and said, "Fine." It was an easier lie with the petals touching his fingertips.

The angel sighed. "Okay. I'm always here if you need me."

"Yeah, I know," Hyungwon said, putting up a smile. "Now I have to get to work. You can stalk me all the way there."

Minhyuk grinned his bright, sunny grin, and then followed Hyungwon out the door. Hyungwon made sure to keep his eyes away from his body.
Sweets and Raisins

Chae Hyungwon,

I cannot believe you went drinking with my friends. Have you become stupid? What if you got drunk and said something you shouldn't? And I never told you how I act when drunk. You–

Hyungwon skimmed through the next paragraph. It was all scolding. Very annoying scolding. Hyungwon had very clearly written that he had left early. Now he was beginning to feel he shouldn't have written anything at all.

The next paragraph was all about what Kihyun did at home. Hyungwon skimmed that too. He was about to close the notebook when the last couple of lines caught his eyes.

I probably won't get anything, but if I do, thank the girl politely. Eat some of it, but give most of it to Shownu and Wonho. I don't like sweets, I just eat some because it's for me and it would be rude not to.

Act properly.

Yoo Kihyun


The thought made him feel oddly bitter. Valentine's Day and he was spending it as a small, unpopular guy. Hyungwon had always gotten tons of chocolate and letters in high school, and though girls in college were not so childish, he still got sweet looks and a couple of sweets. He doubted Tiny got much.

Hyungwon padded over to the kitchen and checked the fridge. There was a container of sliced fruit with a note written Cereal today. That was alright.

Shownu showed up later than usual, and once again Hyungwon had to go through their morning ritual. Shownu finally spoke after they had both finished eating and he was washing their bowls. "What do you want to do today?"

It was Sunday. Which meant Hyungwon couldn't hide in the university library, or sit blankly in class. "I don't know," he said, trying to sound casual. "Stay home, probably."

"Okay, we haven't stayed in in a while," Shownu said, wiping his hands dry. "Let's finish that videogame you bought last week."

Hyungwon's stomach sank. Shownu wanted to stay in with him. No, he wants to stay in with Kihyun. For the first time in a while, Hyungwon felt horribly invasive, like he had slid into a very personal moment in Kihyun's life.

"You know, maybe we should go out," Hyungwon suggested. And then, without thinking he said, "Let's invite Wonho-hyung too."

For a moment Hyungwon thought Shownu would refuse. But he grinned and said, "Sure. Where do you wanna go?"
"You decide," Hyungwon said off-handedly. "I'll call Wonho-hyung."

He hesitated. Was that too enthusiastic? Hyungwon had the feeling Kihyun would have preferred a day alone with Shownu.

Shownu didn't seem bothered, though, so Hyungwon went into the next room and dialed the contact Shin Wonho. As it rang, he wondered how he was going to write this down for Kihyun. Shownu wanted a romantic day in but I invited a third wheel. Sorry. "Hello." Wonho had picked up. "This is early."

It wasn't even 10 yet, but Kihyun was an irritingly early riser. "Not really," Hyungwon said, and he had to grit his teeth to get that lie out. "Do you want to go out today?"

"Yoo Kihyun, are you asking me out on a Valentine's Day date?"

Wonho said it teasingly, but Hyungwon got flustered. "No, of course not," he said quickly. "It'll be the three of us. Not a date."


Nothing to do. Which means he is single. The thought made Hyungwon oddly happy. "Just come to Ki- I mean, my apartment. We'll go from here."

"Okay, I'm on my way," Wonho said. "See you. Save some breakfast for me."

He hung up. Hyungwon looked at the phone in his hand. Maybe there were advantages to spending Valentine's as Kihyun.

There were no advantages to spending Valentine's as Kihyun.

They went to a museum. When Hyungwon asked which sane person would go to a museum for fun, Shownu gave him a weird look and said, "You've been whining about going for a while."

Which meant Yoo Kihyun was the type of person who liked going to museums. The worst type of person.

"This is boring," Wonho groaned after ten minutes. It was like he was reading Hyungwon's mind.

"Kihyun has been wanting to come here for a while," Shownu said. "Let's stay for at least longer than ten minutes?"

You considerate bastard, Hyungwon swore at Shownu silently. Still, he had to play the part, so he smiled at Shownu and said, "Thank you. We can split up and go to the sections we want."

"Thank you," Wonho said, and immediately started towards the exit. Hyungwon watched him, burning with envy, until he turned around and walked back to them.

"I shouldn't leave you two alone," he said as Shownu laughed. "You look too much like a couple."

Shownu laughed even harder, but Hyungwon didn't find it so funny. Wonho thinks so too?

They walked among the exhibits, and Hyungwon thought he knew enough about Kihyun to stay longer around the history-related ones. It was incredibly boring. Hyungwon had never experienced
such concentrated boredom. He had thought Kihyun's classes were bad. They were nothing compared to his free time.

As Hyungwon looked at a scroll from the seventh century, he felt that emptiness fill him up. The feeling that while he wasn't in a coma, he wasn't living either...

He wandered about until he found himself in the historical artifacts area. Hyungwon wasn't a big fan of history. Everything always ended in people stabbing or poisoning each other. He preferred mythology. In mythology at least, everything ended with people getting turned into trees or constellations.

He was looking at a scrap of parchment, trying to appear interested, when someone beside him said, "Having fun?"

It was Wonho. Hyungwon forced on a smile and said, "Yeah. Lots of fun."

"I can't believe there are actually couples here," Wonho said with a grin. "Who would bring their date here? Except you, that is."

Hyungwon looked around. He hadn't noticed before, but a lot of people in the room were in couples. Museum date. Hyungwon couldn't think of a more valid reason to dump someone.

"I think we might be the only non-couple here," Wonho said in a low voice. "Let's pretend we're dating. People would freak out."

'No' was the first word on Hyungwon's lips– he hated PDA, fake or not. Between friends a little skinship was okay, but when it got romantic, he was out. He found it embarrassing. He would never let himself be caught acting lovey-dovey in public.

But then he remembered he wouldn't be caught acting lovey-dovey. It would be Kihyun. And maybe Kihyun doesn't have a problem. He doubted it, from what he knew of Kihyun, but a guy could hope.

"Sure," Hyungwon said casually. "Do you want to kiss or should we start calling each other 'honey'?"

"Eh?" Wonho was very obviously taken aback.

"Yeah, why not?" Hyungwon continued in that casual tone. "We'll start by holding hands?"

"I wasn't serious," Wonho laughed, but there was a touch of nervousness there. "I thought you'd kick at me, not agree."

As expected. "I can be unpredictable too," Hyungwon said with a smile.

"Yeah, you've been proving that a lot lately," Wonho said with a smile of his own. "If I didn't know any better I'd think you were a completely different person."

"A better person?" Hyungwon ventured.

Wonho's smile widened into a full grin. "A different person," he said, and then added, "Not a worse person, definitely."

Hyungwon liked the sound of that. He even wasn't so pissed at Kihyun for liking museums anymore.

His phone started ringing, and Hyungwon fished it out while receiving disapproving stares from other boring people who liked going to museums. It was Changkyun.
"Yeah?" Hyungwon talked louder than usual out of spite.

"Hyung, you have to come here," Changkyun said excitedly.

"What? Go where?" Hyungwon said, creating some distance between himself and Wonho.

"To your hospital room," Changkyun said. He paused. "This is Hyungwon-hyung, right?"

"Yes," Hyungwon said with an exasperated sigh.

"Sorry, I always forget," the kid said. "But seriously, you have to come here. You won't believe it."

Hyungwon didn't believe it.

Someone had brought him chocolate. A lot of someones.

"What the hell?" Hyungwon picked up a bag filled with chocolate hearts. "Even if I wasn't supposed to be in a coma, how the hell would I finish all this?" Someone had even brought in an extra table to accommodate all the chocolate. Wonho's flowers had been relegated to the floor.

"You became super popular after your accident," Changkyun said with a grin. "The handsome literature student in a coma? That's practically a drama plot. According to one of the nurses, a ton of girls came in the morning with all this stuff."

"A ton?"

"Around twenty-five," Changkyun said. "So I'd say more than a ton. Holding an average weight of fifty-three—"

"Shut up." Hyungwon gave him a shove. He looked at all the prettily-wrapped bags of chocolate. There were letters too, in lovely pastel envelopes bedecked with hearts. "What's gonna happen to all this stuff?"

Changkyun shrugged. "You have no family in the country, so the hospital staff will probably share out the chocolate."

"That's a waste," Hyungwon said. He started opening one of the bags.

"Hey, hey, you can't do that," Changkyun said quickly.

"Why not? They're for me," Hyungwon pointed out.

"Yeah, but no one thought you'd eat them."

"Yeah, well, I am," Hyungwon said. "You want some?"

Indecision tugged at Changkyun, but eventually he accepted. Hyungwon took one bite, frowned, and tossed the bag. "There was a raisin in there," he said by way of explanation. "A raisin. I'd rather be in a coma."

He should have been used to it after all these years, but Changkyun still sighed. "You see, this is why you became more popular after you fell into a coma."

Hyungwon would've argued about that, but that's when Wonho walked into the room, holding a
bunch of azaleas.

There was a moment of surprised silence, and then he said, "Kihyun, you should've told me you were coming here."

"I'll just leave now," Changkyun said with a sly smile. When he was behind Wonho he mouthed, *Popular*, before he left, trying to hold in laughter. Hyungwon could've smacked him.

His eyes fell on the azaleas. "How did you manage that?" he asked, genuinely curious. "It's Valentine's. There should be no flowers anywhere."

Wonho looked embarrassed. "I reserved them beforehand."

Hyungwon was touched, and surprised at himself for it. He had never been this romantic. Was it a side-effect of Kihyun's body? But Kihyun seemed even less romantic than Hyungwon. Then…

He watched as Wonho made space for his flowers. He put the letters away carefully, but piled the chocolate almost lazily. When his flowers were set, he looked at Hyungwon's face, and the corners of his lips lifted lightly into a smile.

*It's him. He's… contagious.*

Wonho caught Hyungwon staring at him and blushed. The pink was stark in his snow-white cheeks. "Don't look at me like that," he protested. "I just… want to know him. I want him to wake up. To live. Is that so weird?"

It wasn't. Hyungwon wanted to live.

He decided, right then, that's what he'd do. He would live.

And like that the emptiness in him filled up.

"Hey, do you want some chocolate?" Hyungwon asked, picking up a bag.

"Are you crazy?" Wonho asked with a laugh. "It's all for him."

"Yeah, and he can't eat any of it," Hyungwon said. Seeing the look on Wonho's face he added, "He'd want us to eat it. I know him."

"Well, okay then." Wonho said it uncertainly, but he took a huge bite out of a chocolate bar.

Hyungwon laughed, and Wonho joined in.

As the two of them sat and ate chocolate together, Hyungwon got an image of the scene in his mind. But in his mind's eye it was him sitting with Wonho, his body. And the person in the hospital bed was Kihyun.

Hyungwon swallowed the image with a bite of white chocolate, and started talking with Wonho about books.
White and Shoes

Chapter Notes

Thank you everyone who read and enjoyed my writing. I’d thank you before every chapter but I know you’re here to read my fanfic, not my rambling lol. I’d just like to say something now. The story's set around February/March this year, because that's when I started writing it. All of this is written beforehand. I have about 20 chapters written so far, and I'm still working on it. I do read your comments and take in all your requests/suggestions, but please forgive me if you don't see them appear immediately.
I'll stop here now. Once again, thank you for all your love and support. I seriously break out in a huge grin every time I read a comment :)

The weather was beyond chilly, and drifting into true cold. Jooheon passed by an open window, shivered, and drew his coat closer around him.

The last few weeks had been… weird. Jooheon had spotted Kihyun around campus like he usually did, but Kihyun pretended like he hadn’t noticed. This was even ignoring the time Kihyun had literally run away from Jooheon at that café. One time Kihyun had actually turned and started walking the opposite direction when Jooheon had called out his name. It was so obvious, Jooheon was pretty hurt.

Things were even weird at home, but that was because it was normal. Too normal. After one of Changkyun’s closest friends had fallen into a coma Jooheon had expected some sadness, a few tears, maybe even a little depression. Instead, nothing. Changkyun continued living life like everything was absolutely fine. One time Jooheon asked him about it, and Changkyun just shrugged and said, “It’s fine. He’s gonna wake up anyway.”

Which kind of freaked Jooheon out. Because he was pretty sure Changkyun had initially said they didn’t know if he’d ever wake up.

Still, Jooheon didn’t ask again. He put it down to Changkyun’s natural weirdness, and hoped he was right.

Right then, he wouldn’t have minded Changkyun’s weirdness. Jooheon was alone, and bored. His morning class had ended early, and now he had nothing to do. His friends were either sleeping or in class, or both.

So he wandered aimlessly around campus. He’d sat in the café by the campus until the owner gave him dirty looks, and he’d sat in the cafeteria until one of the cleaners asked him if he was lost. Jooheon had walked around every place he knew, and now he was in the administration building, walking around places he didn’t know.

The building was scarily quiet. Students never came up to these floors, and the only time it was a little busy was during admission time. Every sound got lost in the quiet emptiness. Jooheon kept walking, getting more and more uncomfortable. Just when he decided he’d had enough, he turned the corner and saw a figure all in white standing by the window.
Jooheon almost screamed. Instead the scream came out as a bark, and he fell backwards onto the floor.

The figure turned around, and now *it* gave a yell of surprise.

That told Jooheon it wasn’t a ghost, but his brain was being stubborn and telling him to run away really, really fast and hope it didn’t come after him.

“Are you okay?” the figure asked, coming closer. The light from the window behind it threw shadows across its face, hiding it.

“Are you a ghost?” Jooheon squeaked out.

But now the figure was close enough for Jooheon to make out clearly. It was a young man, good-looking, maybe a little too pretty. His skin was very fair, his hair light blonde, and he was wearing all-white, which explained why he did look a little like a ghost. A pretty ghost, but still a ghost.

But his wide, sunny smile was very un-ghostlike. “I’m not a ghost,” he said. “I’m as opposite to a ghost as you can get. Now, are you okay?”

He held out his hand, and Jooheon grabbed it and pulled himself up. His hand was warm, and solid. *Not a ghost.* “I’m okay, I just scared myself, I guess,” Jooheon said, and laughed. “I’m Lee Jooheon.”

“Lee Minhyuk,” the young man introduced himself. He had a very bright smile, and he wouldn’t let it drop.

“Are you a student here?” Jooheon asked. “I don’t think I’ve seen you around before.”

The smile dropped. Minhyuk looked around nervously, and said, “I’m not a student. Actually, I’m… kind of here on a job. And my boss would kill me if he found out I was talking to people.”

“My lips are sealed,” Jooheon said seriously. “What kind of job is it?”

“Nothing really,” Minhyuk said, waving a hand. “I just kind of have to watch some people. Like… babysitting. You know?”

“I don’t know, tell me,” Jooheon said plainly. He was interested now.

Minhyuk gave him a light shove. “Come on, you’re supposed to say you know.”

“But I don’t.” Jooheon gave him a light shove back, and grinned. “Come on, tell me. I’m bored and I got nothing to do, and since you were just staring out a window doing nothing, I’m guessing you got nothing to do too.”

That brought out a mischievous smile. “Well, since I’m already talking to you…”

“Exactly, now keep talking.”

Minhyuk stopped for a minute, like he was thinking about it. “It’s like this,” he said eventually. “My boss is crazy rich. His son’s enrolled here, and he’s kind of a brat, so I’m just supposed to watch over him and make sure he doesn’t do anything stupid.” He beamed.

Jooheon had a ton of questions, but one stood out more than the others. “Where are your shoes?”

Minhyuk looked at him, and then looked down. He was barefoot.
“Oh, my shoes,” he said easily. “I took them off. They were new and kinda tight, and the floor is clean.”

That sounded alright. Minhyuk seemed like the type of guy who’d take off his shoes and walk barefoot around an administration building. He gave off that vibe.

“You’re watching him through the window?” Jooheon asked, walking towards it.

“Nah, he’s in class right now, so I figured I could take a couple of minutes off,” Minhyuk said, following. “Just people-watching. People are so interesting. I can’t believe I never watched them before.”

“I guess,” Jooheon shrugged. He thought actually hanging out with them was more fun.

“Like, look at that kid,” Minhyuk said, pointing out a dark-haired guy walking with a group of friends. “Looks like a fun guy, right? You should have seen him the day he had an exam. He looked so serious you’d think the apocalypse was coming.”

Jooheon peered down at the guy laughing with his friends, swinging that long scale architecture students always carried. “He looks a bit like Changkyun.”

“You know, he does!” Minhyuk said excitedly. “They should meet up. I think they’re even in the same year.”

It took Jooheon a moment to realize what about that pinged him. And then he grabbed Minhyuk’s shoulder and turned to face him. “Wait, you know Changkyun? Im Changkyun?”

The pretty face was blank for a moment, and then Minhyuk grinned and said, “Yeah, sort of. I don’t think he knows me, though.”

“Wow, this is a neat coincidence,” Jooheon said. “I share an apartment with him. How do you know him?”

Another blank moment. And then, “My aunt’s in a room at the Lady Mary Memorial hospital. I’ve seen him around there a couple of times, with a hyung of his.”

“Kind of short? Reddish hair?”

“Yup, that’s the one,” Minhyuk said brightly. “Kihyun, right? You know him too?”

“Yeah, we went to high school together,” Jooheon said. “We still hang out sometimes.” When he isn’t running away from me, anyway.

“Oh, cool,” Minhyuk said, and suddenly he became weirdly pensive. “You’re friends with Kihyun, and you live with Changkyun, and I just happened to run into you…”

“Yeah?” Jooheon had no idea where Minhyuk was going with this.

“Nothing, it’s just amazing,” he said, back to his usual cheery self. “It’s like fate or something, you know, if fate existed.”

“I think fate does exist,” Jooheon said. “It just acts in invisible ways.”

“Hmm, that sounds good too,” Minhyuk said. He put a friendly arm around Jooheon’s shoulders. “You seem like an alright guy, Lee Jooheon.”
Jooheon grinned. “You don’t seem too bad yourself, Lee Minhyuk.”

He meant it. Minhyuk was obviously weird, but who wasn’t? And he was friendly and made Jooheon feel like he’d known him forever. And he definitely wasn’t a ghost.

A chilly breeze came through a window nearby, and Jooheon shivered. He turned to Minhyuk. “Don’t you feel cold?”

“No,” Minhyuk said simply. Jooheon believed him. He wasn’t wearing a jacket or coat, and his white top looked thin.

“You’ll lose your toes if you don’t wear your shoes,” Jooheon said. “I’m serious.”

“Nah, I don’t think I will,” Minhyuk said with a grin. “I don’t feel cold, at all.”

“Well put on your shoes anyway, let’s go outside,” Jooheon said, giving him a tug. “I want to go and actually buy something from that café now. Hah. I bet the owner’ll be pissed about that.” He stopped. “Wait…”

“Uh…” Minhyuk glanced around in a way that was definitely anxious. “I can’t really leave…”

“Come on, you said the brat was in class,” Jooheon said. “You got some time, and I’m tired of hanging around this empty building.” He narrowed his eyes and added jokingly, “Unless you’re trying to shake me off.”

“Oh course not,” Minhyuk said, putting his arm around Jooheon again. “But…” he gave an embarrassed little laugh and said, “I can’t find my shoes.”

Jooheon burst out laughing. “You lost your shoes?”

“Someone must have taken them, honest,” Minhyuk said earnestly. “I just took them off for a minute, walked around a bit, and when I came back they were gone. Can you believe it? Someone in your university administration is a shoe thief.”

Strangely, Jooheon could believe it. “You can’t hang around here forever,” he said. “What’re you gonna do when you have to leave?”

Minhyuk looked at him, and smiled.

“Cold, cold, cold, cold–”

“You’re complaining a lot,” Minhyuk said, walking briskly. “You’re the one who offered me your shoes.”

“You practically forced me to,” Jooheon grumbled. “My toes are freezing. It’s cold.”

“Just drink something, it’ll warm you up, I heard,” Minhyuk said brightly. “And then you won’t miss your shoes at all.”

Jooheon doubted that. He was walking around campus in only his socks, and the air felt like it was stabbing at his feet. Still, a hot drink didn’t sound bad.

“Okay,” he said. “But you’re buying. Think of it like paying for my shoes.”
Minhyuk laughed. “Definitely not.”


“I practically forced you to,” Minhyuk said with a cheeky grin. “So I don’t think I owe you a coffee.”

“Hyung!”

“Oh, I’m a hyung now?”

“I want a free coffee, so yeah, you’re my hyung,” Jooheon said. “Come on. My toes will fall off, seriously.”

“Do I look like I’m carrying any money on me?” Minhyuk stopped and spread his arms wide.

He didn’t. His white top had no pockets, and neither did his pants.

“Ah, hyung, what kind of person are you?” Jooheon groaned. “You don’t have shoes, you don’t have a wallet—”

“I had shoes,” Minhyuk interrupted, “they were just taken. And I’ve never needed any money on my job.”

“What, your boss pays for everything?” Jooheon asked, wide-eyed. “That’s awesome! Do you buy, like, four gigantic ice-creams everyday? Because that’s what I’d do. Or expensive steak everyday for lunch, or something.”

“No, I don’t, because I don’t wanna get fired,” Minhyuk said wisely. He paused for a moment, like he was thinking something over, and then said, “Ice-cream seems really yummy.”

“It’s too cold for ice-cream now,” Jooheon shivered. His toes felt like ice cubes. “Come on, buy me a coffee.”

It didn’t seem like Minhyuk had heard him. All his attention was on a group of students coming out of a nearby building.


“Sorry Jooheon-ah, I have to go,” Minhyuk said. He gave him a bright if apologetic smile. “Catch you later, okay?”

He was already jogging away as Jooheon called, “Your kid?”

“My kid,” Minhyuk answered with a laugh, and went on at a quicker pace.

Jooheon just laughed. A strange guy, but likeable.

And then he remembered Minhyuk still had his shoes.

He looked around, but he had disappeared. Jooheon walked around a bit, hoping he’d spot Minhyuk, but no. The guy had vanished into thin air. It was weird. But then again, Jooheon had been experiencing weirdness for such a long time he should have thought it normal by now.

“Is that guy even human?” Jooheon wondered aloud, and then laughed at himself before walking off in only his socks.
I'm sorry for not replying to all your lovely comments; I noticed AO3 counted them and I considered it unfairly inflating numbers. But I do read and love all your sweet comments!

Kihyun was not enjoying life very much.

He was sitting in class, trying to focus on a lecture on nucleotides, but his mind was on the latest entry he had read in the notebook he and Chae Hyungwon shared. Wonho had invited him out for a drink with friends and he had accepted. Accepted! After Kihyun had explicitly told him not to go out with his friends!

And yet somehow Kihyun felt he should be glad for that entry. He was getting the suspicion Hyungwon did not write down a lot of what he did.

It was obvious that if Chae Hyungwon was actually trying to act like Kihyun then he was doing a shitty job of it. People treated Kihyun differently. He was apologizing to his professors all the time. Although I guess that isn't really Hyungwon's fault. He is after all a literature major. The only thing worse than sharing your body with an asshole was sharing it with a literature major.

He tried to concentrate on the class, but he couldn't. Kihyun was finding it hard to concentrate on anything the last couple of days. He was on damage control with everyone he met, and the rest of the time he was trying to keep track of the date and getting things ready for Hyungwon. It was exhausting. Kihyun calculated the days. It had only been three weeks. How much longer would this go on?

Eventually the lecture ended, and Kihyun was glad. He rushed out before the rest of the class, not caring how it looked. Everyone probably already thought he was weird anyway. He took the stairs until he reached the sixth floor of the building. This floor only had the laboratories, and was usually pretty empty. Kihyun wandered around until he found an empty hallway by a staircase. Then he waited until he was no longer alone.

"I'm touched," Minhyuk said from behind him. "You actually want to see me. That's new."

Kihyun smiled when he saw him. He wasn't sure if he exactly liked the guy, but at least with him there were no pretences. "Don't get too flattered," he said. "I want a report. On my body."

"Great, just my type," Minhyuk said immediately. "But you should gain a bit of weight. Your arms--"

"I don't mean that," Kihyun interrupted. "I mean on what my body does when... when I'm not with it."

"You mean on Hyungwon's turns?" Minhyuk frowned. "That sounds really close to stalking."

"You already stalk him," Kihyun said. "What's wrong with sharing? Come on, it's my body anyway."
Minhyuk looked uncomfortable. "I don't know what you want me to tell you. He just does stuff. Normal stuff. The only out-of-the-ordinary thing he does is visit himself in hospital."

Kihyun didn't know what he had expected to hear. He tried another road. "Is Hyungwon really trying? To act like me?"

"I'd say so," Minhyuk said. "He attends all your classes, and goes to your job. He even pretends like he likes the stuff you like. What more do you want?"

"You sure?" Kihyun asked suspiciously.

"Cross my halo and hope to die." Minhyuk put on a perfectly innocent smile.

"You don't have a halo."

"Exactly," Minhyuk said with a wink.

Kihyun kicked at him, but laughed. The angel smiled in reply. He was right. Hyungwon wasn't skipping classes or work, and he had spent some time at the museum two weeks ago (though he complained a lot about it in his diary entry). Things were not ideal, but it had not all gone to rot.

"Say, do you think your shoes would fit me?" Minhyuk piped up all of a sudden.

Kihyun looked the angel over. He was barefoot, like he always was. "Probably," he said, examining first Minhyuk's feet, and then his own. "I think they might be a little tight, though."

"That's fine, as long as they're wearable," Minhyuk said brightly.

"What do you want with shoes?" Kihyun asked suspiciously. "You don't walk anywhere."

"I thought it might be fun," Minhyuk shrugged. "Walking is good for your body, I heard."

"My body... "Wait a second," Kihyun said suddenly. "What did you mean when you said my body was just your type?"

Minhyuk grinned but didn't say anything. Kihyun was going to prod him about it when his phone started ringing. He gave the angel a suspicious look, and then took out his phone. It was Shownu.

He picked up. "Yeah, hyung?"

"Kihyun, not going to join us for lunch?"

"Yeah, I'm on the way," Kihyun said. He looked up to find Minhyuk had disappeared. "I'll see you."

He ended the call and started for the cafeteria, feeling much better than he had just ten minutes ago.

"You know it's my birthday soon."

Kihyun grinned. Wonho had lasted longer than expected. It had almost been three whole minutes.

"We know," Shownu said. "You always start reminding us two or three days before."

"Just making sure you have enough time to buy me something," Wonho said brightly.

"Neither of you bought me anything for my birthday last year," Shownu reminded with a frown.
"Because we agreed not to buy each other anything for our birthdays," Kihyun said with a pointed look at Wonho. "I didn't get anything from you guys either."

"That's your business," Wonho brushed off. "Come on, we aren't old people. We should celebrate birthdays."

"We will," Kihyun said. "But we won't get you anything." Shownu nodded along.

Wonho gave a pout. "And I thought you were being nice to me nowadays."

This was news to Kihyun. "Nice? How?"

"You bought me coffee yesterday," Wonho said. "And a couple of days ago you insisted on paying for my lunch."

"You buy him things?" Shownu was shocked. Kihyun was infamously stingy.

"He even told me to buy an extra dessert," Wonho said with a smug smile.

Shownu turned to Kihyun. "That's too much," he said. "You owe me a lunch. Plus dessert."

*Chae Hyungwon. That's my money you're spending.* "Well don't get used to it," Kihyun said to Wonho. He looked at Shownu. "And I will buy you lunch. And dessert. I'll make you two desserts, if you want."

Shownu smiled. "I'll take that offer. Tomorrow."

"I can't, tomorrow," Kihyun said. "But day after, definitely."

That erased Shownu's smile. "Sure," he said, and went back to his ramen. Kihyun didn't understand. He looked at Wonho for an answer, but he just shrugged.

They finished lunch, and then Wonho left for the hospital. He went to visit Hyungwon everyday, if the diary entries were right. Something about that worried Kihyun. Today, though, he was glad. He wanted to talk to Shownu alone.

The two of them walked around the campus in silence for a while before Kihyun finally asked, "What's wrong?"

"Nothing," Shownu answered, but it was in that stiff tone he used when he tried to hide something.

"You know I won't stop asking until you tell me," Kihyun said, "so you should just spill. Otherwise it'll be annoying for both of us."

Shownu walked in silence, and Kihyun let him. He had learned to decipher Shownu's different silences. This one meant he was thinking.

"It's dumb," he said finally. He faced Kihyun. "I feel… alone, sometimes. Like you don't want me around."

"That is dumb," Kihyun said flatly. "Why wouldn't I want you around? You're the person I want the most."

"Really?" Shownu asked. "Because we have breakfast, and half the time I can feel you dying to get away from me. We never have lunch together, just the two of us. And you make up some lame excuse every time I ask if you want to have dinner with me."
"I've been… preoccupied," Kihyun answered.

"I can see that," Shownu said, and then he sighed.

It was not a nice thing to hear, and Kihyun felt like he had to say something to put it in the past. "It's nothing about you," he said. "I don't really hang out with anyone nowadays."

Shownu gave him a flat stare. "You spend a lot of time alone with Wonho, though."

"What?" Kihyun was surprised. What would Hyungwon be doing alone with Wonho?

"Please don't do that," Shownu said, anger breaking through that usually calm face. "It's beneath you, acting dumb like that. You eat lunch with him all the time. Yes, I know you're going to visit your friend in the hospital," he added, seeing Kihyun open his mouth to speak, "but why do you always refuse when I offer to go with you? I feel like…" He ran out of words, and sighed again.

Kihyun didn't know what to say. There were only two words on his tongue, and he finally spoke them. "I'm sorry."

"You don't have to apologize," Shownu said. "Just tell me."

Tell you? Tell you what? The cold air suddenly felt stuffy. Kihyun breathed in deeply, trying to clear out his lungs and his heart. He was usually so good at talking, but now the words were clogged up in his throat.

"I'm sorry," he said again. "I do want you around. It's just… sometimes I feel like a completely different person." And that person is a bastard. It was a lame explanation, he knew, but what else could he say?

Shownu thought this over in silence a while, and then he finally asked, "Is this about your friend? Hyungwon?"

More than you know. "Yes," Kihyun said. "It's… weird."

Another silence. And then: "I'm sorry," Shownu finally said. "That was thoughtless. You're going through a lot. It's not about me."

That made Kihyun feel guilty. "You don't have to say sorry," he said sincerely. "It's nothing. We're putting it behind us, yeah?" Shownu nodded, and so did Kihyun. And then Shownu hugged him.

Kihyun had expected a normal, brief hug, where Shownu would thump his back briefly and then let go. This was not a normal hug. It was an embrace. Shownu put both arms around Kihyun and held him close. Kihyun felt like Shownu had fit his whole body around him. He could feel the beating of Shownu's heart against his chest, could feel Shownu's breath by his ear. Outside the embrace the February air bit at any exposed skin, but Kihyun was warm.

He had no idea how long Shownu held him. Maybe a couple of seconds, maybe hours. He just knew that afterwards, the winter air didn't feel so cold anymore.

"You should get to work," Shownu said. "You'll be late."

Kihyun's tongue was in a knot. He tried to get some words out, and then eventually ended up nodding. Shownu nodded slightly, squeezed his shoulder once as a goodbye, and then jogged off.

It was strange. Kihyun couldn't say it was weird, because it didn't feel weird. It was different. It was
just strange.

He didn't want to think about it anymore, so he turned his mind to the root of it all: Chae Hyungwon. Kihyun found that he was pretty damn angry. He was letting Hyungwon live in his body and use half his life (though he didn't really have a choice) and Hyungwon repaid him by...

*By what? By not living as me? Could he, anyway?* Kihyun thought about that. He wasn't an unusual person—his life was not complex.

He thought about Shownu's arms around him and told himself aloud, "Not complex at all."

He wasn't alone again until after work, and as soon as Kihyun entered his apartment he called out, "Lee Minhyuk, I want to see you."

He waited for a moment, and then the silence was broken by, "Wow, twice in one day?"

"You," Kihyun said, whirling around. "You said Chae Hyungwon was trying to act like me. He is definitely not."

Minhyuk thought for a second. "Is this about what Shownu said this afternoon?"

Kihyun started. "You… you saw that?"

"Of course," Minhyuk said with a disconcerting grin. "I see everything."

"Well, stop," Kihyun said uncomfortably.

Minhyuk laughed. "You're blushing. Cute. And I thought that was physically impossible for you."

"Shut up," Kihyun snapped, trying to ignore the heat in his cheeks. "You lied to me. Hyungwon is not even half-trying to act like me."

"I'd say he is," Minhyuk shrugged. "He hangs out with your friends all day."

"Yeah, but he should be spending more time with Shownu-hyung," Kihyun insisted. "It's getting too apparent."

"Well, Shin Wonho is your friend too," the angel pointed out, "and as far as Hyungwon knows, you like them equally. If you wanted him to treat Shownu special, you should've told him."

"It's… not special treatment." Kihyun felt himself running out of steam.

Another disconcerting grin. "Sure."

"Don't give me that look," Kihyun said. "I don't know what that look is supposed to mean."

Minhyuk sighed. "Now you're just being dumb on purpose. There's nothing I can do if you're dumb on purpose."

"Then don't do anything, and disappear," Kihyun snapped.

"That's hurtful, I'm just trying to help you out," Minhyuk pouted. "Come on, I'm your friend."

"No, you're a weirdo who follows me around and spies on me." Kihyun thought for a moment and
then added, "I'm pretty sure you're a pervert, too."

Minhyuk gave a huge gasp of fake outrage. "I am halfway to being an angel."

"And the other half is a demon." Kihyun started taking off his coat. "I'm damn sure you're a pervert."

"That is a bit rich, coming from you," Minhyuk sniffed.

Kihyun stopped. "What? How? I'm not perverted at all." He thought about a few certain folders in his computer, and then amended, "Not more than the usual guy."

"You're just weird," the sort-of-angel said. "You know it too. I mean, you're going around getting hugged—"

"Can you shut up about that?" Kihyun walked into the kitchen quickly.

Minhyuk laughed. It was the worst kind, the kind laughed by immature kids who know they're annoying you but you can't do anything because then you'll be known as the guy who argues with children. And Kihyun had been that guy more times than he was comfortable admitting.

"This is too fun," Minhyuk said happily, following him into the kitchen. "Gosh, Hyungwon is so boring compared to you. Who would've thought?"

"Can you stop discussing our lives like they're drama plots?" Kihyun started getting pots out, just to keep his hands busy so that they wouldn't go for Minhyuk's throat. "Can you just stop being you?"

"Nope," Minhyuk said as chipper as ever, if not more so. "This is the most fun I've had in ages."

"Well this is my life," Kihyun said, putting everything down and turning around to face him. "And I want some quiet now. Okay?"

Minhyuk nodded, still grinning. For a moment Kihyun thought he was being ignored, but then he blinked and found himself alone in the kitchen.

He made himself dinner, and then spent a good half hour writing his entry for Hyungwon. Then Kihyun went to sleep, trying to think about what would happen the next day, instead of what happened that day.
Hyungwon kept a smile plastered on his face as Shownu entered the kitchen. "Good morning."

"Morning," Shownu said, a little freaked out.

Kihyun had written a long, emphatic diary entry the night before, how Hyungwon ignored Shownu and how he was acting nothing like he was supposed to. The first part made Hyungwon roll his eyes, but he paid attention at the second one. Honestly, Hyungwon himself knew he wasn't acting like Kihyun, and he was caring less and less. He wanted to live. It had been hell at first, but now Hyungwon was almost having fun. It was a once-in-eternity opportunity, to actually have a second body. And he would go back to his own eventually, so no harm done.

Except Kihyun seemed to think there was. He sounded pissed, even in that neat, pretty handwriting. So Hyungwon decided to appease him a bit, and play it safe. Play Kihyun.

The major point of the entry was to treat Shownu nicely. Well, Hyungwon could do that. Breakfast was pancakes, with the batter all ready in the fridge. They looked good, fresh out of the pan. Sure, none of them were actually round and he had burned the first three, but they were alright. Hyungwon gave the best looking ones to Shownu, and as they ate, he tried to emit happiness. Any happier and he'd look deranged.

It was a Friday, but there was a day-long cultural programme at the university, so neither of them had classes. Hyungwon found weekends the most uncomfortable, since Kihyun had stopped working weekends, and now he had to deal with another free day. He did the dishes side by side with Shownu, although there were romantic undertones he didn't like. When they had washed everything, Shownu turned to Hyungwon.

"Are you doing all this for me?" he asked.

"Doing what?" Hyungwon asked innocently.

"Acting all… happy." Shownu hesitated, and then asked, "Is this about what happened yesterday? Did I make it weird?"

Kihyun had written that Shownu had confronted him about his odd behavior. Hyungwon guessed they had had an angry or awkward conversation. "No," he said with a smile. That seemed like a Kihyun-appropriate reaction.

"You sure?" Shownu sounded almost cautious. "I didn't make you feel uncomfortable or anything?"

"Not at all," Hyungwon answered. Kihyun would've written it down if something uncomfortable had happened. He took a shot in the dark and added, "I'm glad you did it."

Now Shownu was surprised. "Really?"
"Yeah, it was just what I needed," Hyungwon made up spectacularly. Then, though he didn't want to, he asked, "What do you wanna do now?"

They played video games. Shownu might have been the gentlest person in real life, but in-game he was absolutely ruthless. Hyungwon liked it. They played for a while, and he had fun. He had the feeling that they could have been good friends, if Shownu didn't think Hyungwon was Kihyun, that is.

Afterwards, Hyungwon took out snacks and they sat and watched TV (with an appropriate gap between them). They ate in silence for a while until Shownu finally asked, "Are we really not going to get Hoseok anything?"

For a moment Hyungwon forgot that Hoseok was Wonho’s real name. And then he was surprised. "What? Why?"

"I know we decided not to buy each other birthday gifts anymore," Shownu said, "but he seems to be really looking forward to it. I think he thinks we're going to surprise him. He'll be super disappointed."

Hyungwon listened to all this, stunned. Wonho's birthday? Kihyun could write pages of scolding, but he had no space to mention this?

And no birthday gifts? What is Yoo Kihyun?

"I know it's short notice," Shownu continued, "since his birthday's on Tuesday, but I still think we should get him something."

A quick calculation, and Hyungwon realized Tuesday was one of his 'turns'. That settled it. He accepted the responsibility of making Kihyun at least a little more likeable. "You're right," he said. "Let's get him something."

Shownu grinned. "I knew you'd crack."

Thank goodness Kihyun's not a total asshole, then. "What do you think we should get him?"

Hyungwon asked. He spent most of his days with Wonho, but Shownu obviously knew him better.

"You have a couple of hours before work, right? Let's go out," Shownu suggested. "Hoseok's fickle like hell, but I'm sure we'll find something he'd like. Can you bake a cake?"

"Sure," Hyungwon said, already thinking of bakeries that delivered. If Wonho wanted an apparently homemade cake, that's what he'd get.

He was going to make this a birthday worth remembering.

They went to the swanky shopping mall in the city center. It was Friday midday, so it wasn't busy, apart from a couple of trophy wives and their bag-carriers. Wonho was interested in fashion, and fortunately this was an area Hyungwon was experienced in. He led Shownu around the stores for a while before finally settling on a black leather riding jacket. They each paid half, and then they went to the food court for lunch.

"When did you become such an expert on fashion?" Shownu asked over steaming bowls of noodles. Hyungwon shrugged. "I've always been an expert on fashion."
shownu laughed. A lot. hyungwon was actually offended on kihyun's behalf. "i'm not that bad," he said.

"don't you sometimes buy clothes from the kids' section?" shownu asked, still laughing. "today's the most you've spent on clothes, and you only paid for half of it."

kihyun really was the worst. "insult me tomorrow," hyungwon said. "for now, just thank me."

"there it is," shownu said with a grin. "i was wondering when you'd start boasting. that was actually a record, how long you held out."

hyungwon smiled and returned to his noodles. today wasn't as bad as he'd expected. shownu was a fun friend, even if he didn't talk much. the only thing was… wonho. hyungwon kept thinking about him. what was he doing? was he eating alone? or is he with me, my body? that was worse than being alone.

"i think i should go now," hyungwon said. "i might be late for work."

"you should finish your lunch first," shownu said, sitting up.

"you can have it," hyungwon said. "see you."

shownu grabbed his arm as hyungwon tried to hurry away. "we on for dinner?"

"i don't think so, i'll probably be exhausted after work." hyungwon decided he'd done enough for one day. "maybe tomorrow night."

"okay," shownu said, looking satisfied. he gave hyungwon's arm a strangely affectionate squeeze, and then let go.

hyungwon walked away feeling weird. shownu and kihyun were nothing more than friends, right? shownu never expected any kisses or affection from hyungwon– not even when they were alone. and kihyun had said he wasn't in a relationship. but then shownu would do something like this, something that was definitely not just friendly…

hyungwon tried to put it out of mind. it was kihyun's business. he just hoped if shownu suddenly confessed, it was on one of the days kihyun had control of his body.

he really would be late for work, but hyungwon still headed for lady mary memorial hospital. the woman at the front desk recognized him now. "a little late today," she said with a slight smile. "your friend is already upstairs."

wonho. hyungwon smiled and thanked her. the second floor was empty as usual. but in chae hyungwon's room, shin wonho sat. hyungwon opened the room door to find wonho sitting in the chair by the bed, a bouquet of irises on his lap.

"oh, kihyun," he said with a soft smile. "you came. i thought you wouldn't today."

"i was with shownu-hyung," hyungwon said, keeping his eyes off the figure on the bed. "we had lunch."

"that's good," wonho said, with an odd smile.

"what's with that look?" hyungwon asked directly. "you look… relieved."

"no, it's nothing," wonho said, brushing it off. "you know, i've figured out your schedule. you
only come every other day, right?” He smiled, embarrassed. "I can't believe it took me so long to realize."

"It's not really a schedule," Hyungwon said, trying to sound casual.

"No, but it is totally a schedule," Wonho laughed. "You never skip a day."

"Okay, you don't have to watch me so carefully, you know," Hyungwon said with a forced laugh.

"Nah, it's kind of fun now," Wonho said, not catching on to Hyungwon's discomfort. "I like guessing what you'll be today. Stressed-out Kihyun? Or will it be weirdly-nice Kihyun, or emotional Kihyun? Or maybe regular Kihyun will finally make an appearance."

"I'm the same person," Hyungwon lied terribly. "I just… get in different moods sometimes."

"Different moods is right," Wonho said with a grin. "You're seriously another person half the time. Hey, you're not possessed or something, are you?" He laughed.

Hyungwon forced himself to laugh too. "I am not possessed, you idiot," he said. "If I was a ghost I'd pick a better-looking body. Like yours. I'd walk around without clothes all day."

This time Wonho forced out a laugh, and Hyungwon noticed. The joke had made him uncomfortable, and that was weird. Wonho had laughed at worse than this, why was he awkward now?

Hyungwon pretended he hadn't seen. "You ate lunch yet?" he asked, trying to move onto a new topic.

Wonho jumped onto it. "No, not yet. You?"

"No," Hyungwon answered. It was technically only a half-lie; he'd only eaten half his noodles after all. "You want to get something?"

"I don't know, it's getting pretty late," Wonho said, looking at the clock on the wall. "We'll probably be late for work."

"We'll be late for work anyway," Hyungwon said. "Come on. I'll pay."

"Well, if you're paying..." Wonho put the irises down on the bedside table and stood up. Hyungwon looked away as Wonho gave a nod of farewell to the body on the bed, and then the two of them left the room.

They went to a small restaurant near the hospital. Wonho ordered ramen. Hyungwon ordered the smallest thing on the lunch menu. They were halfway through the meal when Wonho suddenly said, "I guess it's generous Kihyun today."

Hyungwon swallowed his soup down. "Don't get used to it," he said, hoping he sounded crabby enough to be Kihyun. "Next time the two of us eat out, you're paying."

There was a brief silence, and then Wonho said in a thoughtful sort of voice, "We've been doing that a lot recently, huh? Eating out, just the two of us."

"I guess," Hyungwon said, trying not to see the implications.

Wonho nodded, and didn't say anything more. Hyungwon tried not to think about that. They were just friends, going on friendly outings. Nothing date-like about it. Except it's Kihyun and Wonho who..."
are friends. Not me and Wonho.

The thought was a little strange in Hyungwon's head. He liked Wonho, and it was not in a 'just friendly' way. And Wonho went to see Hyungwon's body daily, with a bouquet of flowers every time. That didn't smell 'just friendly' either. Sometimes Hyungwon thought he caught a trace of pink in Wonho's white cheeks when the two of them hung out, and he didn't think that was a 'just friendly' blush. But as far as Wonho knew, he was hanging out with Kihyun. Smiling at Kihyun, laughing with Kihyun, blushing because of Kihyun.

So exactly what the hell is going on?

"We should go," Wonho said. He'd finished his lunch. "We'll get skinned alive if the boss is there." Hyungwon nodded. He was feeling awkward now at their small table for two.

They took the subway, standing the whole ride. Hyungwon didn't know if he was imagining it, but it seemed like Wonho was more protective than when he'd first met him. He reached for Hyungwon every time the car braked, making sure he wouldn't fall. He stayed close, even after the crowd thinned.

Hyungwon tried not to notice, but it was getting difficult. The weather was getting warmer, and Wonho was no longer wearing scarves or thick jackets. His white neck almost shone under the fluorescent bulbs, and his collarbones peeked out from the neck of his T-shirt. Even his hands were gorgeous, one gripping the rail, the other hanging by his side, ready to grab Hyungwon at a moment's notice. His wrists were bare. He wasn't even wearing a watch. Hyungwon found himself thinking what a shame that was.

More than anything, Hyungwon found himself hoping nobody would shove him forward. Because if he got pushed onto Wonho, with those lips by his ear and his chest pressing against his, he didn't think he'd be able to handle it.

Fortunately his will wasn't tested on the ride. But as soon as they got off on their platform Wonho smiled at him, a wide, beautiful smile that reddened his cheeks up to his eye-smile. "In case you forgot," he said, "my birthday's on Tuesday."

A smile spread on Hyungwon's face. "I know," he said. "But I'm still not going to get you anything. We had an agreement, after all."

Wonho was still smiling. "Sure," he said conspiratorially.

Before Hyungwon could stop himself he grabbed Wonho's forearm and squeezed it, a gentle affectionate squeeze. He watched as Wonho's smile faltered, as that happy blush in his cheeks intensified and became something else.

And Hyungwon was satisfied. "Come on, let's go," he said. "We're going to be even more late."

Wonho blinked, nodded, and then followed him out of the subway station.
Theories and Milkshake

Im Changkyun checked his calendar. Sunday, and a blue dot in the corner. It would be Hyungwon today.

He stretched and got out of bed. No classes today, thank goodness. It was ten in the morning, the right time to wake up.

The apartment was quiet this morning, which meant Jooheon was still sleeping. Changkyun fixed himself a bowl of cereal and was just about to take out his laptop when his phone started ringing.

It was Kihyun's number. Of course. No one else would call Changkyun so early in the morning.

He considered not picking up. He could say he was sleeping. Loads of people were asleep at ten in the morning on Saturdays. Changkyun was beginning to wish he was one of them.

Except he hadn't talked to Hyungwon in a while. They'd had conversations over the phone, but they hadn't met up since that day so long ago, when Jooheon had showed up looking for Kihyun. Hyungwon was always busy with Kihyun's friends, even on weekends. And Changkyun was beginning to feel their phone conversations were getting shorter and shorter.

Finally, he sighed aloud and picked up. "Good morning, Hyungwon-hyung."

"Good morning, Changkyunnie," Hyungwon answered, in that chipper tone he only used when he needed something.

"What is this about?" Changkyun decided to be direct.

"You're good at finding stuff, right?" Hyungwon asked innocently.

"Finding what stuff?"

"Cash," Hyungwon said flatly. "Tiny emptied out his wallet and is hiding all his money from me. I need to find his secret bank. I know it's somewhere in this apartment."

"Wait, what?" Changkyun sat up straight. "Kihyun-hyung is hiding money from you? Why?" He thought about it a second and then asked, "What did you do?"

"Nothing," Hyungwon insisted. "I bought a birthday gift for his friend's birthday. How was I supposed to know he's a stinking miser?"

"You're good at finding stuff, right?" Hyungwon asked innocently.

"Finding what stuff?"

"Cash," Hyungwon said flatly. "Tiny emptied out his wallet and is hiding all his money from me. I need to find his secret bank. I know it's somewhere in this apartment."

"Wait, what?" Changkyun sat up straight. "Kihyun-hyung is hiding money from you? Why?" He thought about it a second and then asked, "What did you do?"

"Nothing," Hyungwon insisted. "I bought a birthday gift for his friend's birthday. How was I supposed to know he's a stinking miser?"

It didn't sound like a lie to Changkyun. But Hyungwon had a talent for working half-truths. "Don't you write letters to each other? What did Kihyun-hyung say in his?"

"That I wasn't supposed to use his money 'so frivolously'," Hyungwon grumbled. "He should be thanking me. Wonho is his friend, not mine."

"Wait, Shin Wonho?" Changkyun grinned. "You've reached the point where you're buying presents for him? Smooth, hyung."

"It's his birthday on Tuesday, idiot," Hyungwon said, the smile apparent in his voice. "You have to get a birthday gift. You know, Tiny wasn't going to? That's how much of a grade-A miser he is."

Changkyun knew a diversionary tactic when he saw it, and he wasn't falling for this one. "What did
"Shut it," Hyungwon snapped. He lasted two seconds before saying, "A jacket. Paid for only half of it and Kihyun's still freaking out."

"Only half? Hyung, did you buy a gift as part of a couple?"

Changkyun said it as a joke, but Hyungwon swore and said, "You're right. It's a damn couple gift."

"I was just kidding," Changkyun said. "And besides, isn't Kihyun-hyung single?"

"It's weird," he said. "I don't know. I hope I'm out of this body by the time the situation explodes. And it'll definitely explode. You have my word on it."

Changkyun thought it was a bit rich for Hyungwon to make predictions on Kihyun's love-life, considering Hyungwon's own was a lesson in what not to do, but he didn't mention that. Instead he said, "Want to meet up today? It's been a while."

"Can't, sorry," Hyungwon answered. "I have to go to… church." You could hear the grimace in his voice.

"Good, you need it," Changkyun said, grinning. "No, I mean afterwards. We could have lunch or something."

"I'm supposed to eat with Wonho today, at the park by the campus."

Supposed to? Or you just want to? "You can cancel."

"I can't," Hyungwon replied promptly. "Already Kihyun is trying to keep his money from me. I'm not doing anything that'll make him any angrier."

That didn't sound like a lie either. Changkyun decided to try one more time. "How about after?"

"No, I'll probably be with Wonho the whole afternoon." Hyungwon was trying so hard to sound casual it was awkward to listen to. Changkyun decided to be kind and pretended not to hear.

"Okay, then," he said. "Call me if you need anything. And use your own money."

"Of course," Hyungwon laughed his obviously-lying laugh. "See you."

"See you."

Changkyun looked at his phone screen until it went dark. See you. He thought of the last time he had seen Hyungwon. He had been tired, depressed, hating his circumstances. And now it seemed he was enjoying his circumstances too much.

Wonho, Wonho, Wonho. It was like every time he called Hyungwon he was with Wonho, about to go out with Wonho, or had just been with Wonho. Changkyun made a mental note to look into Shin Wonho. It felt like his responsibility.

"What are you looking at?"

Jooheon was awake and had just padded into the room. His eyes were pretty much nonexistent in his puffy face, and his maroon hair was a mess on his head.

"Nothing," Changkyun said, putting his phone away, and then added, "I was talking to someone."
"Did you finally get a girlfriend?" Jooheon asked through a yawn.

"No, that was Kihyun-hyung," Changkyun half-lied. It was Kihyun's voice, after all.

"Okay." Jooheon yawned again, and then he jumped, as though he'd suddenly remembered something. He scurried up to Changkyun and said in a low, confidential tone, "Hey, can I talk to you about something?"

"About Kihyun-hyung?" he asked.

"You've gotten kind of close to Kihyun-hyung recently, right?" Jooheon climbed onto the couch.

"Not really close," Changkyun said quickly. "We just talk."

"Yeah, but you talk a lot," Jooheon said. "Now, just hear me out." He took a deep breath. "I think Kihyun-hyung is possessed."

Changkyun stared. That was completely impossible and yet uncomfortably close to the truth.

"No, see, I watched this documentary," Jooheon continued. "Apparently, sometimes when ghosts possess people, they can't do it completely. So they only take over the person's body a couple of days a week or something. That's why Kihyun-hyung has been acting weird recently. It's not really him. It's a ghost."

"That's ridiculous," Changkyun said with a forced laugh that sounded nervous, even to himself. "I think Kihyun-hyung would know if a ghost was controlling him half the week."

"Yeah, which is why I think he made a pact with the ghost," Jooheon said knowledgeably. "He's helping the ghost fulfill its purpose and achieve peace. Some people do that."

"In this 'documentary' you watched?" Changkyun raised an eyebrow. That was better. That actually sounded cynical.

"I can hear the inverted commas in your voice," Jooheon said, giving him a shove. "Just think about it. Sometimes hyung can't remember things he said the day before, and when I was talking to him about my class he just stared at me blankly. That's because I was talking to the ghost." His look of confidence slowly changed to horror. "Oh my god I was talking to a ghost! A ghost!"

"Stop freaking out, Kihyun-hyung is not possessed," Changkyun said, and he didn't even know if that was a lie or not. Technically, Hyungwon wasn't dead, so he wasn't a ghost, but it was damn close.

"You have to admit it makes sense," Jooheon insisted. "I talked to Wonho-hyung recently—he's one of Kihyun-hyung's closest friends—and even he agrees Kihyun-hyung doesn't act like himself some days."

"And did you mention your ghost theory to him?" Changkyun tried to sound amused, but he was genuinely curious. Hyungwon was spending a lot of time around Wonho.

"No," Jooheon said, frowning. "You're the first person I've told."

That made Changkyun feel bad. He tried to look at it like he didn't know the truth. What would've been his reaction? "I don't really know Kihyun-hyung that well," he mused, "but sometimes he does act kind of weird."
"Right?" Jooheon was excited now. "Like he's trying really hard to act like himself. Sometimes the ghost doesn't even try. Remember that day when I asked hyung for help with my math assignment, and he ran away? That was definitely the ghost." He thought about that for a second, and then shivered.

Uncomfortably close to the truth. "It might not be a ghost," Changkyun suggested. "What if it's an alien clone?"

"But he's still himself a lot of the time," Jooheon said. "A clone couldn't do that."

"What if it's still copying data from Kihyun-hyung's brain?" Changkyun leaned forward. "That's why sometimes it knows what to do, but other times it's lost."

He watched as the idea entered Jooheon's brain. He knew it got all the way in when Jooheon yelped, "It could be an alien!" And then looked around like a flying saucer was going to come crashing through the wall.

Changkyun nodded wisely. "Or it could just be Kihyun-hyung acting a little weird."

Jooheon sat in silence for a while as he thought it over. After a while he finally said, "I still say ghost."

Right then seemed like the moment to change the subject. "Do you know Wonho-hyung well?"

"Sort of," Jooheon shrugged. "He's pretty cool. Kihyun-hyung knows him better." He paused and then added, "The real Kihyun-hyung, not the ghost."

But it was the ghost Changkyun was worried about. "Does he have a girlfriend?" he asked. "Do you know?"

"Nope, he's single," Jooheon said. "A noona I know asked him out, but he turned her down." He grinned cheekily. "Why, Changkyunnie? Is this why you're not getting a girlfriend?"

"Maybe," Changkyun said, wiggling his eyebrows, and then they both laughed. Jooheon went to fix himself breakfast, but Changkyun sat where he was and thought. Hyungwon seemed to be getting pretty comfortable in Kihyun's life. He was already more than comfortable with Wonho, and for some reason Changkyun felt he should be worried about that.

He would have to do something about that.

"Is there any reason we're eating here, on pretty much the other side of town?"

"Not really," Changkyun shrugged. "It's a Sunday, it's not like you have anywhere you need to be."

Jihoon frowned. "You understand this is a thing couples do? Eat lunch at the park."

That was the first thing Changkyun had thought of when Hyungwon told him about it. "Not everyone here is in a couple."

"Yeah, just everyone except us," Jihoon said, and took a bite of his burger.

He was not in a happy mood, but Changkyun hadn't had much choice. He couldn't bring Jooheon, and he couldn't 'coincidentally' bump into Hyungwon and Wonho alone. So Jihoon had to suffer for a good cause: stalking Hyungwon while he was on a date.
"You don't have to be so grumpy," Changkyun said, putting up a smile. "Come on, I'll pay."

"Are you crazy?" Jihoon said in a low voice. "That screams 'date'! What else do you want to do, split a milkshake?"

"That's a good idea," Changkyun said.

"I will kill you," Jihoon threatened. "I will stab you with this straw. Nobody will miss you."

Changkyun tried not to grin as he sipped his Coke. He knew Jihoon wasn’t really pissed. Plus, it was hard to take threats seriously when they were coming from the smallest, cutest-looking guy you would ever meet. Jihoon was Changkyun's age but got into movie theaters on a half-ticket. He'd dyed his hair orange to look more 'gangster' and, though it should have been impossible, he now looked even cuter.

It would have been fun talking through lunch with Jihoon, but Changkyun was here on a mission. And as he ate the last french fry he saw the target.

Wonho was entering the café inside the park, Kihyun right behind. No, not Kihyun-hyung. That's Hyungwon-hyung.

"Finish up," Changkyun said to Jihoon. "I think I see a hyung I know. We should go say hi."

"I’m still eating, though," Jihoon said through a mouthful of burger. “Wait a little, and then I’ll go with you.”

Changkyun hovered in indecision, and then got up. "Alright, you wait here, and I'll go say hi."

"And now you're abandoning me," Jihoon said as Changkyun walked away. "This is the worst date ever."

He grinned, but kept walking. He was almost at the table when Kihyun – no, Hyungwon – spotted him. His eyes widened and he jumped up. "Changkyun, what are you doing here?"

"Oh, hi, hyung," Changkyun said, perfectly innocent. "This is a coincidence. I was just eating here with a friend. Hello, it's nice to see you again." This last bit was to Wonho, who had just gotten up and turned around. "I don't think we met properly. I'm Im Changkyun."

"Good to see you too," Wonho returned with a friendly smile. "Shin Wonho. As you can see, I really do know Kihyun."

The smile looked genuine. That was good, at least.

Changkyun returned genuine. That was good, at least.

Changkyun returned the smile. "You guys come here often?"

"Not really," Wonho said. "Kihyun suggested it, and I thought, why not? I would've refused if I'd known he was going to ask me to pay for it, though." He laughed, a free, kind of dopey-sounding laugh.

"Changkyun-ah, could I have a word with you?" Hyungwon asked with a strained smile. Before he could answer, Hyungwon grabbed his arm like an iron pincer and dragged him away.

"I did come here with a friend," Changkyun defended before the accusation came out. "See? Over there." He gestured towards where Jihoon was sitting.

"Don't you lie to me, I'm the master," Hyungwon said in a low, angry voice. "You came here to spy
on me. Admit it!"

"It's not spying, it's stalking," Changkyun corrected. "And I just wanted to see what you were doing. Is that wrong?"

Hyungwon scanned Changkyun's face. It was strange, seeing Kihyun peering at him the way Hyungwon did when he was trying to figure out what Changkyun was thinking. It was even more unnerving. Kihyun's eyes were smaller than Hyungwon's, their gaze sharper.

"You didn't come to see me," Hyungwon said suddenly. "You came here to see Wonho."

Changkyun tried not to look guilty. "Yeah? And?"

"Well, get lost," Hyungwon said. "This is too much."

"Why?" Changkyun asked. "It's not like you're on a date, are you?"

Now Hyungwon looked guilty. It was not a pretty expression on Kihyun's face. "No, it's not a date," he said. "We're just eating out."

"Just the two of you?"

"Yeah, nothing weird about that," Hyungwon said defensively. "I eat out with you all the time, just the two of us."

"So then you wouldn't mind if I joined you guys." Changkyun started back towards Wonho's table.

Hyungwon grabbed his arm. "Get lost," he said, but now it sounded like a request.

"Wow, you're pretty serious, aren't you?" Changkyun said, encouraged. "You're not laughing like you do when I annoy you only a little."

"I can't do that anymore." The bitter expression fit Kihyun's face perfectly. "Tiny doesn't do it. Turns out that was a Hyungwon-body thing, not a Hyungwon-soul thing."

"There's a lot of things like that?"

"Yeah," Hyungwon sighed. "This body makes me act… meaner, too. Or maybe I'm just cranky from pretending to be Kihyun."

"Then I guess this body makes you act more romantic too?" Changkyun raised an eyebrow with a cheeky smile. "Come on, a lunch park date? I thought you said you only liked romance in books and songs?"

Hyungwon shrugged in reply. No retort.

Wow, he has it bad. "You remember he thinks you're Kihyun-hyung, right?" Changkyun said it cautiously, feeling rather terrible. Hyungwon had never been really serious about anyone before.

"Yeah, I know," Hyungwon snapped, and then said, "Damn it. Yoo Kihyun's body, I swear."

Changkyun looked at Kihyun's face. He knew it was Hyungwon inside there, and he tried to see him. Did his eyes look more brown, or was he imagining it?

"You've already got enough to worry about," he said gently. "Do you really want to add this to it all? Why don't you just wait until you get your body back? It's already been more than three weeks. He
must have some attachment to you, he visits you everyday."

"I'm not doing anything," Hyungwon said, way too defensively. "I'm just hanging out with him. He's Kihyun's friend, I can't just ignore him."

"This is not just friendly," Changkyun said, lowering his voice further. "You have to see that."

But Hyungwon wouldn't. Changkyun could see that. He'd convinced himself this was all innocent, and he wouldn't let himself be convinced otherwise.

"It's just lunch," Hyungwon said.

Changkyun stared at him a second, and then gave up. Hyungwon would have to stop pretending eventually.

"I'll leave you to it, then," he said.

Hyungwon was stunned. "Really?"

"Yeah," Changkyun said, putting on a casual grin. "Besides, I have my own lunch date."

"Who is it? Is it that Dawon girl?" Hyungwon started looking around curiously. His excitement popped when he spotted the short guy in the hoodie. "Oh. It's Jihoon. And I thought you were serious."

"As serious as you," Changkyun said with a smile.

Hyungwon laughed a Kihyun-laugh. "Get lost," he said again, but this time he was grinning.

"Call me your next day, I mean it," Changkyun called out as he started walking away. He gave a small goodbye wave to Wonho, and then rejoined Jihoon.

"You talked to your hyung?" Jihoon asked. "Do you think I should go say hello?"

"Nope, no need," Changkyun said. He looked over to where Hyungwon was sitting with Wonho, and hoped everything would be alright. He told himself things would be better if he didn’t meddle, and tried to put it out of his mind. He turned back to Jihoon and grinned. "Now what were you saying about sharing a milkshake?"
Birthday and Drinks

Wonho had been thinking about Yoo Kihyun a lot lately.

It was amazing. He had known Kihyun for years, and yet recently he felt like he had just met him for the first time. In the last couple of weeks Kihyun had... changed. He had to have changed, otherwise why would Wonho see him so differently?

All this was on Wonho's mind as he sat at the small restaurant table where they were having lunch. There was a hot bowl of spicy ramen in front of him, but even this wasn't enough to take up his attention. Kihyun was sitting opposite, picking at his rice. Was it Wonho's imagination, or was Kihyun getting more handsome recently? He had never been ugly, but something about him had changed, made him look even better-looking. Sometimes his eyes looked different, warmer than before, more brown. A small thing, but it made a big difference.

Or am I just imagining it? Trying to see him differently?

Kihyun looked up and met Wonho's eyes. He grinned, and then reached across the table and grabbed a good amount of Wonho's ramen in his chopsticks and ate it. When Wonho frowned Kihyun gave him a sideways smile and then broke out into a huge grin.

Kihyun had changed, Wonho was sure of it. These new little actions of his proved it. They were un-Kihyun, too mischievous, too cheeky, too...

Too attractive.

Just then, another pair of chopsticks reached into Wonho's bowl. By the time he looked up, Shownu was already chewing.

"This is not an all-you-can-eat-buffet," Wonho said, putting his hands around his bowl to protect it from any more attacks. "Why only me? Eat each others' food."

"No," Kihyun said, and reached for the ramen again.

"You punk, how dare you?" Wonho pulled his bowl away. "It's my birthday."

"Yeah, that's why you should share," Shownu said. Kihyun laughed and nodded.

"I'm already gonna be paying for dinner, I can't even eat my lunch?"

"Then eat it already, stop tempting me," Shownu said. "You can eat that in ten seconds flat."

"Something on your mind, hyung?" Kihyun said it with grin, but there was a touch of seriousness to it.

Yeah, you, damn it. "Just thinking about my present, which I'm sure you bought for me."

"I told you, I didn't," Kihyun laughed. That was also un-Kihyun, laughing when telling an obvious lie. Kihyun used to do it with a straight face and a casual vibe. The laughing was... charming.

"Don't bother, Hyunwoo is as transparent as air," Wonho said with a satisfied smile. "You got me
something. I know." On his left, Shownu buried himself in his lunch, trying to look casual.

Kihyun laughed again. "Sure, if you say so."

"I do," Wonho said, content. He started eating, and pulled out his phone as he did. It was almost two.
The three of them had booked some time at a paintball ground, where they’d meet up with a couple
of other friends. But that was in the afternoon, and Wonho had an errand to run.

He chugged down the rest of it and then stood up and announced, "Okay, I have to go now." He
didn't have to explain where. The lunchtime trip to the hospital was now routine.

Kihyun got up too. "I'll go with you."

Wonho knew he'd say that, and he wished he wouldn't. He glanced at Shownu and then said, "You
don't have to come with me, you know."

"I'm not going for you," Kihyun answered, grinning. "You know I actually know the guy in the
coma, right?"

"I know, but you don't have to go all the time," Wonho said, with a more open glance towards
Shownu this time.

"That's funny, coming from you."

Shownu didn't say anything, and Kihyun refused to get the hint. Wonho stood where he was a
moment, feeling caught, when an idea that he should've thought of eons ago finally came to him.

"Hyunwoo, you should come with us," he said.

Shownu looked up from his food, surprised to be suddenly part of the conversation. "Me?"

"Yeah, why not." Wonho started pulling at his arm.

"I don't know the guy, for one," Shownu said.

"Yeah, neither do I, it's fine," Wonho brushed off. He looked at Kihyun. "Right?"

One flash of discomfort showed on Kihyun's face, and then he smiled and said, "Yeah, sure."

Shownu saw it too. "I'm not so sure. I think I'll just meet up with you guys after."

"No, you're coming with us." Wonho was now trying to physically lift Shownu off his chair, and
failing miserably. "Right, Kihyun?"

"Yeah, of course," Kihyun said, and he looked genuine this time.

"Okay, then," Shownu said, standing up. With the resistance gone, Wonho almost fell flat on his ass.

Kihyun laughed, loud. That, at least, was very Kihyun.

They walked to the subway station, and Wonho kept Shownu between himself and Kihyun. Usually,
that happened by itself, but not today. In the subway car he left Shownu in charge of taking care of
Kihyun and stood a distance away. Kihyun had always had real shitty balance in trains, and Wonho
preferred to let Kihyun fall into other people and then laugh at him, so Shownu had naturally become
Kihyun's support and protection.
There were a lot of things Wonho had taken as natural. Like how if they ever split up, he would be alone, because Shownu and Kihyun always ended up together. That when Kihyun made something really good, Shownu would get an extra piece, or the last bit. If Kihyun needed a partner for anything, or even the tiniest bit of help, Shownu was there. Because, naturally, it was Shownu and Kihyun.

But that had changed all of a sudden. Now it seemed like half the time Kihyun didn't even want to be around Shownu. That he was uncomfortable around him. That he wanted to spend time alone with Wonho.

*I'm being crazy. That's not it. That can't be it.* But Wonho was beginning to feel like it was. Which was why he'd made sure Shownu came along too. Because Wonho liked the natural order of things. Change, especially this change, was dangerous.

At the florist Wonho picked up a bouquet of lilies– a small one, because he was almost broke and he'd already spent a small fortune on flowers. Kihyun watched him with a bemused smile and said, "You're almost disgustingly romantic, you know that?"

"Almost disgusting," Wonho said. "As long as I'm not completely disgusting, it's fine."

"Isn't it kind of weird, buying flowers everyday?" Shownu asked, looking at some roses on display.

Wonho shrugged, and Kihyun said, "I don't think it's *that* weird. Plus, everyone likes guys with flowers, right?"

Shownu looked at Kihyun like he'd never seen him before. "Really? Everyone?"

Wonho caught the question in Shownu's voice, and wanted nothing more than to disappear. So did Kihyun, it seemed. "Uh, yeah, I guess," he said, scratching his chestnut head uncomfortably. "You know, girls. And stuff."

"He's buying them for a guy, though," Shownu pointed out.

"A patient," Wonho corrected, hoping that the awkward moment was behind them. "You have to take flowers to go see a patient, even if the patient can't see you."

"Makes sense, I guess," Shownu shrugged, and thankfully the conversation about flowers ended there.

At the hospital, the three of them went up to the second floor, and Kihyun and Shownu stopped outside the patient's room. "We'll just wait out here," Kihyun said, a little awkwardly. Wonho nodded, and then entered.

The room was like it always was– clean, still, quiet. Wonho always held some strange hope that it would be different one day, but it never was. Chae Hyungwon was where he always was.

Wonho arranged his fresh flowers, threw away some old ones. He hated looking at the dying flowers in this place. Life. That was what the room needed. He opened the blinds some more, let more light in until it bathed the whole bed. Once he was satisfied, Wonho sat in the small chair he'd gotten used to these last three weeks.

He'd heard coma patients could sometimes hear what was going on around them. That sounded like a load of bullshit to him, but he still cleared his throat and said, "Hey. It's me. The guy you talked to once." He glanced around out of habit to see if anyone else was listening and then continued, "You must be tired of me by now, huh? Sorry." Wonho cleared his throat again. "It's my birthday today,
you know? March 1st. It's okay, you can get me my present later.” He laughed, and then immediately felt embarrassed. He switched topics. "It's lilies today. Apparently everyone likes flowers, so you don't mind, right? It'll be dahlias tomorrow. I'm sorry if you're sick of me, but I won't stop coming. Not until you wake up."

And that was it. Wonho had nothing else to say. Chae Hyungwon looked peaceful, like he was sleeping. His skin was smooth, clear, his lips slightly parted. Wonho wondered what his eyes were like. He couldn't remember from their winter morning meeting, and he was annoyed at himself for it. He imagined they would be brown, and warm.

He sat still for a moment, and then Wonho reached out and patted Hyungwon's hand. He did this everyday. It was the only physical contact he allowed himself. Hyungwon probably wouldn't like being touched by strangers, but a pat on the hand was okay, right?

Finally, Wonho got up. He took one last look at Hyungwon for the day, and then left the room.

Kihyun looked up as he reentered the hallway. "Done?"

Wonho nodded. "For today."

A strange smile spread on Kihyun's face, and then he got up off the chair. "Let's go, then."

Wonho downed his soju, shook his head vigorously to dispel the hit. He'd already had a good amount to drink, but how much could one more hurt?

"Whoa, slow down," Shownu said. He was already pink, and with a permanent smile on his face.

"It's my birthday dinner, when else can I get drunk?" Wonho asked. He could hear his words slur a bit. "Right, Kihyun-ya?"

A number of people had been invited to birthday drinks in the bar, but it had gotten late enough for only the three of them to be left. They sat in a booth for four people, Wonho on one side, Kihyun and Shownu on the other.

"Your face is totally red," Kihyun laughed. "Any more and we could use you as a stop sign."

"That always happens when he drinks," Shownu said. "Wait until he starts hitting on you. Then you know he's really drunk."

"Alcohol can make even this face attractive, huh?" Kihyun asked with a sardonic smile. "It's practically magic."

This kind of self-deprecating humor was so unexpected from Kihyun that both Shownu and Wonho burst out laughing. Wonho continued longer than necessary, pushed on by the alcohol.

"It wasn't that funny," Kihyun said, now laughing.

"That was hilarious," Wonho said, pouring himself another drink. "And you aren't that bad. I'd consider it after one bottle."

"Are we talking vodka or what?"

Shownu started laughing again. "Is there anything stronger?" Wonho asked, and then he and Kihyun were laughing too.
The laugh put a bit of pink in Kihyun's cheeks. It was suddenly very noticeable, to Wonho at least. "You haven't had that much to drink, Kihyun."

"Classes tomorrow," he answered, a little apologetically.

"It's my birthday," Wonho pouted. He was already pouring one out.

"You can't just pout and expect to get your way," Kihyun said with a grin.

"I can on my birthday," Wonho said, and pushed a tiny glass into his hand. "Hyunwoo?"

"No, I think I've had enough for tonight," Shownu said. "I think I'll head home. Kihyun, want me to drop you home?"

Kihyun looked at him, at Wonho, and then back to Shownu. "No, thanks," he said finally. "I think I'll stay with Wonho-hyung a bit longer."

*I should tell him to go, that I'm going home now.* The words were in Wonho's brain, but his tongue came out with, "Thanks."


Wonho wanted to ask Kihyun if he and Shownu had really become distant, but at that moment Kihyun asked, "Where did these nicknames come from again?"

"Dance academy," Wonho answered, surprised. "You really forgot, or is this a setup for a joke or something?"

"The drinks, I guess," Kihyun said, shaking his empty glass. He rested his face in his hands, and then sighed. "My face is so... hard."

"What?" Wonho choked out of his laughter.

"Hard," Kihyun frowned. He didn't find it funny. "My cheeks."

Wonho reached across the table and poked Kihyun's face. "They're okay," he said. "Not the softest, but alright."

"I wasn't asking for an evaluation." Kihyun batted his hand away lightly. "I was just complaining about my short, unattractive body."

"Don't be stupid," Wonho said, struck by his tone. He sounded really bitter. "You're good-looking. You're even better-looking nowadays. It's like your eyes are almost brown now. They... shine."

Kihyun stared at him, and it took Wonho a moment to register what he'd just said. He quickly poured himself another drink and downed it. He was feeling very warm all of a sudden. "Do you want another drink?" he asked, and he sounded awkward even to himself. Kihyun nodded, and Wonho poured for him.

There was a silence as the heat dissipated in the air, and then Kihyun suddenly asked, "Do my eyes really look brown?"

Wonho was glad this was the part he was focusing on. "Sometimes," he answered, and it was the truth. "It could be just a trick of the light, though."
"What about now?" Kihyun leaned forward.

"Yes," Wonho said briefly. He didn't want to look into Kihyun's eyes any longer than he had to. It felt… dangerous.

Kihyun leaned back, satisfied. "That's good, then. That's alright."

The conversation lapsed into a thoughtful silence. Wonho thought of asking Kihyun about himself, about what was happening with the three of them, about everything. He wanted to, so badly, but his mouth just couldn't form the words. Somehow he had a feeling he knew how it would play out anyway.

Suddenly, Kihyun declared, "I have something for you, hyung," and started rummaging through his pockets.

Wonho was glad for the distraction. "Another birthday present?"

He'd said it half-jokingly, but Kihyun answered, "Yes," and then pulled his hand out of his jacket pocket with something in it.

It was a bracelet. Made mostly of strings of dark brown leather woven together, with a small, dull metal plate hanging off an end like a dog tag. It looked worn, but strong.

"Sorry it's not much," Kihyun said as Wonho took it from him. "I… misplaced my money."

There was something engraved into the metal and Wonho twisted it around, trying to read it. It wasn't Korean, or English.

"It's Greek. It's written Morpheus, the Greek god of dreams."

Wonho looked up at Kihyun. "That's… kind of weird."

He shrugged. "I got it at a flea market. It was either this or Hera."

Wonho turned the bracelet over. "You didn't have to do this," he said, keeping his eyes on his fingers. "You already got me something, and I liked it."

"It's nothing," Kihyun brushed off. "I got it practically free."

"Thank you, Kihyun," Wonho said sincerely. He locked eyes with him and yes, there was the touch of brown.

"It's nothing," Kihyun said again, but this time he was a little flustered. "Just don't mention it, okay? To anyone."

He was serious as he said it, and Wonho noticed. He nodded, and felt oddly guilty.

"I mean it," Kihyun said seriously. "Not even to me. I'll pretend like I don't know where you got it. Play along, okay?"

Wonho cracked a smile. "Okay."

Kihyun smiled, satisfied, and then leaned back in his seat. Wonho was still looking at his new gift. It didn't look expensive, but he would never call it cheap.

"Thanks," he said, and he really, truly meant it.
Kihyun was still smiling, but it was a different smile. And all of a sudden Wonho wanted to lean forward and kiss him.

He almost did. Wonho was surprised at how close he was to leaning across the table and pressing his lips against Kihyun's. One more glass and he wouldn't have been able to stop himself.

But he wasn't that drunk, not yet. "We should go home," Wonho said. He stood up so suddenly he teetered, and Kihyun jumped up and steadied him.

"You want me to take you home?" he asked, a touch concerned.

Yes. "No," Wonho answered. "I'll be fine, I'll take a cab. You should too."

"Okay, then," Kihyun said, but he stuck by Wonho while they left the bar, and waited until he found a taxi. "Bye, hyung," he said as Wonho climbed in. "Happy birthday."

Wonho nodded a farewell, and as the cab started moving he found himself wishing he had had one more drink.

Chapter End Notes

Just a short note to say I've joined the Monsta X fic bingo! Hope to write some good fics out of it ^^
If you want any updates on my writing (or just me being me) you can follow me on tumblr at http://alette-stars.tumblr.com
I follow back too ^^
And of course, as always, thank you for all the love ♥
Kihyun’s body had been drinking the night before.

Kihyun’s soul was sure of it, and it was not pleased.

His head felt like it was being stabbed from the inside by a horde of tiny, screaming barbarians. Chae Hyungwon's soul didn't make a difference, his body just was not friends with alcohol. Kihyun dragged himself to the kitchen, made himself some coffee, gulped two cups down, threw it all up, and then made more coffee and waited for his brain to stop screeching at him. It did, eventually.

When he was halfway normal he threw together the hangover cure he had made for Wonho many, many times, and then forced it down. When he was sure it wouldn't come back up, he went to look at his notebook.

Hyungwon hadn't written an entry. That was a bit too much to expect. But Kihyun was pleasantly surprised to find a short, messy note, telling him to check his phone's voice recordings.

There was a new one, and it was in Kihyun's voice.

"Hello. It's me. Your body–"

Kihyun paused it a moment. Was this really how he sounded when he was drunk?

"–with a random stranger's soul inside. Went out drinking for Wonho-hyung's birthday. Came home. I saw you had some beers in your fridge so I finished those too. You don't mind, do you? Of course not.


Kihyun stopped it. There were six more minutes of this. Six full minutes. He was feeling alright now, but he wasn't in the mood for cooking. Shownu would have to be satisfied with toast.

He was busy getting stuff out of the fridge when he heard the front door open. He didn't bother looking up. "Something light today," Kihyun said, putting things on the counter one by one. "Toast. Strawberry jam, since you said you were tired of the orange and I didn't buy another jar and– what is that?"

Shownu looked down at what was in his hand, like he'd forgotten he was carrying it. "A lily," he said finally.
"I can see that," Kihyun said. "Why are you holding it?"

"There was a guy selling some by the road," Shownu said awkwardly. "So I just bought one."

Kihyun gave a half-confused smile. "That's kind of weird."

"Yeah, but everyone likes guys with flowers, right?"

He looked so embarrassed Kihyun had to laugh, even though it brought the headache back a little. "Sure," he said. "You'll be a real hit with the ladies. Now can you put the flower down and help me with breakfast?"

Shownu put it on the table, still flushing with embarrassment, and then started on the coffee. Kihyun couldn't stop grinning as he got breakfast ready. Randomly buying a flower in the morning was so unlike Shownu. But he looked real cute standing there, holding it awkwardly and blushing like crazy. He really would be popular with girls. He could get anyone he wanted.

They were almost done with breakfast when Kihyun asked, "Hyung, are you looking for a girlfriend?"

"No, why would you ask that?" Shownu kept his eyes fixed on his plate, but the red was already creeping back in his cheeks.

"No reason," Kihyun said, trying to force down a grin. Shownu was so awkward it was adorable. "I'm just saying, I know girls who would be interested."

"I'm not," Shownu said, shuffling in his chair. "Interested, I mean. In getting a girlfriend."

"Okay." Kihyun's cheeks were now hurting with the effort of keeping his face straight.

They ended the conversation there. Shownu cleaned up the dishes while Kihyun got his bag ready, and then they started the walk to the subway station. Kihyun noticed Shownu no longer had his flower, but didn't say anything. Shownu had been teased enough for one morning, at least.

The subway ride was uneventful. The two of them separated at the university gates, Shownu off to the mechanical engineering labs, Kihyun to the building where they had the bioengineering classes.

As Kihyun went up in the elevator, he found himself thinking of Shownu. How long had it been since he had had a girlfriend? Kihyun had met him a few years ago when he'd started university. Shownu had been dating a girl named Hyosung then. They had broken up a few months later and Shownu had not dated anyone since.

Why? It's not like he's hung up on her or something. Kihyun remembered Hyosung. She was pretty, kind of shy. Not really worth a years-long heartache. She and Shownu-hyung didn't match that well anyway. He should be with someone more assertive, someone who'll take the lead sometimes.

It was still on Kihyun's mind as he sat at his usual front-row desk. He was thinking about it until he opened his bag and saw what was inside.

There, nestled among his notebooks, was a single lily.

Kihyun stared at it. When did he…?

Before he could even finish thinking the question, a more urgent one took its place.

Why would he?
Kihyun put his hand in his bag and ran his fingers along the petals. The flower was still fresh. *He really did get it this morning.*

*For me.*

He quickly retreated from that thought. Shownu had just dropped it in his bag for no reason. No need to make it into something it wasn't.

Kihyun held onto that reasoning. He looked around inconspicuously to see if anyone was watching him, and then slowly closed his bag.

All throughout the class Kihyun's mind was on the flower. It would wilt if he left it in there. But he couldn't take it out, otherwise everyone else would see it. And he didn't want that. It wasn't that Kihyun was embarrassed of being seen carrying a single flower, or at least it wasn't only that. He just felt like the flower was his secret, something he shouldn't share.

Finally he compromised by keeping the zipper of his bag half-open. He hoped it would be enough to keep the flower from dying, at least until he got home and could put it in water.

*I'm being ridiculous. It's just a flower.* But Kihyun still kept it in his half-open bag, and tried not to crush it. Halfway through his 11:30 class he finally gave in and tried to check on it secretly. The lily was still intact, which was a relief.

Kihyun wanted both to hide the lily's existence and tell someone about it. He felt like he might burst with the flower hidden in his bag if he didn't talk about it, but the last thing he wanted was to talk about it.

He shifted and shuffled through his class, and as soon as it was done he left the room, paying especial attention to his bag. He took the stairs to the sixth floor of the building, found an empty, secluded staircase, and sat down on the first step. It was not long before someone sat down next to him.

"You're so much better than Hyungwon," Minhyuk said in his slightly-too-loud voice. "You actually appreciate me and my vibrant, sparkling personality."

Kihyun sighed. "I'm starting to regret this."

"Understandable," the sort-of angel commented. "Am I getting my hopes up in thinking you came here just because you missed me?"

"Actually, kind of, yeah," Kihyun said.

Minhyuk smiled sneakily. "Really? This isn't about what you're hiding in your bag?"

Kihyun opened his mouth, shut it, and then finally yelled, "Stop spying on me!"

"It's part of the job," Minhyuk shrugged, and then put on that devilish grin again. "So? I'm right, aren't I?"

"Maybe," Kihyun admitted begrudgingly. Before he could say another word, Minhyuk clapped his hands delightedly.

"Great," he said. "I love romantic dramas. I–"

"Hold up," Kihyun interrupted. "When have you ever watched a drama?"
"I've watched lots of dramas," Minhyuk said, looking a little insulted. "My favorite is *I Remember You.*"

"That's not a romantic drama," Kihyun pointed out. "I'm pretty sure that one was about catching a serial killer."

"Yeah there was some serial killer stuff," Minhyuk said dismissively, waving a hand, "but there was romance too. Like the scene where the main character dries that cute guy's hair. Very sweet."

It took Kihyun a moment to realize what scene Minhyuk was talking about. When he did his mouth dropped open. "You freak! They were *brothers!*"

"What? Really?" Minhyuk blinked in surprise. "But they went to the park and took couple selcas."

"The whole story was about how they were brothers!" Kihyun was dumbfounded. "How could you not know this?"

"Okay, so I didn't watch all of it," Minhyuk admitted in a way which made Kihyun sure he really hadn't watched any of it. "But I watched the hair-drying part. And they smiled lovingly at each other all the time. It was cute."

"Because they were *brothers.*" Kihyun could feel a migraine coming on. He massaged his temples. "I really regret this now. I'm going."

"No, don't go," Minhyuk said, grabbing his arm. "Stay. Tell me about your romantic troubles."

"It's not romantic," Kihyun said, trying to ignore the heat rising in his face.

"Sure." That devilish smile was back. "Someone hid a flower in your bag. That's not romantic at all."

"He didn't hide it in my bag," Kihyun protested. "He just… put it there."

"Yeah, for you to find later," Minhyuk said. "He's just as embarrassed as you."

"It's nothing like that, okay? He just got embarrassed because I made fun of him."

"Can you quit that already?" Minhyuk asked, a little impatiently. "You know what's up. You're pretty much dating anyway."

Now Kihyun could feel his face heat up to the temperature of the sun. "Stop talking nonsense," he said hotly. "I knew I shouldn't have talked to you. I'm leaving." He disentangled his arm from Minhyuk's and got up.

"Come back when you stop being dumb on purpose," Minhyuk called out as he walked away. Kihyun ignored him. *He's an idiot. Pretty much dating? What does he know about that anyway? He couldn't even tell those characters were brothers.*

But as Kihyun started going down the stairs he thought about the lily in his bag. It was romantic. If he was a girl and a guy had done that for him, he would've been totally charmed.

*But I'm not a girl, and it's Shownu-hyung.*

He carried his bag rather gingerly after class to the cafeteria, where Shownu and Wonho were already waiting at a table.
The air was awkward. Shownu didn't talk and ate his lunch like he was on a mission. Kihyun didn't
know if he should say anything, or if he even could. He just picked at his food and waited.

After a couple of minutes of this, Wonho finally sighed and asked, "Okay, what's going on?"

"What?" Shownu looked up.

"Nobody's saying anything," Wonho said. "You didn't even mention my new bracelet."

Only now Kihyun noticed the dark woven leather around Wonho's wrist. "Oh, it's nice," he
commented.

"That was the most lifeless thing I've ever heard, and I used to work at a butcher's," Wonho said
flatly.

"What? No you didn't," Kihyun said. "You worked in the frozen goods aisle at Target."

"Close enough," Wonho snapped. "The point is I was around dead things. As dead as your voice."

"How animated do you want me to be?" Kihyun asked. "It's a nice bracelet, but it's not gonna go
around zapping demons."

Wonho sighed and turned to Shownu. "Well?"

"It's nice," he said. And then feeling like he should add something, "Where did you get it?"

"At a flea market," Wonho said, obviously pleased that he'd asked. "The writing is Greek. It says
Morpheus, the god of dreams."

"Isn't that the name of that character in the Matrix?" Kihyun asked. "The guy with the sunglasses."

"They all wore sunglasses in the Matrix," Shownu said.

"I mean the one who told Neo about the matrix," Kihyun explained. "What's that actor's name
again?"

"I don't remember," Shownu said after a moment's thought, "but I've seen him in other movies too."

"I only remember Keanu Reeves," Kihyun said. "That movie was a long time ago. There was also
that actor who played an elf in Lord of the Rings. Not Legolas," he added quickly, seeing Shownu
open his mouth to speak. "The older one."

"I guess you guys are okay now," Wonho squeezed into the conversation. "I'll be going now. See
you at work, Kihyun."

They had all gotten used to Wonho's daily hospital visits, and how Kihyun only went with him every
other day. It all went without saying.

"Okay," he said, and watched as Wonho picked up his bag and jogged away.

Leaving Kihyun and Shownu alone at the table.

And now Kihyun remembered the lily in his bag. He tried to forget it and focus on his lunch, but it
was gnawing at him. He had to say something.

"Hyung," Kihyun said quickly before he lost the nerve. "I have to ask you something."
Shownu put his chopsticks down. "Yeah?"

Kihyun hesitated. What exactly did he want to know? Finally he gave up looking for the right question and reached into his bag and pulled out the lily inside. It was still firm, and he put it down on the tabletop.

Shownu looked at the flower and said nothing. Eventually Kihyun was forced to ask, "Why did you put this in my bag?"

"I just did." Shownu was trying to sound casual but his voice came out awkward and wooden. He started eating again. "You said you liked flowers so I just… did."

So you did buy it for me. Kihyun didn't know how he felt about that. He didn’t even know if he was right. He could feel blood rush up to his face and concentrate in his cheeks. He tried to ignore it, keep his mind on his lunch. It was no use. The more he tried to think about something else, the more he thought about the damn flower.

After an uncomfortable few moments, Kihyun sneaked a glance at Shownu. He was looking around awkwardly, looking in every direction except Kihyun's. And high in his warm cheeks, a touch of pink.

Kihyun couldn't believe it. He had been comfortable with this hyung for years, and now just his presence was making him feel like his ears were burning.

Whatever it was, he couldn't take it anymore. "I have to go to work," Kihyun said, getting up abruptly. "I'll– I'll see you tomorrow." He tried to make his voice normal, but it sounded weirdly high-pitched, even to his own ears.

Shownu finally made eye-contact and nodded wordlessly. Kihyun quickly gathered his things and hurried away without a second glance. Only after he'd passed through the university gates did Kihyun realize he'd picked up the lily too.

He stared at it in his hand. He couldn't throw it away. Kihyun looked around to make sure no one was watching, and then carefully tucked the flower back into his bag.
The first thing Hyungwon saw when he woke up was a single white lily in a vase.

At first he was confused. Why was there a flower in his apartment? Then he remembered the accident, and Minhyuk, and Kihyun, and for a moment he’d thought he was back in his body, and was looking at a flower Wonho had brought for him. It took him a moment more to realize he was still in Kihyun's apartment.

"Damn it," he said aloud, and then climbed out of bed.

As he washed up, Hyungwon thought about his existence as Yoo Kihyun. How long had it been? Three weeks, at least. How much longer would it be?

Once he'd gotten rid of most of the sleep in his eyes, Hyungwon opened up Kihyun's letter for the day.

It contained the usual stuff: some scolding, some complaining, a lot of unnecessary details about the day. Only the last two lines were interesting.

*Don't throw the lily away. It's nothing important, I just like how it looks in the apartment.*

Hyungwon looked at the flower on the bedside table. It wasn't actually in a vase, it was in a bottle. He thought of tossing it just to be horrible, but the truth was he liked it too. It reminded him of the bouquet of lilies Wonho had bought for him once.

*Bought for my body, at least.*

He tried to put that thought out of his mind. Shownu was already in the kitchen, making coffee. "Good morning," he said as Hyungwon walked in.

His voice sounded a little weird, but Hyungwon ignored it and just smiled and said, "Good morning. Breakfast will be ready soon."

Shownu blinked, and then quickly busied himself with the cups. Hyungwon shrugged it off and went to check what Kihyun had made for breakfast.

A lot. He had made a lot. There was pancake batter, all sorts of puddings and pudding-like things, salted bacon and battered fish ready to be fried, a billion slices of fruit. The whole fridge was filled with breakfast.

*Wow. Tiny really does not have a life. It must've taken forever to get all this ready. Hyungwon straightened. "What do you want for breakfast?"

"Anything is fine," Shownu said, not looking up from the coffee.

Hyungwon shrugged and pulled out the milk. "Can you grab the cereal?" he asked. "It's in the cupboard."

They ate in silence like usual, but this time it was different. It was like Shownu felt just as awkward as Hyungwon did. Shownu was probably trying to hide it, but he was as obvious as clear glass.

It made Hyungwon more uncomfortable than usual. The subway ride was just as awkward. Shownu would stick close, then move away suddenly, and then eventually gravitate back. The silence
continued until they reached the university gates, and just as they were about to separate, Shownu grabbed Hyungwon's wrist and blurted out, "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine," Hyungwon said, taken aback. "Are you okay?"

"Do you..." Shownu hesitated, and then went for a different route. "You seem kind of... awkward."

"So do you." Only after he'd said it did Hyungwon realize that wasn't what Kihyun would've said.

Shownu didn't notice. His face went deep pink and he looked down and murmured something in reply. And then he noticed he was still holding onto Hyungwon's wrist. He quickly let go and stepped back, and now his face was really red.

Hyungwon thought about the flower in Kihyun's bedroom, and tried his hardest to hide his smile. 'Nothing important', huh? Good going, Tiny, you ain't half-bad.

He thought about how Kihyun might react, and then decided, to hell with it. "I'm fine, hyung," he said. "I am, really." And with that, Hyungwon hit him with his sunniest, most charming smile.

With Hyungwon's face that smile would have killed anybody. Kihyun's face had the same effect on Shownu. For a moment his eyes widened, and then he smiled. A warm, adoring smile.

"I'll be busy today," Hyungwon said, "but tomorrow let's have dinner, just the two of us."

Shownu's eyes widened again, this time in real surprise. "What?"

"Yeah, we do that, don't we?" Hyungwon was actually having fun seeing Shownu this shy. "It's been a while."

"Uh, um, okay," he answered uncertainly. "We do do that. Um, yes. Yeah."

Hyungwon grinned, and it was genuine. "See you at lunch then." He turned around and started walking away before Shownu could reply. You're welcome, Kihyun-ah. He had a feeling he'd just pushed that relationship forward a lot.

He thought about the lily in the bottle. How romantic. Wouldn't have thought Shownu had it in him. Have I ever gotten flowers?

It took Hyungwon a moment to remember that he had. He had gotten bouquets of half-dozen flowers everyday for weeks, and he'd get another one at lunchtime.

Except those weren't for him, not really. They were for his body.

His good mood drained away before he even reached the bioengineering building. For one moment in the morning Hyungwon had truly believed he'd returned to his body. One moment. Yoo Kihyun was moving forward with his life, but Hyungwon was stuck. Stuck in a body that wasn't his, stuck trying to live someone else's life.

He could feel the start of a headache as he walked up to the elevators. When the elevator reached his floor, he didn't get off. Hyungwon had diligently attended all of Kihyun's classes for weeks. He decided he deserved one day off.

The top floor of the building was too busy for Hyungwon's mood, and he kept climbing down the stairs until he found a quiet floor. Most of the rooms were labs, and their doors were locked. He wandered around until he found an empty stairwell, and then he sat down on the top step.
The headache was pushing around the edges of Hyungwon's mind, and he tried to fend it off by focusing on something else. He pulled out Kihyun's phone, scrolled through his photos, and then found himself dialing a number. A long one with a country code, and one he knew by heart.

Hyungwon was calling his mom.

He didn't know why. He just knew he really needed to hear her voice.

The signal wasn't the best in the stairway, but the call went through. It rang once, twice, and just when Hyungwon was about to end the call— "Hello?"

The sound was a little scratchy, but it was her. Hyungwon held the phone to his ear, unable to say anything. She would know it wasn't his voice, but he couldn't pretend to be Kihyun, not to her. So he just sat still, and listened.

"Hello? Hello? I'm sorry, who is this?"

Tears were choking Hyungwon's throat, and he had to cover his mouth to make sure his mother wouldn't hear. His hands were shaking a little, and he knew he should end the call. And he would, he swore to himself, just a little later…

"Hyungwonnie, is that you?"

He almost dropped the phone, and then tightened his grip until he thought it might break in his hand. Hyungwon swallowed and held his breath while his mother spoke.

"Hyungwonnie, if that's you and you can hear me, Mom can't hear what you're saying," she said. "Call me again a little later, okay? Mom loves you."

Hyungwon cut the line before she could say anything else. That was enough. His throat was closing in on itself, and he put his head down, trying to breathe. He could feel sobs attacking his chest, and he put all his mind into forcing them down.

He sat like that, knees up, head down. After an eternity, as Hyungwon started breathing normally again, he felt an arm go around his shoulders, and a head rest on his.

He waited until he thought he could talk properly, and then he said, "It's been a while."

"Yup," Minhyuk said, and his normally chipper voice was muted. "You alright?"

"I'm fine," Hyungwon said, raising his head. Minhyuk was wearing pure white like he always did, and looking at him with real concern.

The angel smiled. He looked nice, and for the first time in a while Hyungwon decided he wasn't so annoying.

"It's been a while," Minhyuk said, suddenly patting Hyungwon's head, "but it'll be over soon. Hopefully."

Hyungwon jerked his head away. "What do you mean, 'hopefully'?"

"It's being worked on," Minhyuk said seriously. "Things are being done."

That sounded vague. Too vague. "What things?" Hyungwon asked, narrowing his eyes.

"Things," Minhyuk said firmly. "Actions are being taken."
The more Minhyuk spoke, the more uncertain Hyungwon got. “Can I talk to someone else?” he asked. “You know, someone more… normal?”

“Nope,” Minhyuk answered, back to his cheery, slightly-too-loud voice. “Reason being, humans and angels aren’t supposed to interact, so since you already talked to me, you can only talk to me.” He beamed.

Hyungwon was not pleased. “I will seriously punch you one day.”

Minhyuk was not pleased either. “This sucks for everybody, okay?” he said, dropping the upbeat tone. “My bosses are seriously pissed at me right now. It’s not even my fault. It’s your soul. I have no idea why it just didn’t return to your body.”

“Because my body closed itself, you said.”

“Your soul still should’ve been able to push through,” Minhyuk said. “I don’t understand what happened. Your body should’ve opened by now, but you’re still in Kihyun’s. It’s… strange.”

“So how much longer is it going to be?” Hyungwon asked, dreading the answer.

“I don’t know,” Minhyuk admitted. “It shouldn’t be longer than two months, but I really don’t know.”

Hyungwon tried to swallow that. But as it went down, dread crept in. “Is there any chance I’m going to be stuck in Kihyun’s body forever?”

Minhyuk blinked once, and then burst out laughing. “No, of course not,” he said. “For one, you won’t live forever.”

“Don’t do that,” Hyungwon said, giving him a shove. “I’m serious. Will I ever go back to my body?”

“Yes, you will,” Minhyuk replied, still grinning. “Eventually. So cheer up, okay?”

_Cheer up? When I’m stuck in someone else’s body, and I don’t know when I’ll return to mine?_ Hyungwon almost said something nasty, but stopped himself. Minhyuk looked like he genuinely meant it.

“You should really go to class,” the angel said. “Kihyun freaks out about that a lot.”

“I’ve gone to every single class,” Hyungwon said with a groan. “I think I’m allowed to skip one.”

“Just go,” Minhyuk whined. “It’s me he’ll complain to.”

“I’m not going,” Hyungwon said, and this time he said it seriously. “I’d just like to be alone for a while, okay?”

“Sure,” Minhyuk said with a nod. He didn’t move.

Hyungwon sighed and was about to say something, but then he blinked and the angel was gone. It was unnerving, seeing him disappear like that, but Hyungwon was glad to be alone.

He thought of calling Changkyun, just to hear someone call him by his real name, but he couldn’t. He felt tired. The headache was coming back now, a small insistent push around the edges of his brain. Hyungwon let it. He couldn’t be bothered to resist.
Two months. And that was if things went the way they were supposed to. And if things don't? If things go wrong?

Time passed, and Hyungwon didn’t move. Sitting still made him feel better. If he stared up at the ceiling sometimes it felt like he was in his own body. A girl passed by once in all that time, and gave him a look like he was a freak. If only she knew how much of a freak I really am. I'm possessing someone else's body.

Finally, a call interrupted his thoughts. Hyungwon pulled out the phone and answered without a glance. "Hello?"

"Kihyun are you okay?"

Hyungwon took a look at the screen. Shownu-hyung. "I'm fine," he said, trying to sound it. "Why?"

"You're not eating with us," Shownu said. He paused and added, "You don't sound fine, either."

"I was busy with some class-related stuff," Hyungwon said, getting up. His knees protested loudly, and his back wasn't happy either. "I'll be there in a moment."

"Okay," Shownu said, a little uncertainly. Hyungwon cut the line and started down the stairs. He checked the time and was a little surprised to see he'd been sitting in the same spot for over four hours.

The cafeteria was still packed when Hyungwon entered, but he spotted Wonho and Shownu sitting at a table in one corner and joined them.

"Hope you don't mind but we already ordered for you," Wonho said, motioning to a couple of bowls. "If you still wanna come with me today you'll have to hurry."

Hyungwon didn't know if he wanted to even be near his body right then, but he still shoveled his food down like he was in a race. Because he wanted to be near Wonho. For some reason Wonho made Hyungwon feel like he was still in his own body. When Wonho had said Kihyun's eyes looked brown sometimes, Hyungwon had been truly, deeply happy. It was like someone had recognized him, even if he hadn't really. He would've kissed Wonho if he'd had had one more drink, and by the end of the night he'd wished he had.

When he'd swallowed his lunch, Hyungwon stood up and said a goodbye to Shownu before leaving with Wonho. Shownu had looked concerned, even though Hyungwon had faked his best smile. Hyungwon was beginning to realize Shownu could be surprisingly perceptive when you least wanted it.

Hyungwon let his mind go blank during the subway ride, and Wonho didn't try to start a conversation. Only after the two of them had gotten off the train did Hyungwon's thoughts return to him, when he noticed Wonho was wearing the bracelet he'd given him.

That made Hyungwon smile. The bracelet had been his, brought back by his parents from a summer trip to Greece many years ago. He hadn't wanted to give Wonho something so worn, but somehow it seemed right. After all, what was the point in giving a gift if it didn't have some meaning behind it? Wonho noticed the smile, grinned, and said, "Glad to see you're in a better mood."

"I'm okay," Hyungwon shrugged.

Wonho put an arm around Hyungwon's shoulders and gave him a shake. "Like hell you are. Are you gonna tell me about it or just sulk by yourself all day?"
"Nothing to tell," Hyungwon said, and that was the truth. How could he tell Wonho how he really felt?

"If you say so." Wonho took his arm off Hyungwon's shoulders. His arm had been heavy, but Hyungwon had liked the weight.

They walked to the flower shop, and while Wonho tried to charm a discount out of the pretty florist Hyungwon wandered around. He liked this part of his daily hospital visits. He had never liked flowers so much until he started sharing Kihyun's body. The delicate scents of scores of different flowers diffused the air with a gentle feel. It made Hyungwon oddly sentimental.

He walked about until he saw a large bouquet of snow-white lilies. He had helped out Kihyun with Shownu, he was sure of it, but now he felt jealous and bitter about it. While Kihyun received shy smiles and flowers, Hyungwon's life was on pause. He was alive and living, yes, but what was the point if no one knew it was him?

"Kihyun-ah, come on."

Hyungwon followed Wonho out the door without hesitation, and then hated himself for it. He was answering to Kihyun's name now.

"Here, Kihyun, hold this," Wonho said, juggling his small bouquet of gladioluses and his wallet. He shoved something at him as he tried to put his wallet away.

Hyungwon stared at the perfect white lily in his hand. He looked at Wonho for an explanation.

"I saw you staring at them," Wonho said. "So, why not? Think of it like a thank you for the bracelet."

He was blushing; color had bloomed in his cheeks like poppies. He was also trying his hardest to act casual.

Hyungwon didn't know what to do. If he was in his own body he would've shoved Wonho and tried to laugh it off as a joke. He hated embarrassing things like this.

Or at least he thought he did. It was cringeworthy, but Hyungwon found a smile coming to his lips. He was surprised at that, and tried to suppress it.

"That was a birthday present," he said. "You're not supposed to get me something back."

"Well, I did, so just accept it," Wonho said, still blushing, and then he laughed in embarrassment.

Hyungwon smiled. He had gotten a flower, and it was really for him.

He threw his arm around Wonho's shoulder. "Thanks," he said, and grinned.

Wonho smiled, still embarrassed. Hyungwon gave him what he hoped seemed like a friendly shake, and then moved away again. He had wanted to kiss him, on his cheek right where it was the most pink. That surprised Hyungwon too. He was never this affectionate. He hated couples getting touchy-feely in public, but if Wonho had given him another smile he would've kissed him without a doubt. Was this another side effect of Kihyun's body?

He glanced at Wonho, who was adjusting the flowers in his bouquet as he walked. His snow-white cheeks were still tinged rose, but lightly.
Somehow, Hyungwon didn't think this was a side effect of Kihyun's body. It was a side effect of Wonho's.

He still missed his own body, his own life. He still wanted more than anything to leave Kihyun's life behind and stop acting.

But for now, Hyungwon put his lily in his bag, and kept on walking with a smile.
Kihyun stared at the two white lilies in the bottle.

_Holy shit he got me another one._

He could tell which was the old one; its stalk was not as firm as the new one, and the petals felt older. He didn't want to throw it away. But if he kept getting a new one everyday, the whole apartment would eventually be filled with them. And that would be annoying.

"Annoying," Kihyun told himself, and then climbed out of bed.

He washed up, and then opened the notebook where he and Chae Hyungwon left their messages. This one was very short.

_You're welcome._

Kihyun stared at the two words, and then stared at the two flowers. He could feel dread start to creep in. "Chae Hyungwon you bastard, what did you do?" he asked aloud.

It wouldn't be long before Shownu turned up for breakfast. But it would be long enough for a conversation.

Kihyun got up and stood in the center of the room, tapping his foot. "Lee Minhyuk, show yourself. _Now._"

He waited. Five seconds later, there was a polite cough.

"What does that mean?" Kihyun asked, turning around.

"It's what people do to attract attention," Minhyuk answered innocently. "They clear their throats sometimes, too."

"I mean the message," Kihyun said impatiently. "The one Chae Hyungwon wrote me."

"Which one?" Minhyuk asked, walking over to the notebook.

"Don't pretend like you weren't reading it over my shoulder," Kihyun said. "What does he mean, 'you're welcome'?"

Minhyuk shrugged. "I guess you'll find out for yourself."

Kihyun narrowed his eyes. "You spy on us everyday. Would it kill you to share some of that info with me, the actual owner of this body?"

"I'm a spy, not a tattletale," Minhyuk said with a sunny smile. "Besides, it's nothing that major."

He said it confidently, but Kihyun didn't trust that wide smile. "One day, I really will punch you."

The smile didn't change. "We'll see about that."

Kihyun was going to retort something, but then he blinked and the angel disappeared. He swore silently and stomped out of the room.
Shownu was already waiting in the kitchen. Kihyun felt a little awkward, remembering the last time he’d seen him, but Shownu seemed comfortable, and smiled. It seemed Hyungwon had handled the situation.

*So it seems.* Kihyun was not naïve enough to think that was the reason he was supposed to thank that literature-studying bastard.

He tried to put it out of his mind and started on breakfast. He and Shownu ate in silence, and it didn't feel weird. That was good. It was normal until Kihyun went into his room to pick up a book he’d forgotten, and saw the two lilies in the bottle again.

He stared at them. And then he grabbed his things and tried to leave them behind.

But Kihyun was suddenly hyper-aware of everything around him, everything he was doing. While they walked to the subway station, the distance between he and Shownu decreased until their hands brushed against each other. He couldn't believe Shownu didn't notice how close they were. And then Kihyun realized he hadn't noticed either, not until right then.

He wanted to pull away, create some distance. But the truth was Kihyun wasn't uncomfortable. It didn't feel awkward, not until he thought about it. It felt... right.

The subway car was so packed Kihyun couldn't move away from Shownu even if he tried. But for the first time he was actually aware of what was going on around him. He was aware of Shownu steadying him every time the car slowed down or shook, of how he gently but firmly pushed away the stranger that got into Kihyun's personal space.

It made Kihyun think. About everything, but mostly about how he'd never thought about it before.

He thought about it until they reached the university gates, when Shownu asked, "Where do you want to go?"

"To class?"

"No, I mean tonight," Shownu said with a grin. "You decide."

Kihyun stared at that grin until the gears in his brain clicked into place. And then he remembered the message in the notebook. *You're welcome.*

*Chae Hyungwon, you…*

"You want to eat with me? Tonight?" Kihyun scratched his neck. "I'm guessing I suggested it yesterday."

"Uh, yeah," Shownu said, a little confused. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine," Kihyun said firmly. *Yeah, thanks Chae Hyungwon, but no thanks. I can take care of my own life.* He was about to cancel the plans Hyungwon had made for him, when he stopped.

Why not? Kihyun ate with Shownu all the time. It didn't matter whether Hyungwon had planned it, or what his intentions were. Kihyun wanted to eat out.

"Sure, let's go somewhere," he said. "Where do you wanna go?"

"Anywhere is fine," Shownu said. "We could go see a movie or something, too."

"Sounds good," Kihyun said, and he meant it. "I'll see you after work. Right now I have to get to
Shownu smiled, and it was that warm, endearing smile that made you feel like the world was getting better. Then he turned around and walked away.

Kihyun watched him for a couple of moments before snapping out of it. He had a class to get to.

"Not coming today, then?"

Kihyun shook his head. "Enjoy your hospital visit."

"I'm going to go see a coma patient, how am I supposed to enjoy that?" Wonho asked with a frown.

"Well you go everyday, you can't hate it," Kihyun shrugged. "You know he can't see you anyway."

Wonho looked uncomfortable, and oddly a little guilty too. "I just… think I should."

"Well you don't have to," Kihyun said, a little more shortly than he'd intended. Hyungwon already hung out with Kihyun's friends in Kihyun's body, he shouldn't get to hang out with them while unconscious too.

Wonho shifted. He looked… conflicted. Weird, Kihyun thought. He considered asking him if anything was wrong, and then let it go. If it was serious, Wonho would tell him eventually.

He went back to his lunch. So did Wonho. Shownu ate silently like he always did, and for a while the table was free of conversation, until Wonho said, "Let's get a drink tonight, after work."

He sounded back to normal. Kihyun opened his mouth to tell him about the movie plans, that Wonho could come too, if he wanted.

"Sorry, I'll be busy."

Kihyun's mouth stayed open as he turned to Shownu. What? It was the truth, yes, but…

"Kihyun-ah?" Wonho looked at him. "You?"

His voice sounded expectant, hopeful. Wonho's eyes were very dark, and very attentive, and focused on him.

But they were not the only eyes on Kihyun. Shownu was watching him too, though he was pretending to be busy eating. Kihyun could feel that gaze on him. Waiting for his answer.

Kihyun looked at Wonho's bright grin, and swore silently.

"I probably can't make it," he said. "I have some notes to catch up on."

Wonho's face fell for a fraction of a second until he put up a smile again. "Sure."

Shownu didn't say anything, and just kept on eating. Kihyun busied himself with his lunch too, until Wonho said, "Well, I'll see you guys later," and left for the hospital.

As soon as he was gone, Kihyun put his chopsticks down and looked at Shownu. "Well?"

Shownu looked embarrassed, and kept his eyes on his food. "Yeah?"
"You lied to Wonho-hyung," Kihyun said shortly. "He was disappointed."

"I didn't lie," Shownu said. He looked up, but he still looked embarrassed. "I will be busy. With you."

"You didn't tell hyung that," Kihyun said, trying to ignore his own outright lie.

"Yeah." Shownu shifted a little. "Because then he'd want to come with us."

"And?"

"And then he'd be even more disappointed," Shownu said, picking at his rice.

"Why? Why would Wonho-hyung be disappointed?"

But even as Kihyun said it he understood why. Shownu must have known he'd figured it out, but he still answered. "Because I want to go with you. Only you."

There it came again. That heat that rose in Kihyun's body and attacked his cheeks.

"I thought Hoseok would feel bad if I told him that," Shownu was saying. Kihyun was having trouble listening. He really, really wanted to hit something.

Shownu noticed, and shut up. Kihyun waited for the weird feeling to pass, or dull. But now he was thinking about two white lilies in a bottle. And it was getting worse.

"I have to get to work," Kihyun said. He stood up so suddenly he almost fell over, and quick as instinct Shownu got up and steadied him. His grip was strong, but gentle. And now Kihyun was thinking about the walk to the subway station, about their hands brushing against each other.

He pulled away, quickly said, "Bye," and ran away.

When he'd gone far enough, Kihyun stopped using his legs and started using his brain. *Was that an overreaction? It kind of feels like an overreaction right now.*

If he thought about logically, it wasn't that weird. Shownu and Kihyun went out for movies together all the time. Also, Wonho always cried in the sad scenes, and it was kind of a bummer. It didn't even have to be sad. You just put in a couple of sad piano notes in a movie, and Wonho was done.

*Yes. It’s fine. I’m reading into it too much.* Kihyun repeated that in his head a couple of times, until he almost believed it.

Shownu grinned when he caught sight of Kihyun, and that's when Kihyun decided he'd made the right choice.

They were at a cinema hall, the huge one in the eastern tip of the city. The place was busy, with people scurrying about like ants at a forgotten picnic. The nights were getting warmer, and when Kihyun breathed out he saw no mist.

Shownu was only wearing a light jacket over his T-shirt. "Hey," he said as he approached. "There are a lot of people."

Kihyun looked around. "I guess. Hope we can get tickets." The last thing he wanted was to be stuck watching a romcom or something.
They walked up to the ticketing line, and Kihyun took a place in line. Shownu went off to buy popcorn and snacks. This was one of those things that went without saying. Kihyun picked the movie, and paid for the tickets, while Shownu bought the snacks. They'd been to the cinema dozens of times, and Kihyun could count on one hand the number of times Shownu had picked the movie.

A period fantasy was showing in twenty minutes, and Kihyun got two tickets. And then he waited in a corner for Shownu to show up.

The longer he waited, the more uncomfortable Kihyun got. There were a lot of couples. A lot. A big romance drama was showing, and a ton of people had come out on dates.

*It's weird I'm not one of them. Ha ha. Ha.*

*I am thinking laughter. I am going insane.*

Kihyun tried to remember the last time he'd been on a date with a girl. It had been last year, and honestly it had been pretty boring. Kihyun had had an… average number of relationships, but they'd always been short. He wasn't really a pro at romance.

He found himself thinking about Chae Hyungwon. Was he good at romance? Probably. He was a literature student and he looked like *that.* Kihyun wondered why the guy didn't have a girlfriend. Sure, he was an annoying bastard, but he was a good-looking annoying bastard, and girls loved that.

*Unless he does have a girl, and he's romancing her while in my body.* Kihyun thought about it a moment, and then dismissed it. Hyungwon had no time to be getting lovey-dovey with someone. He spent all his time with Wonho.

"Kihyun-hyung?"

The sound of his name made Kihyun turn around, and he spotted Jooheon walking towards him, holding a bag of popcorn.

"Oh, hey, Jooheon," he said, and smiled.

Jooheon gave what sounded a lot like a sigh of relief. "Oh, it's you, hyung."

"Yeah?" Kihyun was confused. "Who did you expect, Pororo?"

"Nah, hyung, Pororo would be taller than you," Jooheon said with a cheeky grin.

"You kid, did you come here just to make fun of me?" Kihyun grinned.

"I'm here with some friends, we're gonna see that new comedy," Jooheon said. He spotted the two tickets in Kihyun's hand, and broke out into a devilish grin. "Hyung, are you here on a date?"

"No!" Kihyun said quickly. "I'm not! Why would you think that?"

He suddenly noticed a couple of people around him were staring. The words had come out louder than he'd intended.

Jooheon looked taken aback too. "Hyung, are you okay?"

"Fine," Kihyun said. He felt like he needed a reason for the outburst, so he added, "I've been kind of stressed lately."

"I get it," Jooheon said in a weird, soothing tone. "It's okay, hyung. You're doing the right thing."
Now Kihyun was getting confused again. "What are you talking about?"

"Everything," Jooheon said, and he sounded mostly normal again. "Just… go with it. Stop worrying about things, yeah?"

Kihyun thought about that for a moment, and was about to respond when he heard a young man with a definite accent call out, "Jooheon, we got the tickets."

Jooheon grinned and said, "I gotta go hyung. Catch you later."

"Bye Jooheon," Kihyun said rather weakly, and then he watched the kid bound off into the crush of people.

He looked down at the two tickets. It was ridiculous. So what if only two of them were watching a movie. It didn't make it a date.

No, maybe what makes it a date is that he gives you flowers, and walks with his hand touching yours, and keeps himself close to you in the train…

Kihyun was stunned at himself for thinking that. But the voice saying those words hadn't sounded like his own. It had sounded like he'd imagined Hyungwon's to be.

I'm going insane. I'm imagining voices.

A light tap on Kihyun's shoulder made him jump. He was about to hit somebody until he realized it was Shownu, laden with snacks.

"Got the tickets?" he asked, handing over some of the food.

"Um, yeah," Kihyun said distractedly. He was thinking about what Jooheon had said.

"Is this okay?" Shownu asked, after a moment.

"It's fine," Kihyun answered. "We watch movies without Wonho-hyung all the time, it's nothing."

"No, I mean the snacks," Shownu said, a little awkwardly. "They're all like this because of the movie premiere. They didn't have any regular ones. I asked."

Kihyun looked down at what he was holding. The popcorn bags were bedecked in hearts. All the candy was red and heart-shaped. Even the soda cups had heart pattern on them.

He looked at Shownu, who was standing there awkwardly, and then back at the snacks. It all felt… planned. Like a drama plot Lee Minhyuk would enjoy.

Well I'm not letting it take over my life. You hear me, Minhyuk? You and Hyungwon can try and help all you like.

After all, everything was the same, wasn’t it?

"It's… okay," Kihyun forced out, but his voice sounded strangled even to himself. "It's just some packaging. Now let's go, we'll miss the beginning."

Shownu looked surprised a moment, and then smiled. Kihyun had to smile back.

They started towards the cinema hall together, and Kihyun tried to convince himself everything was like how it always was.
Investigation and Alcohol

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the late update! AO3 is killing me right now ;;

Yoo Kihyun had been possessed.

Jooheon was sure of it. Now he just had to make someone believe him.

He’d shared his theory with Changkyun, and he could tell that the guy believed him, but just refused to accept it. Jooheon understood. He hadn’t accepted it at the beginning, either. But he was sure now.

It still freaked Jooheon out, knowing there was an actual ghost in the body of someone he knew, but he was trying to get used to it. More than anything, he was just glad he could now tell when he was talking to the ghost and when he was talking to the real Kihyun. Apart from the fact that the ghost was always trying to avoid him, the ghost always spoke to Jooheon formally, and used honorifics. He might've been a ghost, but he was a polite ghost.

Jooheon had thought about talking to Shownu or Wonho, since they were Kihyun's closest friends, but finally he'd decided it would be better to confront Kihyun about it directly.

Which he definitely would. Eventually.

He wanted some proof first, something concrete, so that Kihyun wouldn't be able to deny it. But what?

Jooheon thought it over as he secretly watched Kihyun eat his lunch at a nearby table. He looked perfectly normal, sitting there with Shownu and Wonho. But Jooheon knew the truth.

He guessed what he was doing was technically spying, but Jooheon preferred to think of it as… investigating. Supernatural investigating, and there couldn't be anything wrong with that, right?

He continued… investigating Kihyun, and worked out that it actually was Kihyun, not the ghost. He was facing Shownu, and was sharing bits of his lunch with him. It wasn't apparent to strangers, but Kihyun and Shownu were really close. After a lot of… investigating, Jooheon found that the ghost preferred Wonho. They always disappeared together after lunch to a hospital, though they never mentioned why they actually went. He'd have followed them there too, but Jooheon had classes, and he wasn't failing his courses for a ghost.

So Jooheon had to settle for investigating during lunch. It was boring, but he knew it would pay off. Eventually.

For now, he just sat and nibbled his food and watched Kihyun give a chunk of his beef to Shownu.

On the other side of the table, Wonho pouted and whined something. Kihyun just laughed in reply.

*Sorry, Wonho-hyung, Jooheon thought, watching him frown. That's actually Kihyun-hyung. The ghost would've given you, probably. He seems to like you enough.*
And that's when another thought hit Jooheon. *What if the ghost isn't a 'he'…?*

"Hey! Jooheon-ah!"

Jooheon almost jumped out of his chair. He quickly looked to see if Kihyun had heard, but he seemed busy. And then he turned to find the person calling him.

"Hyung, over here," he said, trying to keep his voice down.

Minhyuk was as pretty as he was before, and again dressed in all-white. He walked up to Jooheon's table, beaming brightly, and sat down in a chair.

"I haven't seen you around since that day," Jooheon said with a grin. "How've you been? Working hard?"

"Yup," Minhyuk said with a nod. "Busy all the time. But I've seen you sitting here alone before. What's up?"

Jooheon leaned forward and said confidentially, "I'm investigating someone."

Minhyuk leaned forward too. "Who?"

Jooheon thought about what he should answer. The only person he'd shared his ghost theory with was Changkyun, and he'd been laughed at. He liked Minhyuk, and he seemed like the type of guy who'd believe him, but in the end Jooheon was only meeting him for the second time.

"Just this hyung I know," he shrugged off casually. "Tell me about your job. Your brat behaving okay?"

At that, Minhyuk's smile disappeared completely. "I'm in a mess, Jooheon," he said, his voice and features dripping with worry. "Things are getting bad. The problem should've fixed itself by now. I don't understand why it's not."

He sounded so serious Jooheon got serious too. "What happened, hyung?"

"I can't go into details," Minhyuk said. "But it's not good. I might get fired." And his face became the perfect picture of horror as he said the last word.

"I'm sure it's not that bad," Jooheon said, trying to sound soothing.

"No, you don't understand," Minhyuk said, grabbing Jooheon's arm. "In my job, when you get fired, it's literal. You actually get thrown into fire. Hellfire!"

He was getting almost hysterical, and Jooheon was getting freaked out. "Hyung, calm down," he said, trying to give him a steadying squeeze on the arm. "It can't be that bad." Except now Jooheon was wondering if the man Minhyuk worked for was a mob boss. That would make sense, especially with how Minhyuk couldn't give any details.

Minhyuk calmed down a bit. "Maybe you're right," he said. "Maybe it's just a rumor after all. I've never actually met anyone who was thrown into hellfire."

Yeah, because they'd be dead. Jooheon didn't want Minhyuk to get all hysterical again, so instead he said, "Hyung, you never returned my shoes."

"Oh, your shoes!" Minhyuk exclaimed. "I forgot all about those. Wait here."
He got up and bounded off. Jooheon noted he was wearing shoes today, plain black and white trainers. In the next moment Minhyuk disappeared into the crowd. It was so sudden it was like he'd teleported. Jooheon gave up trying to find him, and instead edged a little closer to Kihyun's table, hoping to catch some of the conversation.

It was a little difficult to hear, but Jooheon caught snippets. They were planning on going out drinking later that night, at a bar called Blacklight. Jooheon knew the place. It was pretty new, located on the other side of town. Of course, Wonho suggested it. Even Jooheon knew enough about him to know he liked a night out. The surprising thing was Kihyun looked enthusiastic. Kihyun couldn't hold his alcohol, at all, and it was a weekday the next day. Jooheon remembered when he'd bumped into Kihyun at the movies, how he said he'd been stressed recently. *Looks like he wasn't joking.*

"Jooheon-ah, your shoes."

Minhyuk had returned, carrying Jooheon's sneakers and smiling brightly. He seemed to have forgotten all about his hellfire troubles.

"Thanks, hyung," Jooheon said, taking his shoes from him. As the other man sat down, he had an idea. "Hey, let's go for a drink tonight," he said. "There's this bar named Blacklight I've been meaning to check out."

"Jooheon-ah, your shoes."

"What? No," Jooheon laughed. "I feel like going there tonight, and it'd be fun if you came too."

"Sorry, I can't," Minhyuk said. "Busy tonight."

"Aw, that's too bad," Jooheon said, and he meant it. It would've been fun to go with Minhyuk. "Something important?"

"Yup," Minhyuk answered. "I'm always busy. I'm supposed to be working even now."


"I guess," Minhyuk shrugged. He looked around a moment and then said, "I have to go now. Duty calls."

"You didn't eat anything though," Jooheon said as Minhyuk got up. "You should have something and then go."

Minhyuk looked down at the remnants of Jooheon's lunch before saying, "I already ate before I saw you sitting here. And now I really gotta go. Catch you later."

"See ya," Jooheon called out as Minhyuk walked off. He looked back at Kihyun's table to see that Wonho had left, and Kihyun was now sitting alone with Shownu. Jooheon hung around a little while longer before packing up. He had a feeling the real situation would go down that night.

"Hyung, why exactly are we here?"

"I told you, I wanted to check this place out."

"But this is so unlike you," Changkyun said. "You don't even like going to bars, and it's Tuesday."
"Yeah, thought I'd give it a try," Jooheon said, trying his best to sound casual. "Now come on."

They were at Blacklight, and the place was relatively crowded considering it was a midweek night. Jooheon was planning on accidentally bumping into Kihyun, and he thought it might look weird if he showed up alone. So he'd enlisted Changkyun's help, because the kid was never busy on weeknights. And if Kihyun somehow let it spill that he was possessed, Jooheon wanted to brag right then and there.

So he led Changkyun through the mass of people and to the bar. While Changkyun ordered, Jooheon scanned the crowd for a familiar face.

He saw Wonho first, walking with drinks in hand. At a nearby table, Shownu's dark head was visible.

"Hey, it's Wonho-hyung," Jooheon said, getting up. "Let's go say hi."

Changkyun shrugged and picked up their drinks. "I didn't know you were close with him."

"I'm not, really," Jooheon answered as they made their way past filled tables. "But he seems fun and it's never too late to get to know somebody."

"Yeah, even if you're in a coma, apparently." Changkyun said it under his breath, but Jooheon still heard him. He made a note to ask about it later.

"Hey, Wonho-hyung," Jooheon called out when he was close enough. "Coincidence seeing you here."

"Oh, hi, Jooheon-ah," Wonho said with a smile as he turned. "And Changkyun too, hello."

"You know each other?" Jooheon turned to Changkyun.

"Sort of," he answered, in that deep voice of his that made him sound so dependable. "Hello, Kihyun-hyung."

"Hello, Changkyunnie," Kihyun said, and he sounded a little tipsy already. "This is Shownu. Say hi, sweetie."

Okay, more than a little tipsy. As Shownu and Changkyun got acquainted, Wonho let Jooheon slide into the booth, so that he was sitting right across Kihyun.

Kihyun had already had a good amount to drink, Jooheon could see that. Then again, his body was so sensitive to alcohol it was impossible to tell if he'd had one glass or one bottle.

"Hyung, you okay?" Jooheon asked.

"Fine," Kihyun said, waving a hand. "I just feel kind of weird."

"I… can see that," Jooheon said tactfully, noting that Kihyun had linked arms with Shownu without realizing. Shownu either didn't realize himself, or didn't mind.

The night rolled on. Wonho was fun, and drank and chattered endlessly. Shownu drank less and talked less, but when he said something he made it worth it. Changkyun loosened up after the first few rounds and was soon laughing away with the rest of them.

But Jooheon kept his attention on Kihyun. Kihyun looked like he was having fun. He laughed when anyone said anything remotely funny, and when Changkyun randomly gave a high-pitched squeal he
almost choked with laughter. And he kept drinking.

Shownu noticed too, and started inconspicuously moving his drinks away from him. He usually passed them to Wonho, who got more and more affectionate the drunker he got, until Jooheon had to press his body against the wall to try and save himself.

Eventually Shownu got up to see the bartender, and Changkyun went with him. Wonho was too drunk to pay attention to anything. Which gave Jooheon the perfect opportunity to investigate.

"You look like you're having fun," Jooheon said, trying to sound casual.

"I am," Kihyun said, and he was definitely drunk. "Fun. Yeah. Finally."

Jooheon felt kind of bad manipulating Kihyun when he was so out of it, but he reminded himself it was a supernatural investigation, and carried on. "Why, hyung? Someone giving you problems?"

"It's that damn good-looking frog," Kihyun slurred. "He… he keeps trying to do stuff. Well I won't let him! Stupid frog. Doesn't even wash his bowl…"

*That could be about the ghost. Or it could be random drunken musing.* Jooheon tried another route. "I heard you go to the hospital during lunch."

"Hospital? Nuh-uh," Kihyun said, stretching himself over the table. "I never go. Hey, where're those drinks? The blue ones?"

"That could be about the ghost. Or it could be random drunken musing. Jooheon tried another route. "I heard you go to the hospital during lunch."

"Hospital? Nuh-uh," Kihyun said, stretching himself over the table. "I never go. Hey, where're those drinks? The blue ones?"

So it is the ghost who goes. Jooheon felt himself making some progress, and took a jump. "Why does he go, hyung? Do you know?"

But Kihyun was now focused on the drinks, or rather the lack of them. "Hey, Hoseokie-hyung," he said. "Did you have all the drinks?"

Wonho looked up from whatever reverie he was lost in and stared at him like he'd never seen him before. "Kihyun," he said eventually, and then suddenly moved to the other side of the booth, so that they were sitting next to each other. "Kihyun you're too pretty."

Jooheon was getting kind of uncomfortable with the way Wonho moved closer to Kihyun. "Hyung, you're way too drunk if you think Kihyun-hyung is pretty," he said with an awkward laugh.

Kihyun laughed but Wonho didn't seem to have heard. "Kihyun you have to stop doing this," he said, and plastered his body against Kihyun's.

Kihyun kept on laughing. And then he stopped when Wonho suddenly grabbed his face and kissed him full on the lips.

It wasn't a peck. It was a real, proper kiss, and it seemed to go on for hours while Jooheon sat frozen where he was, unable to stop them, or even look away.

And then a hand grabbed the back of Wonho's collar and yanked him away.

Suddenly Shownu was there, pulling Kihyun out of the booth and standing him up. "I think it's time to go home," he said.

Jooheon nodded, not trusting himself to speak. He wasn’t close to Shownu, but he knew him. He was big and strong, but unbelievably gentle and shy, like he knew he could be dangerous and so tried to be as nonthreatening as possible. It worked. Jooheon would never have called Shownu scary
or dangerous.

But that look in his eyes when he’d pulled Wonho away. Jooheon never wanted to see that again.

Changkyun had arrived too, standing still at a safe distance. Jooheon made brief eye-contact, and neither of them said anything.

"I'm taking Kihyun," Shownu said, and his voice was surprisingly calm and steady. "You guys put up Hoseok for the night. Okay?"

Jooheon nodded again. Kihyun was completely done, and could barely stand without Shownu's support. Wonho looked just as drunk, if not more.

Shownu looked over Wonho one last time, and Jooheon found himself watching his expression. It was impossible to read. And then he turned his gaze to Jooheon, and said, "Nothing happened, right?"

For a moment Jooheon didn't know what he meant. But then Changkyun stepped forward and said calmly, "Right."

Shownu waited until Jooheon nodded to show he understood, and then walked off, half-carrying Kihyun away.

"What's going on?" Wonho suddenly slurred.

"Nothing, hyung," Changkyun said, in that deep voice that made you trust him. "Come on, let's go home."

Wonho let himself be helped up and led through the room by Jooheon. And as Changkyun stood on the sidewalk and called for a cab, Jooheon realized that his intuition at lunch had been right. That definitely counted as a situation.
Hyungwon woke up and felt like his head was splitting in half.

It was a hangover, but beyond any hangover he'd ever had. Tiny must've been drinking last night, he thought, and it hurt to even think that much. Hyungwon suddenly felt very guilty about getting drunk on Wonho's birthday. Kihyun must've suffered.

The headache was so bad that it took Hyungwon a while to realize he wasn't in Kihyun's apartment. Then worry took the driver's seat, as Hyungwon realized he wasn't wearing a shirt either.

He got up and out of bed, using a nearby table for support. He was wearing those ripped skinny jeans Kihyun liked so much, and yep, no shirt. Instinctively he wrapped his arms around his torso. Kihyun's body was as thin as Hyungwon's own.

He was in a bedroom, messier than Kihyun's but neater than Hyungwon's. He found the door and dragged himself towards it, trying to think. Okay. Kihyun got drunk last night. And now I wake up half-naked. No big deal.

The door opened up into a bigger room, which had a TV and sofa on one end, and a kitchen on the other. And standing in that kitchen, bending over a pot of coffee, was Shownu.

Hyungwon breathed a sigh of relief. So he hadn't been kidnapped, at least.

"Good morning," Shownu said. "How're you feeling?"

"Like hell," Hyungwon groaned. He made his way to the sofa and lay down.

"You shouldn't have had so much to drink," Shownu said, walking over with a white coffee mug. "Here. Drink this."

Hyungwon took the mug and looked suspiciously at its contents. It was too black to be regular coffee. "What's this?"

"It's supposed to be your hangover cure," Shownu answered. "I've never had to make it, so it might not be right."

It didn't look right. Still, Hyungwon cautiously took a sip. Immediately he felt everything he'd ever eaten start coming back up his throat. Shownu jumped out of the way as Hyungwon rushed to find the bathroom. Fortunately Kihyun's body knew where it was, and Hyungwon let it take the lead.

After he'd thrown up more than he thought possible, Hyungwon surprisingly felt better. At least, he felt well enough to remember he was still shirtless.
He slowly made his way back to the living room, keeping his arms around himself. "Uh, hyung?" Hyungwon called when he was at the doorway. "Why do I not have a shirt?"

"Oh, it's in the wash," Shownu said from the kitchen, where he was busy making breakfast. "You threw up on it a little."

"I threw up on it…"

"Yeah, just a little," Shownu said. "You mostly threw up on me."

"Oh, my god, hyung, I'm so sorry." Hyungwon knew it wasn't him last night, but that didn't stop him feeling bad.

"It's okay, I'm just glad you waited until we'd gotten out of the taxi," Shownu said with a grin. "You can wear one of my shirts in the meantime."

"Thanks," Hyungwon said, and returned to the small bedroom. Shownu was tall and well-built, which meant his shirts were way too big on Kihyun's small frame, but Hyungwon had no choice. He kept being reminded of those scenes in movies, where the girl walks around in the morning in her boyfriend's loose shirt, and it was making him uncomfortable. It wasn't that Shownu was unattractive. He was fit and good-looking, possibly one of the handsomest guys Hyungwon had seen in a while, himself included. It was that Shownu didn't want Hyungwon walking around his apartment wearing his shirt. He wanted Kihyun.

And everyone knows it, except Tiny.

Hyungwon sighed aloud to himself. How could one person be so smart and yet so stupid?

He went back to the living room, where Shownu had breakfast ready: eggs and toast. Hyungwon sat down with his plate and smiled and said, "Thank you, hyung."

"It's nothing," Shownu said casually. "Are you sure you can eat?"

It turned out, Hyungwon could. They ate in silence for a while like they usually did, until Hyungwon finally asked, "Isn't today a Wednesday?"

Shownu nodded.

"And you don't have classes?"

"I can miss one or two, it's fine," Shownu shrugged.

Hyungwon was touched, but again very uncomfortable. He was in the middle of a moment that he was not invited to. The fact that Shownu didn't know didn't make it any better.

Well, he wants Kihyun, the least I can do is make an effort. "You shouldn't miss any," Hyungwon said, trying to sound as nagging as he imagined Kihyun. "I shouldn't be missing any either."

"Yeah, I thought of waking you up," Shownu said, "but you looked so peaceful so…” he trailed off.

Wow he has it bad. Hyungwon looked at the blushing Shownu and tried to act like he hadn't noticed, although it was hard for him to hide his smile. He went back to his breakfast and tried to look pretty as he ate. Shownu was watching, he should at least see something nice. Hyungwon had never thought of Kihyun as good-looking – he classed as above average to Hyungwon – but he seemed to do it for Shownu.
Hyungwon was in the middle of prettily sipping his coffee when Shownu asked, "Do you remember anything from last night?"

His voice sounded a little strangled, and it stuck out. "No," Hyungwon said, picking the convenient answer. "What happened?" Please don't tell me we kissed or something.

"Nothing," Shownu said. "You were drunk and kind of embarrassing. That's it."

He sounded… relieved. It was the slightest touch, but it pinged Hyungwon's senses. He thought of asking, but knew it would be no use trying to get it out of Shownu. Wonho must've been there too. I'll get it from him. If he remembers anything. Hyungwon remembered Wonho on his birthday night. That man liked a drink.

Hyungwon finished his small breakfast, washed up and then checked the time. It was past eleven, and past time he should be getting home. Shownu got Kihyun's shirt, and even saw him to the building lobby. Hyungwon was grateful, but glad when he got away from him. He liked Shownu, but as a friend. Hyungwon felt burdened in Kihyun's body around him.

As he wandered around trying to find some place he recognized, Hyungwon took out Kihyun's phone and dialed Wonho. He didn't think it likely Wonho would answer, so he was pretty surprised when the call was picked up on the third ring with a groan.

"Hello, hyung," Hyungwon said brightly. He knew what Wonho was going through and sympathized, but he couldn't help but get a little malicious pleasure out of it. "Feeling okay?"

"Kihyunnie?" Another groan. "I feel like hell."

"Last night was fun," Hyungwon said cheekily. "Let's go out for drinks again tonight."

"Screw you," Wonho said, while Hyungwon laughed. There was a pause on the line, and then Wonho said in a voice that was surprisingly sober, "Hey, do you remember what happened last night?"

"No, not at all," Hyungwon answered, now genuinely curious. "Why?"

"Nah, it's just that I don't remember anything either," Wonho said. "I was hoping you could tell me."

Hyungwon doubted that. He'd heard the brief pause right before Wonho had answered, and it was making him think. "Where are you, hyung? Home?"

"No, I'm at your hoobae's place. Jooheon's."

"What? You're at Changkyun's?" Hyungwon had not been expecting that.

"Uh, yeah," Wonho said. "They were drinking with us last night. You don't even remember that much?"

"Oh, right, yeah," Hyungwon muttered distractedly. Jooheon and Changkyun. Hyungwon always tried to avoid Jooheon on campus, because he felt like the guy always gave him a funny look when he saw him. Changkyun being there was suspicious, though. Is he spying on me again? Hyungwon hoped not. He already had one spy watching him, he didn't need another.

An idea suddenly came to Hyungwon, but he needed to be alone. "Okay, hyung, I'll see you at work."
"Okay. Are you sure you're alright?"

"I'm fine," Hyungwon said, and he meant it. "Bye."

"Bye."

Hyungwon cut the line, and started looking around for a place an angel could secretly teleport into. It was around eleven thirty on a weekday, so the streets weren't packed, but there were still some people around. Hyungwon was about to cross a narrow street when he suddenly felt a tap on his shoulder. He turned around, expecting Shownu. It was not Shownu.

"Hello," Minhyuk said brightly.

"What the hell?" Hyungwon grabbed hold of his arm and pulled him to a more secluded spot between two buildings. "I thought you weren't supposed to be seen by other people?"

"Turns out, that isn't a hard and fast rule," Minhyuk said. "I let myself be seen by a few people, and since the world didn't fall apart, I thought, what's the harm?"

Hyungwon sighed. "Whatever. Just tell me what Kihyun did last night when he was drunk."

"That sounds like something you should talk to Kihyun about," Minhyuk said. "I've said it before: I'm a spy, not a tattletale."

"Oh, you'll tattle right now," Hyungwon said with an unpleasant smile, "otherwise you'll find out exactly how long your spine is when I –"

"Geez, calm down," Minhyuk said, more irritated than intimidated. "I couldn't tell you even if I wanted to. I wasn't there."

"Really?" Hyungwon had a hard time believing that lie. "I thought you watched us 24/7?"

"I need some time off too, you know," Minhyuk said. "I was there for a while. But they were just drinking and talking, and Changkyun was there in case anything went wrong, so I just… left."

"That sounds too convenient, and too unlike you," Hyungwon said suspiciously. "You like spying on us. We're like a 24-hour drama for you. You just don't want to tell me about Kihyun's night."

"You're pretty entertaining," Minhyuk admitted. "But I wanted to make my own entertainment last night."

Now Hyungwon's curiosity was piqued. "What did you do?"

Minhyuk grinned mischievously. "If you want to know, you should follow me around."

"Disappear if you're not going to be useful," Hyungwon snapped, and started walking again.

The angel walked beside. "Oh, I'm plenty useful. Like do you know you're being followed around on campus?"

"Yeah, the pest is right next to me."

"Harsh," Minhyuk said, not hurt at all. "But no. Jooheon has been watching you."

Hyungwon stopped. "Jooheon? You mean Dimples?"
"Uh, yeah, Dimples," Minhyuk said, slightly taken by off-guard. "Mostly at lunch."

"Why would he be spying on Kihyun?"

"Beats me," Minhyuk shrugged. "He doesn't really think aloud."

Hyungwon resumed walking. "I guess maybe because I've been ignoring him. But spying on someone is pretty weird."

"Totally," Minhyuk said without a trace of irony.

"Maybe I should talk to him," Hyungwon mused. "Or, y'know, tell Kihyun to."

"Or you could ask Changkyun if he knows anything about it," Minhyuk suggested.

"No, I don't trust that kid," Hyungwon said. He found a street he knew and started walking with more purpose.

"I thought you've been friends with him for a long time."

"Which is exactly why I don't trust him," Hyungwon said. "He never says anything unless it's really serious. He thinks it's better if I work out my problems myself."

"Isn't it?" Minhyuk seemed a little confused.

"Not every damn time. Ah, here it is."

Hyungwon had finally found Kihyun's apartment building. Minhyuk disappeared as he entered the lobby, and Hyungwon found himself actually sad about it. His headache was coming back, and he tried to focus on something else. As he went up in the elevator Hyungwon remembered that Minhyuk had not told him what he did in his 'time off'. I'll have to weasel it out of him next time.

He stepped out of the elevator at his floor, turned the corner, and found Lee Jooheon waiting in front of his door.

"Jooheon-ah?" Hyungwon was surprised. "What're you doing here?"

Jooheon stared. It went on a long time, long enough for Hyungwon to get uncomfortable. "Uh, Jooheon? You okay?" He found himself speaking slowly, like Jooheon was going to snap out of it and bolt down the hallway.

He did snap out of it, but he didn't bolt. Instead he put up a smile and said, "Hello hyung. Came to see if you were okay after last night."

Hyungwon walked over to the apartment door and started unlocking it. "You could've called, you know."

"I know," Jooheon said, standing right by him. "Just thought I'd see you in person. You were completely hammered."

"I'm fine, thanks, even if I don't remember anything." Hyungwon put the keys back in his pocket and opened the door. He didn't really want to, but he knew it would look weird if he didn't, so he turned and said to Jooheon, "Come in."

"Maybe another day, I've got to get to class," Jooheon answered, and Hyungwon tried to hide how glad he was for that. "See you later, hyung."
He didn't move. Hyungwon waited for him to leave, but Jooheon stood there, smile fixed on his face as whatever thoughts were in his head kept him rooted to the spot.

"Jooheon-ah?" Hyungwon ventured cautiously.

Jooheon returned to Earth, smiled, and then walked off.

"Weird," Hyungwon said aloud as he walked into the apartment. Everyone around him was acting weird. Hyungwon sighed and dropped down into a chair. When would everything get back to normal?
"Let's go somewhere."

"Somewhere? Where?" Kihyun asked, putting plates in the sink.

"Anywhere." Shownu was elbow-deep in soap bubbles and dirty pots. "I don't want to spend a Saturday afternoon at home."

The two of them were at Shownu's place for a change, and had just finished lunch. Kihyun had cooked. That, at least, didn't change.

"We could go shopping," Kihyun suggested. "You need new curtains."

"You want to go curtain shopping?" Shownu laughed. "Seriously?"

"No, I want to take you curtain shopping," Kihyun said, giving Shownu a light shove before sitting in a dining chair. He could've shoved him with all his strength and Shownu probably wouldn't move, but Kihyun had never tried it. It might make Shownu shove him back, and Kihyun preferred all his bones unbroken.

"Why?" Shownu asked, without turning around. "You'll pick it anyway, so I don't really have to go, do I?"

That was true. Every household item in Shownu's apartment, from the linen to the dishwashing liquid to the pots and pans, Kihyun had picked out all of it. Shownu was a great, smart guy, but he did have some flaws. One of those was shopping. He couldn't find a sale or discount to save his life. In contrast, Kihyun was a master. It was just easier if he did the shopping for the both of them.

"Yeah, but you should learn how to buy these things," Kihyun insisted.

"Why? I have you."

"And when you're old and married and you still don't know where to buy a frying pan?"

Shownu didn't turn around. "I'll still have you."

Kihyun tried to picture it, but he just couldn't. Shownu married to a regular, faceless girl, and Kihyun going over to his house for dinner with his own wife... It just didn't fit. Like a puzzle with the wrong pieces. Or too many pieces.

"Anyway, I'm not going curtain shopping," Shownu said. He started on the pots. "We'll actually go somewhere fun."

"Alright then, you decide," Kihyun said, leaning back.

The conversation lapsed into silence as Shownu thought it over. Kihyun watched him. Shownu had a very attractive back. It was broad, and the firm muscles on his upper back showed through his T-shirt. It shouldn't have been possible for someone to be good-looking from behind. Well it's not like he's unattractive from the front either...

"I know," Shownu said suddenly. "That theme park near the arts university reopened, right? Let's go there."
"Huh?" Kihyun snapped out of it. *What the hell was I thinking about? "Uh, okay. Sure."

"Awesome." Shownu turned around and smiled that bright, almost innocent smile. He dried his hands and went off to get ready.

Kihyun got up and started wiping the sink and counter. He suddenly remembered Wonho. *Should I call him?* Kihyun considered it a moment, and then decided against it. Wonho had been strangely evasive for the last few days, ever since that drinks night that Kihyun could not remember a minute of. He skipped lunch, saying he had some project to work on, and even at work Wonho stayed away. According to Hyungwon's diary entry Wonho hadn't even gone to the hospital with him.

If it was something serious, of course Kihyun would find out what it was. But for now, he was fine with giving Wonho some space.

Besides, Kihyun remembered that day he and Shownu had gone to the movies. *Because I want to go with you. Only you."

Kihyun had a feeling this was one of those days again.

"Come on, let's go," Shownu said as he returned to the living room.

Kihyun put down the cloth and his thoughts with it. "Yeah," he said, turning around and putting on a smile. "Let's go."

The park was busy. It was a Saturday afternoon after all, and a lot of families had come out. A lot of couples too. Recently Kihyun had started seeing couples a lot, and it made him uncomfortable. For some reason they reminded him of Minhyuk and his disconcerting grin.

He and Shownu checked out some rides first. The Viking was monstrous, a huge, swinging giant, and Kihyun was giddy just looking at it. They had to wait a while, but finally they got to sit at one end. Kihyun and Shownu both loved thrill rides. It was one of the few things they had in common.

The rollercoaster was short, but still fun. The spinning octopus went so fast Kihyun would've worried about throwing up his lunch if he wasn't so busy enjoying himself. They went on the swinging chairs, and then decided to take a break. Kihyun bought sodas while Shownu paid for the ugly hotdogs, and then they sat together on one of the many wooden benches around the park.

Kihyun was having fun. He always did with Shownu, no matter how quiet Shownu was. They were completely different in almost everything, but they matched.

"Okay, what do you want to go on now?" Shownu asked, finishing up the last of his hotdog.

"I don't know, you decide," Kihyun said. He usually liked being in control, but today he was perfectly happy to let Shownu make the decisions.

Shownu smiled like he'd been waiting for that. "Let's get on that."

Kihyun followed the line of sight of his pointing finger straight to the top of the bungee-line. Two high platforms connected by a length of rope, on which people in pairs were attached to with thick elastic cords. The screams could be heard a mile away, which was how high the platforms seemed to be.

"No thanks, I choose life," Kihyun answered. Fast rides were one thing, but this was death separated
"It'll be fine," Shownu laughed as he got up and pulled Kihyun to his feet. "I'll be doing it too."

"Oh, yeah, that'll make me feel better while I'm plummeting to my death," Kihyun said sarcastically. "I'm going to die, but Shownu-hyung is going to die too. Much better."

"Come on, they wouldn't let people get on if it was dangerous," Shownu said, pulling Kihyun along. "Look, that couple is just about to take off—"

"Take off? It's not a plane, it's barely anything more than some string," Kihyun said, definitely not looking up.

By now the two of them were standing in line. Kihyun noted that the line was pretty short. It seemed not that many people enjoyed risking their lives on some rope and elastic.

"I don't see why I have to go with you anyway," Kihyun said. "In fact, I think I should stay down here, right on the ground. Short people aren't built for heights."

"It's for two people, though," Shownu said with a frown. "If you don't come, I have to wait for some other person without a partner."

"I'm sure there're plenty of people willing to risk death for a thrill," Kihyun said. "I'm not one of them."

"So you're sure you don't wanna go?" Shownu asked, obviously crestfallen.

"I'm sure," Kihyun said firmly, and because he felt bad for disappointing Shownu, he added, "Sorry. You'll have more fun without me, I promise."

"I doubt that," Shownu sighed. "Now where am I supposed to find a partner?"

"I'm sorry, did you say you need a partner?"

Kihyun turned around to find himself almost eye-to-eye with a pretty girl. She was young, probably close to his age, and had small, delicate features, dark long hair, and large eyes.

"My sister doesn't want to go on, so I'm a single too," she said. She smiled, batted her long eyelashes. "We could pair up, if you don't mind."

Shownu opened his mouth to speak, but Kihyun was all over it. "I'm sorry, we're going together," he said and, just to make sure she got the point, he grabbed Shownu's arm.

The girl looked disappointed. "Oh, okay," she said. "I'll find someone else then."

_Yeah, go find someone else._ Kihyun watched her walk away, feeling oddly triumphant.

"You changed your mind pretty quick," Shownu said with a grin. "I thought you didn't want to get on with me."

"Why, you want to pair up with her?" Kihyun raised an eyebrow.

"No, I'm glad you changed your mind," Shownu said. "But I feel bad for her. She still needs a partner."

"She doesn't need a partner, she was just hitting on you." Sometimes Kihyun felt like Shownu was
"Wow, really? Maybe I should've gone with her then," Shownu said with a smile. "She was pretty."

"Not really," Kihyun said. "She was too tall for a girl. She was practically my height."

"That's not a problem for me."

Kihyun just sighed. Girls hit on Shownu all the damn time. He should've been used to it by now, but it still annoyed him. It wasn't that he was jealous of Shownu. Shownu was tall, handsome and well-built, on top of being a sweet guy, and he deserved every bit of attention he got. It was just... annoying.

"You're still gonna get on the bungee-line with me, right?" Shownu asked suddenly.

"Of course, I said I would," Kihyun answered. He was a man, he kept his word.

"Good," Shownu said with a smile. "Thank you."

He looked so pleased that Kihyun found himself getting a little flustered. "It's nothing," he said, looking straight ahead. Kihyun could feel his face heating up, and it made him angry. Your body was not supposed to betray you like that.

But nothing compared to the betrayal Kihyun's body pulled after he got in the bare metal elevator that would take them to the platform. He looked down through the metal grate that was the elevator's floor, and his knees suddenly gave away. Shownu grabbed him before he fell and held him steady.

"You okay?" Shownu asked. "You can go down if you want. I don't mind."

"I'm okay," Kihyun said, straightening. "I'm doing this."

But Kihyun was really, really regretting opening his big mouth. His brain kept thinking over scenarios in which he went splat on the ground. He thought about Hyungwon. What would happen to him if Kihyun died? Would he die too? Or would his soul return to his body? Then at least one good thing would come out of Kihyun's stupidity.

He wondered if Minhyuk could use whatever angel powers he had and save them. Kihyun doubted it. More likely, the next time he'd see Minhyuk would be in a big, empty white place.

And then I'll wake up in Changkyun's body. The thought was so random Kihyun almost laughed aloud. It actually didn't seem too bad. Changkyun was handsome and had a nice voice and he studied aerospace engineering. Kihyun had always thought the subject was interesting.

"Kihyun, are you okay?" Shownu asked quietly.

"Huh? I'm okay, why?" Kihyun's voice came out oddly high-pitched.

"You're smiling."

"I'm okay," Kihyun repeated for what felt like the thousandth time. Maybe if he said it enough times it would actually come true.

Shownu didn't say anything. But as the elevator came up to the platform and stopped, Kihyun felt Shownu's hand slowly creep around his own. He would've pulled away, just because of how it looked, but he couldn't. The warmth of Shownu's grip was steadying. Just Shownu's presence was calming, like solid earth beneath his feet. For a brief moment Kihyun wished Shownu would hug
him, like he’d done that February afternoon when it had been cold and Kihyun’s breath had misted in the air.

And then Kihyun snapped out of it. He shoved that thought out of his mind and tried to pretend like it had never been there. But he didn’t pull his hand out of Shownu’s.

He had to, eventually, as the instructor told them what they could and couldn’t do, and then they put on all the safety gear. Kihyun was strapped next to Shownu, and as they attached the two of them to the main line he could feel his heart thudding in his chest.

Kihyun could feel Shownu’s eyes on him, and he firmly fixed his own gaze on the empty air. He didn’t want to look at him. His brain was telling him it would be dangerous, more dangerous than stepping out into nothing with just some ropes and elastic.

He looked away, trying to think of something, anything other than Shownu’s arms around him, when he felt Shownu take his hand again. But this time Shownu entwined his fingers around Kihyun’s, locking their hands together. Kihyun couldn’t pull away even if he wanted to. He didn’t think he wanted to.

He looked at Shownu for an explanation, but he got a question instead. “Are you okay?” Shownu asked, and this time it sounded different from before.

Kihyun’s lips couldn’t form words. He nodded.

Shownu smiled. “Then let’s go.”
Something was up with Shin Wonho. Hyungwon was going to find out what.

Wonho had been avoiding him. Or he was avoiding Kihyun, which led to him avoiding Hyungwon. Whatever it was, Hyungwon had had enough of it. Wonho had stopped eating lunch with him, saying he had some project or something to work on, which led to uncomfortable lunches alone with Shownu. He even tried his best to stay away from Hyungwon while they were at work, which made it almost impossible for Hyungwon to cope with Kihyun’s hellish job.

Hyungwon had hoped Kihyun would notice and take some initiative. But no. Kihyun was too busy playing couple-couple with Shownu. Hyungwon had read his very short line about going to the amusement park with narrowed eyes. It was obvious something was bothering Wonho, and Kihyun was ignoring it to go on a date.

Well Hyungwon wasn’t. He’d wanted Kihyun to ask Wonho about it, since Kihyun had known him longer, but Kihyun could no longer be trusted with it. Kihyun’s journal entries were getting shorter and shorter too, which made Hyungwon curse himself for ever helping him out with Shownu.

He stalked down the hallway in a livid mood. He had a headache. He’d been getting a lot of those lately. Hyungwon wondered if it was anything to do with lack of sleep. In his own body, Hyungwon got a proper amount of sleep, with occasional naps during the day. Kihyun had arranged his schedule so that he got no naps at all. It was horrible.

Maybe the lack of sleep is catching up with his body. That oddly satisfied Hyungwon. Kihyun deserved a couple of headaches.

Hyungwon was walking to the library in the hope of getting some sleep. No one would disturb a guy sleeping with his head down on a table, right? He hoped not. He had less than an hour gap between classes, and he wanted to use it productively.

He was in the hallway outside the library when he looked up and made direct eye-contact with Lee Jooheon.

Damn. Hyungwon considered running away and pretending like he hadn’t seen him, except he obviously had. He still thought about it, and then he thought about that night Kihyun had gotten drunk. The night that Wonho claimed he couldn’t remember. Hyungwon didn’t think it was a coincidence that Wonho had started avoiding him after that. Something must’ve happened, and Jooheon probably knew what. He remembered how weird Jooheon had acted the morning after, when he’d waited outside Kihyun’s apartment to talk to him. Something definitely happened.

“Hey, Jooheon-ah,” Hyungwon said, putting up a smile and walking up to him. The hallway was deserted apart from the two of them, and Hyungwon was glad for it. If something legitimately serious had happened, he didn’t want anyone overhearing it.
Jooheon stared at him for a moment like the words didn’t register. And then he took a deep breath and said, “I know you’re not Kihyun-hyung.”

Hyungwon’s initial instinct was to swear, really loudly. His second thought was to turn around and run. Fortunately, his brain kicked in, and he forced out a laugh and said, “What?”

“You can’t fool me, I know the truth,” Jooheon soldiered on, though he looked kind of terrified. “I know I can’t convince anyone else right now, but I know. You’re not Kihyun-hyung.”

“Jooheon-ah, are you okay?” Hyungwon tried to sound concerned, but inside he was panicking. What the hell? What the hell? How does he know?

“I’m fine, and you can stop pretending,” Jooheon said, and yup, he looked completely terrified. “I don’t want you to get exorcised or something. I just wanna know what you’re doing with Kihyun-hyung’s body.”

“Okay, this is ridiculous,” Hyungwon said. “Exorcised? What are you talking about?”

“I know you’re a ghost,” Jooheon said. “Don’t even pretend like you’re not.”

“I am not a ghost!” That, at least, was true. Hyungwon was now genuinely confused. “Where would you get something like that?”

“You told me yourself,” Jooheon said, lifting his chin. “No, actually, Kihyun-hyung did. When he got drunk he spilled the whole thing.”

Hyungwon froze. Yoo Kihyun you–

And then he caught the look in Jooheon’s eye. The guy was bluffing.

But it was too late. Jooheon had seen Hyungwon go dumb in shock, had seen his eyes widen, and now he knew he was right. “You are a ghost, I knew it!” He looked around to see if anyone had heard, and then dropped his tone. “I knew it! Now tell me why you’re possessing Kihyun-hyung.”

“I’m not,” Hyungwon said, but it sounded weak, even to himself. “I’m not a ghost…”

“Well you’re not Kihyun-hyung,” Jooheon said. “So who are you?”

Hyungwon opened his mouth to speak, even though he had no idea what he was going to say next, when all of a sudden a pretty young man in all white stepped out of the library and accosted Jooheon.

“Hyung?” Jooheon was surprised.

Hyungwon was even more surprised. Minhyuk? What the hell was Minhyuk doing here? And how did Jooheon even know him?

“Jooheon, hello,” Minhyuk said with a bright smile. “I need to talk to you. Can I talk to you right now? Oh, hi, Kihyun.”

Hyungwon stared at him wordlessly, and then slowly lifted a hand and waved.

“Right now?” Jooheon looked from Minhyuk to Hyungwon, and then back again. “I’m kind of–”

“It’s urgent, I mean it,” Minhyuk said. “Sorry Kihyun, I need to borrow Jooheon for a minute.” He grabbed Jooheon’s arm and started dragging him away. The angel glanced over his shoulder once,
and Hyungwon got the hint and fled.

When he was a safe distance away, Hyungwon stopped and went over the whole scene in his head. *Okay. Jooheon knows I’m not Kihyun. He also knows Minhyuk, God knows how. Now what?*

He had no idea. He just knew he couldn’t go to the library now. Jooheon might be there, ready to confront him again. So instead Hyungwon took the stairs down and walked out of the building, with the vague idea of finding the university’s other library, which was apparently in the same building as the mechanical engineering rooms.

The air outside was pleasantly cool. The harsh February cold had dissipated quickly, and March was turning out to be a good month. It was the right weather for a light blanket, a cup of a coffee and a good book. Hyungwon wondered if he’d enjoy the weather more in his own body. Kihyun’s body took colder temperatures better.

He was musing on it when he turned and saw Wonho sitting on a bench, tapping his phone.

All thoughts about Jooheon and Minhyuk and Kihyun left Hyungwon’s mind. He strode over, sat right beside Wonho and said, “Hello, hyung.”

Wonho jumped, and then turned to Hyungwon and said, “Uh, hi, Kihyun.”

He moved away a bit. He probably tried to do it inconspicuously, but Hyungwon noticed. “Busy?”

“Kind of,” Wonho said, putting away his phone. “I have a class in a couple of minutes, I should go…” He started getting up.

Hyungwon put a hand on his arm and pulled him back down. “No you don’t. It’s 10:20. Classes start on the hour.”

Wonho squirmed guiltily. “I actually have a project–”

“You don’t have a project either,” Hyungwon said. He was genuinely, truly hurt. Wonho wanted to get away from him so much that he was even using such transparent excuses. There was no point in being indirect anymore. He looked right into Wonho’s eyes and asked, “Did I do anything? To you?”

“What? No, of course not,” Wonho said, surprised. “Why would you think that?”

“Because you’re avoiding me,” Hyungwon said flatly. “Really obviously, too. If you wanted to get away from me so badly couldn’t you at least come up with some better excuses?”

Now Wonho looked guilty. “You didn’t do anything…” he petered off, and then shuffled uncomfortably.

He looked so uncomfortable that Hyungwon laid off a bit. “Then what’s bothering you, hyung?”

“Nothing,” Wonho said, trying to sound casual and failing miserably. “I’m just… thinking about some things.”

“Things you can’t tell me?”

“No, it’s nothing important,” Wonho brushed off. “Just had some stuff on my mind. How are things with you?”

It was such a sudden change of direction Hyungwon was taken aback for a moment. And then he
said, “Things with me are pretty good.”

“Good,” Wonho said, and smiled. “You know, White Day was this Saturday. Do anything special?”

Hyungwon thought about it. Saturday was a Kihyun day, what did he do on Saturday?

_He went on a goddamn amusement park date._ Hyungwon was actually kind of jealous. He realized Wonho was still looking at him for an answer, so he said, “No, nothing special.” He knew there was no reason why he shouldn’t say he was out with Shownu, but Hyungwon just didn’t want to say it. Not to Wonho. “And you? Went around giving chocolate to your legions of female fans?”

Wonho laughed. “Yes, exactly. I just love buying chocolate for imaginary people.”

Hyungwon smiled. That was better. Wonho should be laughing and smiling, not squirming in discomfort. He had the kind of smile that could make other people smile just looking at it. When Wonho was really pleased his cheeks took on a bit of pink, like blooming roses.

“I’m going to the hospital at lunchtime,” Hyungwon said suddenly. “You’re going to come with me, right?”

“Yeah,” Hyungwon said. _He’s stopped smiling._ “Are you going to come with me?”

“I don’t know…” Wonho looked uncertain. “I think I might just go to work.”

“No, you’re going to come with me,” Hyungwon said, and he grabbed Wonho’s arm in case he thought of running away again. “I will be incredibly upset if you don’t go. I mean it. I’ll even buy your flowers.”

He waited for Wonho’s answer. He would wait for as long as he had to.

“Hyung!”

_Oh shit._ Hyungwon didn’t need to turn around. He knew Jooheon’s voice.

“Okay, I have to go now,” Hyungwon said quickly, getting up. “I mean it, hyung. I want to see you there.” He couldn’t wait for an answer. He walked off as fast as he could, and when he’d entered a building and gotten out of Wonho’s view, Hyungwon ran. Kihyun’s body was slow and had a stamina level of -100, but it didn’t matter. Jooheon wasn’t following him, thank goodness.

He made his way to his favorite place in this horrible university—the library—and took a seat at a small table hidden in the corner. And then Hyungwon put his head on the table and closed his eyes, and felt his problems growing with his headache.

Wonho was there at lunch. Hyungwon considered that a victory. As he sat down, Shownu asked, “Done with your project?”

Everyone at the table knew there was no project, but Wonho still smiled and nodded. “I’ll be going to Lady Mary Memorial today too,” he said, with a brief look at Hyungwon.

“Good,” Shownu said, and oddly, he looked like he meant it. Hyungwon thought that weird. Why did Shownu care so much whether Wonho went to see Hyungwon’s body or not? He thought about asking Shownu about it, but decided not to. He didn’t like talking about himself, not like that.
Lunch was unusually silent, but a lot was being said. Hyungwon was aware of an unspoken conversation going on over his head. Shownu and Wonho kept exchanging glances, looks that Hyungwon was unable to decipher. One thing was obvious, though. Wonho was not comfortable. He didn’t shift around in his seat or pick at his food, but it was still visible. Hyungwon wanted to bluntly ask what the hell was going on, but he knew better than to do that.

He and Wonho left for the hospital right after. The journey was awkward too. Hyungwon noticed Wonho keeping his distance, even when Hyungwon tried to initiate a conversation. Finally Hyungwon gave up and just stood stonily in the subway compartment. He was trying to be patient, but it was frustrating. It was obvious Wonho had a problem with him, why couldn’t he just come out and say it?

Hyungwon almost straight out said it on the way to the flower shop, but stopped when he noticed Wonho was still wearing the bracelet he’d given him. Hyungwon was almost embarrassed to admit how much that appeased him.

The pretty male florist smiled at Wonho like he always did, and Wonho smiled back. He always did, out of politeness (and the flimsy hope he’d get a discount) and Hyungwon never minded before, but this time he didn’t like it. As they left, Hyungwon shot the florist a look, which made the pretty young man raise an eyebrow and give an amused smile. Hyungwon never hated being in Kihyun’s body more. In his own body Hyungwon could have matched the florist in visuals. In Kihyun’s he was just a short, squinting, jealous guy.

In the hospital elevator, Wonho finally broke the stifling silence and said, “Can I ask you a question?”

“You mean apart from that one?” Hyungwon was relieved for the conversation. “Sure.”

“Why don’t you ever go inside his room?” Wonho asked. “You just wait for me outside every day. Why?”

Hyungwon didn’t know how to answer. What could he say? That he hated looking at himself just lying there lifeless? That it made him feel even more unwanted and out-of-place than usual?

“It’s just weird,” he said eventually. “Because… I’ve seen him walking around and doing stuff and—” He stopped, and then quickly added, “I mean, you have too, but… it’s just weird.”

“I guess so,” Wonho sighed. “I’ve actually seen him more in a coma than not.” He laughed a brief, bitter laugh.

*I am right here.* Hyungwon almost said it aloud. But the elevator gave a ding as it reached their floor, and the soft sound stopped him. This floor was rarely busy, and Hyungwon knew it well by now. They walked down the corridor to his room, and then by unspoken agreement like always, Wonho went in while Hyungwon waited for him outside.

For a moment he’d wanted nothing more than to tell Wonho everything. Everything about himself, about Kihyun and Minhyuk, about this whole ridiculous mess. Somehow Hyungwon knew everything could be sorted out if he just told Wonho about it all. What was the worst that could happen? Jooheon already knew—or, at least, he deeply suspected—and Hyungwon had already told Changkyun. Minhyuk walked around pretending to be a regular person. So what was wrong if he just told Wonho?

But Hyungwon knew he wouldn’t. He had seen the look Jooheon had given him when he’d been confronted. There was fear there, yes, but underneath there had been another look. That Hyungwon
was wrong. Not his words or his thoughts, but his entire existence was wrong. That he shouldn’t be here, that he should’ve just gone from that empty white place straight to heaven or hell, wherever he belonged. Because he didn’t belong here.

Changkyun had accepted it because Changkyun was Changkyun and he had an unusual mind. Kihyun had accepted it because he had no other choice. But Hyungwon could see that look in Changkyun’s eyes sometimes too, even if the kid himself didn’t know it was there. And he could feel Kihyun getting more and more impatient.

The headache was creeping back up on Hyungwon, and he massaged his temples to try and alleviate it. It scared him sometimes, how used to Kihyun’s body he had become. He no longer felt weird looking at those short fingers, or feeling that rough brown hair. Mirrors still freaked him out, but he had a horrible feeling one day he’d be used to those too.

One day. I hope I can get back to my body before that day ever comes.

Hyungwon jerked his hand up. He looked up and down the corridor, all previous thoughts gone. There was nothing nearby. But something had definitely touched his left hand. It was a light touch, but he had felt it clearly. Hyungwon rubbed at his hand as he felt a shiver go down his spine. His soul was a parasite in another person’s body. Nothing should have creeped him out, but that definitely did. He wondered for a moment if it was a ghost, since he was in a hospital after all, and then almost laughed at the irony of it. Hyungwon was halfway to ghostdom. The thought sucked out any cheer he might’ve had in him.

Wonho chose that exact moment to reenter the hallway. He looked at Hyungwon rubbing his hand, and then into his eyes, and for a second a strange expression crossed his face.

Hyungwon didn’t break his gaze. Ask me if I’m okay. Ask me if anything’s wrong, and I’ll tell you.

They stood like that for a few moments, and then finally Wonho spoke.

“Let’s go, Kihyun.”

A wry smile spread on Hyungwon’s face, and he followed Wonho out of the hospital.
Forgive me, this chapter was so hard for me to write ;; It is, frankly, not the greatest. Sorry Wonho :( 

What did you do when you and your best friend fall in love with the same person?

Wonho knew what he should do. It was Shownu and Kihyun after all. It had always been them, even if no one said it aloud. Wonho had met Kihyun first, but it had been only a few weeks after that Shownu and Kihyun had become… *Shownu and Kihyun*. Wonho had thought it hilarious at first, how the two of them either didn’t notice or just didn’t say it, but he’d gotten used to it. He had never liked Kihyun like that, and though he had felt like a third wheel sometimes in the beginning, he’d become comfortable with the dynamics after a while. It worked.

Wonho knew what he should do. He should back off, spend some time away from Kihyun and let his stupid thoughts sort themselves out. And he thought he could do it. He really thought he’d just get over it eventually, and then look back at this time and laugh about how ridiculous he’d been.

And then Wonho had gotten drunk one Tuesday night and ruined everything.

He couldn’t remember all of that night, but he remembered enough. He remembered Kihyun’s lips against his, how soft they’d been. He remembered Kihyun’s skin underneath his fingertips, smooth and warm, and how his body had felt against his own.

Wonho couldn’t stop remembering it. The fragmented scene kept replaying in his head, and a small part of him was angry at himself for drinking so much and wiping away his memory.

But one part he remembered perfectly. Shownu had grabbed Wonho, yanking him away. That should have convinced Wonho even more of what he should do. But all he could think about was how it was Shownu that had broken the kiss. Not Kihyun.

That was it. It would be easier for Wonho if he knew that Kihyun wanted to be with Shownu. But he didn’t know that anymore.

Wonho didn’t think he was an idiot, not more than the usual person. In fact, he considered himself perceptive. And he noticed that sometimes Kihyun just was not comfortable around Shownu. Kihyun was more attentive and affectionate to Wonho than he was to Shownu, something Wonho had never experienced before and never imagined he would. Kihyun had always been nice to him, in that mean, pestering way of his. But this was affection, and there was something… distinct about it, something Kihyun usually only reserved for Shownu.

No, Wonho was not an idiot, but neither was Shownu. He had noticed it too, and Wonho was aware of him doing what he could to take up as much of Kihyun’s attention as he could. Sometimes it worked. But sometimes it didn’t.

Since Tuesday night, the air between Wonho and Shownu had frosted over. Kihyun didn’t remember anything, and was completely clueless. Shownu hadn’t said anything outright, but had
sent Wonho enough silent, clear signals. *Back off.*

Wonho was trying. But he didn’t know how much longer he could.

He was spending a lot of time alone recently. Shownu got it, and kept his distance. Kihyun did not. The day before he had frankly asked Wonho what was wrong, and narrowed his eyes when Wonho told him everything was fine. The day before that he had pestered Wonho into going to the hospital with him. Wonho knew that eventually Kihyun would force it out of him. He hoped something would happen before that, his feelings disappearing being the preferred choice.

He trudged through the cafeteria, spotted Shownu and Kihyun at their usual table, and made his way toward them. Lunchtime was the worst. Spending time alone with Kihyun was dangerous, but it was worse with Shownu there too. His presence made Wonho feel even guiltier.

“You’re late,” Kihyun said as Wonho took a seat. “Another project?”

That was sarcastic. “No, I just don’t schedule every second of my life like you,” Wonho said with a grin.

“You should,” Kihyun said, putting a kimbap into his mouth. “We have work right after lunch.”

“How could I ever be late when you nag me every day?”

Kihyun smiled. It was on Kihyun’s face, but it was a distinctly un-Kihyun smile. Wonho quickly turned back to his lunch and concentrated on it. He was aware of both Shownu and Kihyun looking at him, with very different feelings.

They ate in silence for a while. For a moment Wonho thought he could safely make it through this lunch, when Kihyun suddenly said, “Hyung, you have something on your face.”

He looked up, expecting to see Kihyun wiping at Shownu’s face, and was instead greeted by Kihyun leaning across the table and dabbing at the corner of his lip with a napkin.

Wonho froze. Kihyun’s movement was surprisingly awkward. He sat back down in his seat, and his cheeks were definitely tinged with pink. That was the worst. It gave Wonho ideas.

“Okay, I’m done,” Kihyun said quickly. “Hyung? Coming with me?”

“Uh… I’ll catch up,” Wonho said, keeping his eyes on Shownu. Kihyun got the hint and left.

“You should go,” Shownu said, going back to his rice as soon as Kihyun was gone. “You’ll be late.”

“No, I have time,” Wonho answered. He shifted uneasily. He was with his best friend and he felt horribly uncomfortable, but he had to do this. “Is there… anything you want to say to me?”

“No,” Shownu said, still busy eating.

“Are you sure?” Wonho tried again. “Nothing? Nothing you want to say, or want me to say…?”

Shownu swallowed, put his chopsticks down slowly and looked up. He locked eye-contact with Wonho. “No. What do you want me to say?”

Wonho felt his throat dry up. *Say something,* a part of his brain urged. *You have to say something right now, or it’ll all just get worse.*
“Nothing,” he finally said. “Nothing at all. I’ll see you later.”

Shownu looked at Wonho a second longer, and then went back to eating. Wonho fled the cafeteria. He had been a coward, he knew, but he just couldn’t handle a second more of it. Why couldn’t Shownu just say something? Why was he waiting for Wonho to say it himself? Wonho didn’t think he could, not with Shownu looking at him like that.

Kihyun was waiting by the university gates, and gave a small smile when he spotted Wonho. “That didn’t take long,” he said.

Wonho just shrugged, and Kihyun didn’t pursue it further. That was another thing. The usual Kihyun would have poked him about it, or at least tried to stare it out of his brain. This kind of patient, gentle approach was so un-Kihyun.

As they walked towards the subway station, Wonho found himself fiddling with the bracelet Kihyun had given him for his birthday. That was un-Kihyun too. Kihyun had said he’d just bought it randomly at a flea market, but Wonho didn’t believe that. The bracelet… felt precious. It had obviously been worn before, but it was in good shape, like the person had taken care of it. Wonho was sure he’d never seen Kihyun wearing it, though. It was another Kihyun-mystery he found himself thinking about more and more.

The subway ride was awkward. Wonho found that it was hard talking with Kihyun without Shownu’s presence. At every second he wanted to ask him if he really didn’t remember anything from that night, or if he was just pretending he didn’t. He didn’t know what would be worse. It was very like Kihyun, looking away from things that made him feel uncomfortable, like they’d never happened. Right then Wonho almost wished he could do the same.

At the flower shop Wonho let the florist pick a bouquet while Kihyun wandered around. The florist seemed kind of distracted about something too. He still smiled at Wonho, but it seemed kind of halfhearted.

“You alright?” Wonho asked after the florist returned the wrong change.

“Ah? Me?” The pretty young man seemed surprised at the concern, and smiled as he counted out the money again. “Fine. A little distracted. Have a good day.”

He’d given the wrong change again, but Wonho accepted it, smiled, and walked out of the shop, Kihyun beside him. He’d noticed Kihyun watching his conversation with the florist, but neither of them said anything about it. Wonho wondered a little whether it was jealousy he’d seen in Kihyun’s look, and then berated himself for wishing that it was.

Neither of them said anything at all, not until they were at the third floor of the hospital, and Kihyun finally said, “I’ll wait out here.”

He didn’t need to say anything, since he always waited out there, but Wonho was glad he did. “Okay,” he said, and then walked into the hospital room.

It was the same. Wonho had come to this place every day for over a month, and it was always the same. Soft sunlight coming in through large windows, white curtains stiffly framing either side. The room was big, bigger than it needed to be, with only three pieces of furniture in it—table, chair and bed. And in that bed, one person, looking so calm and peaceful that he seemed like he was only sleeping.

Wonho went through his usual routine. He threw out the old flowers, put in the new ones. He
opened up the window, letting fresh, cold air in. And then he sat down in the chair by the bed.

In the bed, same as he always was, was Hyungwon. His dark hair fell over his forehead and his face was calm, lips gently parted. Wonho still couldn’t get over how peaceful he looked, like he was napping. Like any minute he’d get stir, rub his eyes and sit up. And then he’d look at Wonho with a confused expression and say, “Who are you?”

Sometimes Wonho forgot that he didn’t really know Hyungwon, and that Hyungwon definitely didn’t know him. He’d been visiting him daily for over a month, it was natural he felt kind of close to him, even if Hyungwon was unconscious all that time. The conversations were one-sided, but they were there.

“Um, hey,” Wonho started awkwardly. He still felt a little weird talking to a coma patient, but apparently sometimes people could hear things when they were in a coma, so he still had to try. “Back again. I’m doing pretty good. I’m guessing you… are not.”

It was such a stupid thing to say Wonho wanted to smack himself in the head, even if no one heard him say it. He cleared his throat and was about to go on some useless chatter, when he suddenly stopped.

“I need you to wake up,” Wonho said, and he surprised even himself with how earnest he was. “Right now. I need you to wake up. Because if this thing with Kihyun goes on any longer, I won’t be able to stop myself, and I’ll just end up hurting both Kihyun and Hyunwoo and…” He trailed off, took a breath. “I just really need you to wake up.”

Wonho didn’t think he was a romantic. He was just the type of person who went all in when it came to romance. When he fell for someone, he gave them every inch and corner of his heart, whether they wanted it or not. And he could feel it happening. Wonho could feel Kihyun grabbing at his heart, claiming it bit by bit, while he stood and watched powerlessly.

Which is why Wonho needed Hyungwon to wake up. Because somehow he knew the only person who could stop Kihyun was the stranger in front of him.

Wonho sat there for a few more moments, and then leaned forward and touched Hyungwon’s left hand. It was part of his every day routine. Hyungwon didn’t know him, and he was unconscious, so of course Wonho would never do anything more than that. But he still felt the need to touch him. A pat on the hand… that was okay, right?

And that was it. Wonho took one last look at Hyungwon’s serene face, and then he left the hospital room.

Outside, Kihyun stood leaning against the wall, gazing down curiously at his left hand.

“Hey,” Wonho said, when he didn’t look up. “Everything alright?”

The auburn head jerked up, surprised, and when Kihyun met Wonho’s eyes he smiled. A warm, almost gentle smile, one that made Wonho’s heart thud in his chest. “I’m fine,” he said. “Just have a headache. Been getting those a lot recently.”

“Is it bad?” Wonho asked, concerned.

“No, it’s fine,” Kihyun said, waving a hand lightly. “My schedule catching up to me, I guess.”

“Are you sure?” Wonho asked. “We’re at a hospital, you know. This is the ideal place to say you’re not feeling okay.”
Kihyun laughed. “Hyung, I’m fine. Thank you for caring, though.” He put an arm around Wonho and gave him a brief squeeze.

It was probably meant to be a friendly action. But Wonho could feel warmth rushing to his cheeks, and he quickly busied himself with his sleeves, turning away so that Kihyun wouldn’t see. He had a feeling he’d noticed, though. He could feel Kihyun’s eyes on him, watching him almost intently. They walked up to the elevators like that, Wonho still awkward, Kihyun still watching him.

The elevator came up to the floor with a ding, and opened up to reveal no one inside. The two of them stepped in, and as the doors closed, Wonho felt Kihyun’s hand brush against his.

He almost said something, but managed to stop himself. Wonho glanced at Kihyun, but those sharp dark eyes were watching the floor number. But Wonho refused to believe he hadn’t done it on purpose. He had to have done it on purpose. Wonho kept glancing at Kihyun, waiting for some sort of sign. He didn’t know what he’d do if he actually got one. But Kihyun never sent any signal. The elevator doors opened and he stepped out, and Wonho followed, a little confused.

It was nothing. Nothing. His hand just touched mine. It was nothing. But it didn’t feel like nothing. It should have, but it didn’t. Kihyun grabbed Wonho’s hands all the time. When it was cold and Kihyun was in an especially motherly mood, he’d rub Wonho’s hands to keep them warm, before scolding him for not wearing mittens. Wonho had never thought of it as anything special. It was just Kihyun being annoying in a way he liked.

But that in the elevator wasn’t Kihyun being annoying. That had felt like something else. Something… un-Kihyun.

The more Wonho tried to ignore it, the more it stuck in his head. Like the memories of that drunken night when his brain had shut down and his body had taken over.

And, like every time he thought about, the same question came back. What would have happened if Hyunwoo wasn’t there?

“Hey, hyung, are you okay?”

Wonho snapped out of it to find Kihyun looking at him with a smile. It was supposed to be a joking smile, but there was a touch of real concern behind it.

“Oh, yeah, just spaced out a bit,” Wonho said, putting up a smile of his own. “You know, thinking.”

“What?” Kihyun asked it innocently, but Wonho could tell he was curious.

“About what?” Kihyun asked it innocently, but Wonho could tell he was curious.

“Nothing, really,” Wonho shrugged. “Just… stuff.”

“Okay.” Kihyun didn’t say any more as they walked out of the hospital, back towards the subway station. They walked together like that for a minute or two, when Kihyun suddenly asked, “You sure everything is alright, hyung?”

He sounded so serious Wonho was slightly taken aback. “Yeah. I was just thinking about nothing.”

Kihyun stopped walking, and Wonho did too. “You’d tell me, right?” Kihyun asked. “You’d say something if anything was wrong? Are you sure you’re okay?”

He was looking at Wonho so intently. Like he knew what Wonho was thinking, he just wanted him to say it himself. Wonho just stared back at his searching eyes, those eyes with the lightest touch of brown. A light fade, but enough to warm his eyes into something Wonho had never seen before.
“Everything’s fine,” Wonho said, and it might have been the biggest lie he’d ever told.
Kihyun got up in the morning, washed up, checked his bag, and then opened Hyungwon’s diary entry.

It was short, and to the point.

*Talk to Wonho. Something’s up. He keeps avoiding us, and I’m pretty sure something went down between him and Shownu. You’re his friend. Talk to him.*

That made Kihyun angry. Hyungwon thought Kihyun didn’t realize something was bothering Wonho? Of course he did. But he knew when to nag and when not to, and he’d decided this was something that he shouldn’t mess with. Wonho was upset over something, and he deserved some space to try and get over it without Kihyun breathing down his neck.

And that second line. *He keeps avoiding us?* There was something about that line Kihyun really, really didn’t like.

He read the message through again, and this time something caught his eye.

*Something went down between him and Shownu.*

This, Kihyun didn’t realize. He had noticed some unspoken conversation between the two of them, but he’d assumed it was Shownu attempting to figure out the reason why Wonho was acting weird. It had never crossed his mind that Shownu could be the reason.

Kihyun made a mental note to ask Shownu about it. He didn’t know what he’d do if Shownu denied it. Shownu rarely hid anything from Kihyun, so when he actually did Kihyun was lost.

He went to kitchen and started getting breakfast ready. Kihyun had already taken out the eggs and was beating them when he heard Shownu enter the apartment. He turned around, whisk in hand, ready to threaten Shownu with withholding breakfast if he didn’t spill, when he saw what was in Shownu’s hand.

It was a flower.

*You big dumb…* Kihyun thought he’d swear, but to his own surprise, found himself grinning instead.

“What is that?” he asked, trying to keep his facial expression under check.

“Um, it’s a daffodil,” Shownu said. He shuffled his feet. “There was this guy selling them, so I thought…” he trailed off, shifted awkwardly again.
It was almost a replay of that day that felt so long ago, when Shownu had turned up with a single snow-white lily. That time Kihyun had just laughed and teased him, thought it nothing significant. But that day had passed.

“You can’t just randomly go around flowers like that, hyung,” Kihyun said, but it was hard trying to sound reproachful when he was about to start smiling again at any second. “Go and whisk the eggs.”

Shownu stood where he was, looking a little lost. He held onto the flower, stared for a moment like he hadn’t heard, and then finally said, “What?”

Now Kihyun couldn’t hide the grin. “Go whisk the eggs,” he repeated clearly, and then he held out his hand.

Shownu looked from Kihyun’s hand, down to the daffodil, and then back again. And then he handed the flower over.

Their fingers brushed against each other as Kihyun took the flower from him, and he faltered a bit. He tried not to show it as he searched for something to put the daffodil in. Finally he found an old bottle, filled half of it up with water and slipped the flower in. It took him a moment to realize this was the same bottle he’d put the lily in. He thought about that a second, and then returned to the kitchen to put the bottle down on the dining table.

The eggs had been thoroughly whisked, and now Shownu was busy with the coffee. Kihyun didn’t say anything as he started making the omelets. Shownu didn’t say anything either as breakfast was prepared, and then the two of them were sitting at the table.

Finally, halfway through the meal, Kihyun spoke up. “So, why exactly did you buy it?” he asked, keeping his eyes on his food. He tried to keep his voice light and joking, but he really did want to hear the answer to that question. “Wanted something pretty to look at while you ate?” Kihyun looked up and put on a grin.

Shownu swallowed his food thoughtfully before saying, “I always have something pretty to look at while I eat.”

Kihyun choked on his omelet. He grabbed his mug and downed a huge amount of coffee. It was super hot and burned him all the way down, but he was glad for something else to think about, even if it was the possibility of internal scalding. Shownu went on eating calmly like he hadn’t just seen Kihyun almost choke to death on a piece of egg. Kihyun cursed him silently in the privacy of his head. That was the worst thing about Shownu. You thought you had him all figured out, that he was just some sweet, slightly slow, handsome guy, and then he came out with something like that.

Years of friendship, and Shownu still kept surprising Kihyun.

“Are you okay?” Shownu finally asked. “We’re gonna be late if you don’t hurry up.”

Kihyun laughed. There was a bit of bitterness to it, but he just couldn’t help it.

They walked to the subway station together. Shownu walked close, but Kihyun wasn’t bothered by it. As they went down the stairs to the train platform, Shownu moved even closer, until the backs of their hands pressed against each other. Kihyun laughed and pushed him away lightly with his shoulder. Shownu looked at him, and then laughed too. At the bottom of the stairs Shownu moved closer again, and this time Kihyun let him.

The car was packed. Most of the passengers were office workers on their daily commute, but there were a fair number of students too. Kihyun was cramped, but went the whole ride confident he
wasn’t going to get grabbed or fall over.

At the university gates, Shownu smiled and waved once before setting off for his class. Kihyun smiled and waved back, and then started for his own building.

He was in the elevator going up when he suddenly realized he’d forgotten to ask Shownu whether anything had happened between him and Wonho. It had completely been driven out of his mind by that stupid daffodil.

“That idiot,” Kihyun muttered to himself. “Why did he have to go and do that?”

He had to admit that in other circumstances, he’d consider this as something… romantic. But this was him and Shownu. These weren’t romantic circumstances.

Right?

Kihyun thought about it very, very carefully in class while everything the lecturer said became background noise. It definitely felt a little romantic. The flower. The ridiculous line at breakfast. The walk to the subway— hell, even inside the car, where Shownu stayed close and protected him. It was very possibly just a tiny bit romantic.

But it didn’t make sense. It was him and Shownu. They’d been friends for so long. Things don’t just spontaneously become romantic.

Not that things are romantic. Definitely not. Nothing romantic about him buying me flowers—twice—or walking close to me like that.

All of a sudden Kihyun found himself missing Minhyuk. The time Shownu had given him the flower, he’d only told Minhyuk about it. Sure, Minhyuk had only said annoying things, which annoyed Kihyun more than calmed him. But he’d still been glad for the conversation.

And this time Kihyun felt a little more receptive about Minhyuk’s ridiculous ideas.

Hyungwon had written something about Minhyuk taking time off for personal reasons. Actually, he had specifically written that Minhyuk was an annoying twit who probably spent time spying on someone else and refused to tell Hyungwon about it, but Kihyun rewrote the words mentally. Kihyun hadn’t thought much about it, until Jooheon had talked to Hyungwon, and Minhyuk had pulled him away.

He wondered what Minhyuk had said to Jooheon. Kihyun had seen neither Jooheon nor Minhyuk for a while. He’d have to do something about that.

As soon as the class was over, Kihyun went back to the elevator, and this time took it to the sixth floor. He found an empty staircase, sat down, and waited.

And waited. And waited. After almost ten minutes of silence and no Minhyuk, Kihyun got impatient. “Minhyuk, I know you’re invisible and just watching me,” he said. “Just show yourself already.”

Still nothing. Finally Kihyun sighed and, although he hated himself for it, said, “I have… romantic troubles.”

Still nothing. Kihyun tried one last time. “I mean it,” he said, a little louder than before. “Romantic problems. Real dramatic stuff. I want to talk to you about it.”

When Minhyuk didn’t show up after that, Kihyun gave up. It was obvious the angel must have been
really busy to give up an opportunity like that.

Kihyun went outside. He had a gap between classes, and he decided he’d like some fresh air. It wasn’t as cold as it had been just a few weeks ago. The weather was almost mild now, with just a little nip in the air. It was almost too warm for the scarf Kihyun had around his neck, but every once in a while a cold wind would blow which made Kihyun glad for it.

He wandered around a little aimlessly, until he spotted Jooheon leaning against a tree, talking and laughing with a pretty brunette girl. Kihyun was about to walk right up to them, when Jooheon caught sight of him. The maroon-haired kid said a few more words to the girl, and then started walking toward Kihyun purposefully.

“Jooheon,” Kihyun said, when the kid was close enough. “Been a while.”

Jooheon stared at him a second, and then suddenly gave a huge sigh of relief. “Oh, hyung, it’s you,” he said. “Thank God. I thought it was… him.”

_Damn he really does know then._ “Him?” Kihyun put on a puzzled expression. “Who else would it be?”

“Don’t play dumb, hyung,” Jooheon said, attempting to sound stern. “I know all about him.” He looked around to see no one was eavesdropping, and then leaned close and whispered, “The ghost.”

Kihyun burst out laughing. It was actually kind of genuine. Jooheon was so serious he was kind of adorable, looking at him so suspiciously. “A ghost? Really?”

“I already know everything,” Jooheon soldiered on. “You’re being possessed half the time. Don’t even try and tell me it’s not the truth. I just want to know what he wants.”

It wasn’t the truth, but it was pretty damn close. Kihyun observed Jooheon’s face carefully. The kid seemed certain he knew exactly what was going on.

Kihyun could deny it. He could insist the idea was ridiculous—which it totally was, no matter how close to the truth it was—tell Jooheon nothing was up. But he knew that persistent look on Jooheon’s face, and knew he would never let it go.

So Kihyun winged it. “If, hypothetically, there was a ghost possessing me— and I’m not saying there is,” he added quickly, seeing Jooheon about to explode. “But if there _was_, don’t you think it’d be better to leave him alone?”

Jooheon opened his mouth, closed it, and then finally came out with, “What?”

“I mean, _hypothetically,_” Kihyun said, leaning in confidentially, “this is a _ghost_ we’re talking about. Who knows when he’ll get violent? What if he decides to start throwing things around with his ghostly powers? What if he decides to possess someone else? Like someone who keeps annoying him?”

A look of abject terror came on Jooheon’s face, and it took all of Kihyun’s self-control not to grin in satisfaction. Jooheon gulped and said, “You think he could do that?”

“I don’t know,” Kihyun said, and he was 100% sure Hyungwon couldn’t.

He let the terror sink into Jooheon completely, and then said, “I think it’s better if you just stay away for a while.”
Jooheon nodded blankly, still out of it. Kihyun smiled, nodded, and walked away. He knew there was no reason why he didn’t just tell Jooheon the truth—it wasn’t like the truth was any less ridiculous than what he’d said—but he just loved messing with the kid. Kihyun was planning on bumping into Jooheon next week and glaring at him threateningly. He could already hear Jooheon’s terrified shriek.

Kihyun continued wandering around. There was nothing for him to do. He usually utilized gaps between classes for studying, but since Hyungwon had appeared in his life he just couldn’t concentrate on studying anymore. It seemed Hyungwon was contagious. He decided to keep walking, stretch his legs for a while. He turned around the main administration building, and saw a familiar figure sitting on a bench.

It was Wonho. He was tapping away at his phone, completely oblivious of the world outside, until a rather irritated Kihyun dropped onto the bench beside him.

“Oh, hi, Kihyun,” Wonho said after he’d gotten over his surprise. “When’s your next class?”

He’d moved away from Kihyun a bit. Just a bit, but to Kihyun it was obvious. “Okay, enough of this,” he said. “What’s wrong? Tell me. Now.”

Wonho looked confused. “What?”

Kihyun decided he might have gone at it a little too abruptly, so he took a moment and then said, “I’ve noticed you’ve been kind of out of it lately. Is everything okay?”

“Everything’s fine,” Wonho said, but he was definitely leaning away. “How about you? You and Hyunwoo eat out anywhere new recently?”

So it is something to do with Shownu-hyung. Once Kihyun heard that, he realized there was no point in him trying to get it out of Wonho. Not alone, anyway. “No, nowhere,” Kihyun brushed away the question. “Hey, how about we go out for drinks on Friday night?” He’d gotten quick at calculating which days were his, and which were Hyungwon’s.

Wonho’s eyes widened. “You and me?”

“You, me and Shownu-hyung,” Kihyun said, slightly taken aback by Wonho’s weird reaction. “Come on. Don’t you dare refuse.”

“Uh, I’m not sure we should be drinking…”

“What? You don’t want to go drinking?” Kihyun raised an eyebrow. “Now I’m really worried. Come on, hyung. One night.”

He gave Wonho the Look. Kihyun didn’t have a cute personality, but he’d been born with a cute appearance. Most times he considered it a curse (admin officials generally did not find short guys with baby-faces intimidating) but it was a blessing sometimes too. And now he was trying to use the blessing side. It always played out the same way. Kihyun put on a cute face, Wonho swore at his face and laughed and ended up doing what Kihyun wanted him to do.

It played out differently this time. Wonho stared at Kihyun for a long time, and then said, “Sure.”

Kihyun was surprised. “Really? Just like that?”

“Yeah, I’ll go,” Wonho said, and he sounded almost breathless. “But you have to convince Hyunwoo.”
“Don’t worry about that,” Kihyun said. “Just make sure you’re going out on Friday. Got it?”

Wonho nodded, and Kihyun got up, satisfied. The job was done.

“No.”

“What?” Kihyun sat down on his bed. “Why not?”

He’d just come back from work, and after putting his things away and freshening up, the first thing he’d done was call Shownu. Kihyun had wanted to tell Shownu about the Friday plans at lunch, but for some reason whenever he looked at Shownu’s face he forgot everything else. It was very annoying.

So he’d made up his mind to call Shownu when he got home. It was supposed to be a short phone call. Kihyun would tell him about the plans, Shownu would agree, end of call. This was not it.

“I think we’ve gone out drinking enough,” Shownu’s level voice came through the phone. “You don’t remember that night at Blacklight, but both you and Hoseok embarrassed yourselves. A lot.”

“Yeah, but we’re not going to Blacklight,” Kihyun said. After learning he’d apparently made an ass of himself there, Kihyun decided he’d never go to Blacklight again ever. Not even if he died. If anyone attempted to carry his corpse in there, Kihyun would return as a ghost and murder them.

“I’m still against it,” Shownu said. “You know Hoseok drinks a lot. And if you get drunk again—”

“I won’t this time,” Kihyun said quickly. “Come on, I never get drunk, you know what alcohol does to me.”

“Apparently.” Shownu said it so quietly Kihyun almost didn’t hear him.

Kihyun soldiered on. “You have to come. Please. I can’t handle a drunk Wonho-hyung alone.”

“Wait, are you saying if I don’t go, you’ll go with Hoseok alone?”

Kihyun could tell it bothered Shownu and he didn’t know why, but that didn’t stop him from using it to his advantage. “Well, yeah,” he said, trying to sound resigned. “If you don’t come with us, of course it’ll be just me and Wonho-hyung…”

“I’ll go,” Shownu said immediately.

“Really? Just like that?”

“Yes, just like that,” Shownu said. “You’ve convinced me, great job. Pick the time and the place, I’ll be there.”

Kihyun smiled. “Thank you, hyung,” he said, trying to project as much of that smile into his voice.

Shownu just sighed. “Yoo Kihyun, you… see you tomorrow morning.”

“Oh okay,” Kihyun said. “Thank you again.”

“Sure.”

He cut the line. Kihyun looked down at his still-illuminated phone screen and grinned.
Things were going to go right.
I know something’s up with Wonho-hyung. I tried talking to him about it again today, but he keeps being evasive. I managed to convince him to go out for drinks with me and Shownu-hyung tomorrow night. I’ll get it out of him then. For now, just be normal.

Yoo Kihyun

Hyungwon read over the last part of the journal entry again, satisfied. He’d done a good thing sharing his concerns with Kihyun, after all. He wondered if Kihyun was suspicious about his sudden worry for Wonho, and then decided he didn’t give a damn. In any case, what was so suspicious about it? Hyungwon had known Wonho over a month. They were practically friends, even if Wonho didn’t know it.

It turned out Kihyun was actually pretty good at solving problems. Hyungwon had told him about the incident with Jooheon and Minhyuk, and Kihyun seemed to have taken care of that too. He didn’t know what Kihyun did, but it worked.

Hyungwon washed up, thinking over the time Jooheon had confronted him. He actually hadn’t seen Minhyuk since that day. He thought it kind of weird, since Minhyuk was an annoying pest who lived for drama, and the whole thing with Wonho was pretty drama. But the angel hadn’t shown up once, not to Hyungwon at least. He guessed Minhyuk was satisfied with bugging just Kihyun, and stopped thinking about it.

In the kitchen, Shownu was already busy with the coffee, and he looked up and smiled when he saw Hyungwon enter. Hyungwon didn’t think he was fooling himself into thinking Shownu had been especially… lovey recently. The pretty daffodil on the dining table hadn’t escaped his attention either. It was that damn amusement park date, Hyungwon was sure of it. Tiny, you lucky bastard, Hyungwon cursed silently as he smiled back at Shownu. He was fine helping Kihyun out with Shownu now that Kihyun was checking up on Wonho, but if it got to kisses then Hyungwon was out.

Breakfast was chocolate pancakes. Hyungwon almost snorted aloud when he saw the strawberries in the clear container, and the small note instructing him to whip cream. It was disgusting, couples being cute in front of him.

He didn’t bother with the cream, obviously, and he ate most of the strawberries himself, and they were good. They must have cost Kihyun a fair bit, fresh strawberries. Hyungwon got a little malicious pleasure in that.

It wasn’t that Hyungwon was jealous. But he might have been a little.

As they ate breakfast, Shownu broke the silence with, “Do you wanna do something tonight?”

Hyungwon almost choked. “Something?” he said, after downing some water. “Like… what?”
“I don’t know, anything,” Shownu shrugged. “We could go see a movie. Or eat out somewhere.”

“Not tonight,” Hyungwon said, grinning into his coffee. *Damn Tiny is thick-headed if he can’t see through something as obvious as this.* He thought about scheduling another date for them, and then decided Kihyun could handle his own love life. “Some other night, though, definitely.”

Shownu seemed satisfied with that and went back to eating. Hyungwon felt a little weird. Half the time Shownu was romancing *him*, and it was just strange.

They walked together to the subway station. Hyungwon kept a little distance between them. No amount of days would make him used to Shownu’s hand brushing against his while they walked.

The feeling of Wonho’s hand on Hyungwon’s was even more unusual, but in a different sort of way.

Hyungwon was sure it was Wonho’s hand he’d felt in the hospital corridor. He knew it was impossible, but he also knew it was true. He’d brushed his hand against Wonho’s in the elevator the day before, to try and confirm, but it didn’t confirm anything except Wonho was really not good at controlling his reactions.

But Hyungwon was sure of it. It was Wonho’s hand. He didn’t know how he knew, but he did.

At the university gates, when they parted, Shownu squeezed Hyungwon’s forearm and smiled at him. Hyungwon awkwardly smiled back. Things were getting more and more uncomfortable for him in Kihyun’s body.

During the day, Hyungwon tried to concentrate on Kihyun’s classes. He was getting better at them now. Some of the stuff the professors said actually entered his brain, and sometimes when he was bored in class he paged through Kihyun’s notes. Kihyun’s notes were clean and pretty, topic headings and important words underlined neatly in colored pen. They were the exact opposite of Hyungwon’s notes, which were less notes and more scribbles on random pieces of paper.

It was hard, though, trying to pay attention in class. Hyungwon could feel a headache start to leach into his brain. The headaches were almost ever-present, better in the mornings and absolute hell at night. He tried to ignore the pain poking at the edges of his head, and focused on nodding at whatever the professor was going on about.

By lunch time Hyungwon was used to the little ache, and could ignore it almost completely. It had killed his appetite, though. He bought a packet of chips and munched on them as he went to the cafeteria, where Shownu and Wonho were already sitting at their usual table.

They were talking about something, but stopped when Hyungwon came close enough to make out their words. Hyungwon was not pleased. Wonho and Shownu kept talking over his head, and it pissed him off. Sure, *he* didn’t know them, but as far as they knew he was Kihyun, and Kihyun did. Kihyun deserved to know what the hell was going on.

“Hey,” Hyungwon said, trying to sound casual. He sat down. “What’re you guys talking about?”

“I can’t make it tomorrow night,” Wonho said. “Jonghyun-hyung is going to be out all night and I need to watch the apartment.”

So this Jonghyun was obviously Wonho’s roommate. “Tell him you have plans,” Hyungwon said. Wonho’s eyes widened. “Tell… Jonghyun-hyung… I can’t do it?”

From his reaction Hyungwon gathered that Jonghyun-hyung was the most terrifying entity in
Wonho’s life. “Come on, hyung,” Hyungwon said. “You said you’d go out with us.”

“Yeah, but I can’t refuse Jonghyun-hyung…” Wonho trailed off.

He looked… guilty. Hyungwon looked at Shownu to see if he had noticed it, but Shownu just went on eating with a blank expression.

Hyungwon could feel this opportunity slipping away. And he knew if he did not fix what was bothering Wonho now, it would never get fixed. Wonho would keep delaying until he got used to being miserable, and Hyungwon could not let that happen.

“No, you have to come,” Hyungwon insisted. He knew he was pushing the line of forcefulness, but he wasn’t letting this go. “Come on. One night.”

And it worked. Wonho shifted a little, and then said, “I really can’t tomorrow night.”

“Then tonight,” Hyungwon changed immediately. “We’re not doing anything tonight. Right, hyung?”

Shownu looked surprised at suddenly being spoken to, but nodded.

“Um, okay then,” Wonho said, but he still looked uncomfortable. He glanced at Shownu, who made half a second of eye-contact before going back to his lunch. It was barely a moment, but Hyungwon noticed, and it pissed him off even more.

“Hey,” he said, and this time he directed it at Shownu. “Anything wrong?”

“No,” Shownu answered, after a moment of cluelessness. “Why?”

“Because it’s obvious you guys have something to say to each other,” Hyungwon said flatly. “So just get it out in the open and end it.”

“No, everything’s fine,” Shownu said, and he sounded perfectly normal. Wonho was not so good an actor. He fidgeted and avoided Hyungwon’s eyes.

“Really? Do you think I’m blind or an idiot?” Hyungwon said to Shownu. “You keep trying to send messages to each other and it’s starting to get on my nerves. So just get out with it.”

Shownu seemed taken aback at being spoken to so roughly. “Kihyun–”

He reached for Hyungwon’s hand, and Hyungwon pulled away. It was instinctive, and he’d done it before he could stop himself. For a moment Hyungwon didn’t even realize what he’d done, until he felt both Wonho and Shownu’s eyes on him. It was like time had stopped at the table, Shownu’s hand still outstretched, Hyungwon frozen in place. And then thoughts finally returned to Hyungwon’s brain, and one was right in front.

Kihyun is going to kill me.

“Uh… I have to go,” Hyungwon said uneasily. He got up. “Work will be starting soon. Hyung?”

For a moment Wonho didn’t seem to realize Hyungwon was talking to him. Then he jumped up and nodded. “So, um, see you tonight,” he said to Shownu. Shownu stared at him blankly for a second, and then gave a nod of his own. Wonho broke out into what was obviously a relieved smile, and then followed Hyungwon out of the cafeteria.

The trip to the hospital was devoid of conversation. For the first time, Hyungwon was glad. The
incident at lunch had freaked him out. After he’d pulled away from Shownu’s hand, he’d seen the
look in Shownu’s eyes, plain: You’re not Kihyun. Maybe not so specific, but it was obvious that was
something Kihyun—the real Kihyun—would never do.

Recently Hyungwon felt more… exposed. Like it was obvious he wasn’t Kihyun, he was just
wearing Kihyun’s skin. It wasn’t just the scene with Jooheon, though it was a big part of it. It was
the way both Wonho and Shownu acted around him.

It was like they knew. They knew Hyungwon was an impostor. And it was freaking him out.

They went to the flower shop first, where Wonho bought a small bouquet on recommendation of the
florist. Hyungwon didn’t bother with a look at the pretty young man. He seemed just as bothered by
something as Hyungwon was.

And then a short walk to the hospital, up to the second floor, and they were in front of Hyungwon’s
hospital room.

“I’ll wait out here,” he said, though he didn’t need to, but Wonho nodded anyway, and then went in.

Except this time Hyungwon wasn’t going to just wait outside. He shuffled around for a few seconds,
and then moved over to the room door. He waited a little longer there, just steadying himself, and
then he slowly opened the door a fraction of an inch.

He didn’t know what he expected to see, but he got a good view. The bed was in the perfect
position, which meant even through the small gap Hyungwon could see it completely. There was a
chair next to the bed too, and in it, was Wonho.

Hyungwon watched. Wonho was talking, but it was in a low voice, so Hyungwon couldn’t make
out what he was saying. But it still clawed at his heart, to see Wonho there, speaking so earnestly to a
shell of a body. Wonho said something and then broke out into an embarrassed smile, a lovely curve
of his lips that Hyungwon knew tinged his cheeks pink, even if he was too far to see. A few more
words, and then Wonho leaned forward and patted the hand of the body in front of him.

And Hyungwon felt it.

He almost yelled aloud. He didn’t know how he managed to stop himself. He was frozen still, and it
was like the brief touch was still sending waves through his body. Because Hyungwon had definitely
felt it. He had felt that warmth, that light pressure. He had felt it through his own empty body, right
through to Kihyun’s hand. A brief, almost gentle touch, but it was seared into his brain.

Wonho turned and saw Hyungwon, and his eyes widened in surprise. That somehow brought
Hyungwon back to his senses. He was still dazed, but he tried his best to put on a normal face. A
normal Kihyun face.

Hyungwon moved out of the doorway as Wonho got up and walked towards him. Neither of them
said anything as they walked down the hallway, got in the elevator together. Hyungwon was
relieved. He didn’t know what he’d say if Wonho asked him why he was spying on him, or worse, if
anything was wrong. Because everything was wrong.

When they were finally out in the open air, Wonho cleared his throat a little awkwardly and said,
“You sure you want to go out drinking tonight?”

It was such a sudden question it caught Hyungwon off-guard. Then he said, “Of course. Why?”

“No, because we have class tomorrow and everything…” Wonho trailed off.
“It’s fine as long as no one gets drunk,” Hyungwon said. “Just make sure you’re there. I’ll physically drag you after work if I have to.”

Wonho put on a faint smile. “I’ll be there.”

The bar was pretty much empty.

There were only a few people in, sitting mostly in the booths. Shownu was already waiting at a small circular table when Wonho and Hyungwon walked in, and they joined him.

They ordered drinks and sat around and talked, but everything felt… forced. Wonho was obviously still uncomfortable, and he seemed even worse now. Shownu was quiet like always, but even Hyungwon could sense this was a different type of silence. And Hyungwon still could not get over what had happened at the hospital.

He felt it. He felt Wonho’s hand on his. On his supposedly empty body.

It meant something. Hyungwon was not romantic enough to think he’d only felt it because it was Wonho who’d touched him. Even in this nonsensical situation, he had to stay practical.

It meant he still had a connection with his body. But did that mean Hyungwon might be returning to it soon?

He didn’t know. And right then it was taking up all the space in his brain. Not even the headache ticking at the edges could enter.

Hyungwon tried to put it out of his mind, and put up a smile. “Okay, I think I’ve had enough of the sitting around awkwardly thing,” he said, trying to sound as cheery as possible. “Now let’s try something fun.”

Shownu looked up from his beer. “This isn’t fun for you?”

It was such a perfect deadpan that both Hyungwon and Wonho burst out laughing, and Shownu grinned too. Hyungwon was glad. The tension in the air seemed to decrease with the laughter.

Surprisingly, Shownu led the conversation. “I bumped into Jinyoung recently,” he said. “He’s still with the academy. Helps out with the new students.”

Wonho leaned back in his chair and grinned. “Jinyoung? Isn’t he the one who constructed an elaborate plan to burn down the academy building? He even made a detailed budget for all the supplies he’d need and everything.”

“Yeah, that’s him,” Shownu said with a grin of his own. “Everyone thinks they hate that place, but somehow they always go back.”

The two of them started on a nostalgic conversation about their old dance academy, and Hyungwon was content with just sitting and listening. Wonho looked normal, and happy.

“Oh, Jinyoung said Soyeon is still with the academy too,” Shownu said in the middle of the conversation. “She’s getting jobs in plays now. And she was asking for your number.”

“Oh, really?” Wonho said, and there was something about the way he said it that sounded weird to
“Wait, remind me again,” Hyungwon said. “Who’s Soyeon?”

“That girl,” Shownu said, a little surprised. “The one Hoseok was dating. I can’t believe you don’t remember her name. Almost the entire first year you knew Hoseok it was Soyeon this, Soyeon that, ‘why won’t Soyeon reply to that sexy shirtless picture I sent her?’, ‘do you think Soyeon would like this shirt on me?’” He chuckled a bit. “One time you threw a banana at his head and swore to upturn the entire fridge on him if he said her name again.”

“Oh, that Soyeon,” Hyungwon said, forcing out a chuckle that sounded completely fake, even to his own ears. “What happened with her again?”

“She stopped replying to Hoseok’s shirtless pictures,” Shownu said simply. “He got the hint.”

“If a girl stops replying to those, then I get that she’s really not interested.” Wonho said it with a laugh, but it sounded forced to Hyungwon.

“She seems interested now though,” Hyungwon said. He tried to keep the frown off his face. The girl had Wonho chasing after her for so long and she was only showing interest now?

“Probably not,” Wonho said. “She probably just wants to catch up or something. It’s nothing.” He smiled.

The conversation on Soyeon ended there. The upbeat mood at the table died with it. Hyungwon was aware of Wonho feeling uncomfortable again, throwing glances at both him and Shownu.

When Shownu brought the next round of drinks, Wonho downed his in one shot. That concerned Hyungwon. He’d wanted this night out to try and fix whatever it was that was bothering Wonho, but it seemed like it was only getting worse.

After too long of trying to ignore it, Hyungwon had had enough. He reached out for Wonho’s hand and asked in the gentlest voice possible, “What’s wrong?”

Wonho jumped. He looked down at Hyungwon’s hand on his, up into Hyungwon’s eyes, and there was a question in his eyes. “I have to go to the bathroom,” he said, and got up so quickly he almost overturned the table.

He hurried towards the small corridor that led to the bathrooms, not looking back once. Hyungwon got up. “I’ll go see what’s wrong with Wonho-hyung,” he said.

Shownu put a hand on his forearm. “Kihyun, just let him go.”

“What? Are you serious?” Hyungwon jerked his arm away. “How can you say that when he’s obviously…” He trailed off, not sure what Wonho obviously was, and then decided he wasn’t going to waste any more words here. Hyungwon gave Shownu one last look, and then followed Wonho’s steps.

Wonho was leaning against the wall of the narrow corridor, and when he saw Hyungwon he quickly straightened. “What are you doing here?” He put on a forced smile. “Gonna follow me into the bathroom too?”

“Cut the crap,” Hyungwon snapped. “Why did you run away from the table?”

“I didn’t run away,” Wonho said. “I told you, I have to—”
“No, you don’t,” Hyungwon cut him off. He was just tired of all of it, and he wanted it to end. The headache was back now with a fury, pushing at every corner of his brain. “You keep trying to avoid me. You’re grimacing and shifting around all the time.”

Wonho was taken aback. “Why are you getting so worked up?”

“Because you’re not acting like yourself and it’s so obvious,” Hyungwon said. “So just cut it out and tell me.”

Wonho blinked at him, surprised, and then he narrowed his eyes. “Me? I’m not acting like myself? And what about you?”

Hyungwon tried to act normal. “What about me?”

“You’re nothing like how you used to be,” Wonho said, and now he wasn’t awkward, he was angry. “Sometimes I can’t even believe it’s you. Why?”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Hyungwon said, trying not to back away. The narrow corridor was almost private, and no one was around to overhear or sneak a glance. Somehow it made him more nervous.

Wonho barked a laugh that was completely different from his usual warm laughter. “You don’t know what I’m talking about?” He moved closer to Hyungwon, and he seemed almost excited. “The only reason I’m like this is because of you. I can’t be around you anymore. It scratches at my nerves just thinking about you.”

“What? What did I do?” Hyungwon was confused now. Was it something Kihyun did? Or was it him? What had he done that made Wonho so upset?

“Everything!” Wonho turned around and took a few steps, and then walked back. He was pacing. “Everything you do, the way you just keep changing from one day to the next and then back again…”

Hyungwon swallowed. Damn it. “Wonho, listen—”

Wonho whirled on him. “Did you just call me by name? Did you just not call me hyung?”

Hyungwon could feel it all collapsing around him, everything, the act he’d worked hard on for so long. “Hyung, I’m sorry, but wait—”

“No, see, you’d never do that,” Wonho said, returning to his pacing. “Everything about you is different sometimes and it’s driving me insane. I can’t take it anymore. Sometimes I feel like I’m going to explode.”

He sounded so agitated that Hyungwon was actually more concerned for Wonho than he was for himself. “Wonho—”

It happened so fast Hyungwon couldn’t understand at first. One moment he was reaching out towards Wonho, hoping to try and calm him down. The next his hand was crushed against Wonho’s chest as Wonho held him close and kissed him.

And then the next moment Wonho shoved him away.

It was so brief Hyungwon thought he might’ve just imagined it. But the remnant of the warmth on his lips was as tangible as Wonho’s hand on his empty body.
He stood there, stunned, as Wonho continued pacing, but now much faster than before. He was also
talking to himself now, running a hand through his hair as he walked.

Hyungwon had no idea what just happened, but he knew it was too brief.

“Hyung,” he said gently. “Hyung, calm down.”


Before he could stammer out another word Hyungwon walked up to him and pressed his lips to
Wonho’s.

There was one second where Wonho stood frozen, while Hyungwon took his hands in his face and
held him. And then Wonho put a hand in Hyungwon’s hair and kissed him back.

Wonho’s lips were soft and warm, gentle against Hyungwon’s. Hyungwon parted his lips for him,
took his tongue into his mouth and kissed him more deeply. There was a light taste of alcohol, but
there was something else too, something Hyungwon wanted even more of. He moved one of his
hands to Wonho’s hair, even as Wonho put a hand on his lower back, pulling him closer. Hyungwon
slipped his other hand down to Wonho’s collarbones, felt the shape of them beneath his fingertips,
and then–

And then Hyungwon felt his head split in half.

The pain was so intense he doubled over, clutching at the sides of his head. Wonho was beside him,
asking him if he was alright, but Hyungwon could barely hear him over the blade cutting at him.

“I’m fine,” he managed to say. “I’m fine. I’ll just go home.”

Wonho was saying something else, but Hyungwon staggered past him. He couldn’t think. He
needed to get home. He caught a glimpse of Shownu sitting at their table, standing up concernedly,
but Hyungwon couldn’t think of that either. He managed to find his way outside and fell into an
empty taxi, and he couldn’t think of anything–not Wonho’s hand, not Wonho’s lips–except wanting
the pain to be over.
Kihyun sat alone at the kitchen table, worried.

He’d woken up that morning in his outside clothes. At first he’d thought that maybe Hyungwon, that irresponsible literature-studying bastard, had gotten drunk again, but Kihyun’s head wasn’t exploding with a hangover migraine. And no matter how irresponsible Hyungwon was, he wasn’t the type of person who’d fall into bed sober without changing his clothes. Something must have happened for him to not even bother with changing. But what worried Kihyun more than anything was that Hyungwon hadn’t left him a message. Nothing. Even that other time when Hyungwon had gotten drunk he’d left a slurred, sloppy voice recording on Kihyun’s phone. But this time there was nothing.

And now Shownu hadn’t turned up for breakfast.

At first Kihyun had thought Shownu was just a little late. He’d called Shownu anyway and he hadn’t picked up, so Kihyun assumed he was on the way. He did that when he was late; he never picked up if he was only a minute or two away. But now breakfast was made and sitting cold, and now Kihyun was worried.

He looked at the cold plate, at his phone, and then at the daffodil in the bottle on the table. It still looked good. The petals were drooping a bit, but it seemed alright.

“Seems alright,” Kihyun murmured aloud to himself. He picked up his phone and dialed Shownu again. And again no answer.

Kihyun got up. This didn’t feel right. Was Shownu ignoring him? But that wasn’t like him. Or maybe something had happened yesterday.

He was already running late, but he decided to go and check on Shownu’s apartment anyway. Maybe Shownu was sick. Maybe he was hurt. Kihyun had no idea, but he knew something was wrong. As he grabbed his bag and headed for the door, Kihyun thought about the time he’d waste just walking there and wished he could teleport.

He stopped at the door when he realized that he did know someone who actually could teleport.

“Minhyuk,” Kihyun called loudly. “Minhyuk, show yourself, I need you.”

No response. None of that throat-clearing Minhyuk did to attract attention quietly, or his loud chipper voice.

“Minhyuk,” Kihyun said again, but this time quieter. “Hey, come on, appear already.”
Still nothing. He remembered the last time he’d tried to call Minhyuk, hanging around that empty staircase, and how the angel hadn’t shown up. When exactly was the last time he’d seen Minhyuk?

“Hey, Lee Minhyuk,” Kihyun called, but he was concerned now. “If you’re ignoring me or doing this as some sort of joke, cut it out. It’s not funny. Come on.”

He waited, and still nothing. Kihyun wanted to kick something. Why was everyone disappearing on him?

Kihyun took out his phone and dialed Shownu’s number one last time. If he didn’t pick up this time, Kihyun would go to Shownu’s apartment. He didn’t know what he’d do if he got there and no one opened the door.

“Hello?”

“Shownu-hyung?” Kihyun said dumbly. He hadn’t expected Shownu to pick up. “What— where are you? Are you okay?”

“I’m about to head into class,” Shownu answered. “I got up late so I had to go straight to class. Sorry I didn’t show up for breakfast.”

“You weren’t answering your phone either,” Kihyun said. For some reason, now he felt a little hurt.

“I was probably in the subway. Sorry.”

Shownu’s voice sounded a little weird, but at that moment Kihyun was just relieved he was okay, so he didn’t mention it. “It’s fine. I’ll see you at lunch, then.”

“Okay.”

Kihyun was about to say a word of goodbye, but Shownu had already cut the line. That was also weird. Shownu wasn’t injured or sick or any of a million other horrible possibilities Kihyun had thought of, but something wasn’t right.

He remembered the last message Hyungwon had written him. _Something went down between him and Shownu._ Was that it? Did the situation between Wonho and Shownu blow up?

Kihyun considered it for a moment, and then dismissed it. He was probably over-thinking it. He’d just been worried over Shownu’s non-appearance at breakfast, and now he was imagining dramatic stories about Shownu and Wonho fighting over something.

He put it out of his mind, and left the apartment.

The commute was hell. Kihyun fell over in the car twice, once on this man in his forties who smelled much older than he looked, then on a young office lady who almost slapped him before she realized it was unintentional. She stepped on his foot with a stiletto heel a minute later, and he gave her a look, but it was halfhearted. It was hard to glare at someone when you were being compressed from all sides.

Finally Kihyun got to campus, surprisingly in one piece. He was late for class of course, but after weeks of sharing a body with Hyungwon Kihyun was no longer a model student anyway.

He found an empty seat at the back of the class and dumped himself into it. He tried to pay attention, but after a while Kihyun got bored and let his mind wander. Unless Hyungwon had messed something up, he was going to go out for drinks with Shownu and Wonho that night. If anything
really was up—with either of them—Kihyun would find out then.

But Kihyun was still worried. The reason Shownu gave for not showing up for breakfast was completely rational, but it sounded like an excuse. Hyungwon hadn’t left a notebook entry, Minhyuk had completely disappeared, Wonho had been acting strange for a while now.

Something wasn’t right.

As soon as class was done Kihyun took out his phone and dialed Wonho. He couldn’t contact Hyungwon or Minhyuk, and the phone call he had already had with Shownu did not make him feel any better. So he called Wonho and hoped he’d say something that did.

Kihyun had pretty much memorized Wonho’s schedule so he knew he was free, but it still took a while before he was answered with a rather tentative, “Hey.”

“Hyung,” Kihyun said. He thought about how to phrase his question so he didn’t sound insane, and then asked, “Do we have plans tonight?”

On the other end of the line, there was silence. Kihyun waited for Wonho to answer, and when he didn’t, he asked, “Are you okay?”

“What? What, I’m fine,” Wonho insisted, but his voice was curiously high. “No. I, um, I’m not doing anything tonight. I am totally free tonight. Um. Why? Are–are you free?”

“It seems I am,” Kihyun said, more to himself. “We went out drinking last night, right?”

“Um, yes,” Wonho said. “Why? Do– you wanna go out for drinks again?”

“No, not tonight,” Kihyun said distractedly. So Hyungwon had already gone out with Shownu and Wonho for drinks. The thing Kihyun had planned specifically to find out what was wrong, and it somehow made everything worse.

Stupid literature frog.

“Okay, thanks, hyung,” Kihyun said. “I’ll see you at lunch.”

“Kihyun, wait.”

Wonho said it so quickly Kihyun was taken aback. “Yeah?”

There was another long pause, and then Wonho finally said, “Nothing. I’ll… we’ll talk in person. I think that’s better.”

There was something so serious about the way he said it that made Kihyun anxious. “Okay, sure,” he said. “See you.”

“Bye.”

Wonho ended the call, and Kihyun stared at his phone screen. Wonho had been acting kind of strange for some time now, but this phone call was a different sort of strange. And it did not make Kihyun feel better.

He went to his next class and took a seat right in the front row, hoping it would force him to concentrate, but it was no use. He kept trying to guess what happened the night before. Hyungwon must’ve done something, Kihyun was sure of it. Something that upset Shownu, and made Wonho… what? He didn’t sound upset. He sounded… happy. He sounded a little awkward, yes, but almost
hopeful. Tentatively pleased. Which was weird, because how could Hyungwon have made Shownu unhappy and yet at the same time pleased Wonho?

The class couldn’t end fast enough for Kihyun. When the students flooded out, he was right at the head. He didn’t know what he’d say, sitting at the cafeteria table between Shownu and Wonho, but he hated just sitting at the desk, wasting everyone’s time.

Kihyun felt better when he was outside, breathing in the cool air. March wasn’t as bitter cold as February had been, and Kihyun had always felt more comfortable in the winter. He walked around aimlessly, trying to enjoy the nip in the air, when he found himself near the building where the mechanical engineering classes were. Kihyun stopped and leaned against a wall, watching as students poured out of the doors.

When Shownu walked out he was so easy to spot. He took up so much space. Not just his tall, well-built frame– his gentleness, his warmth, just emitted from his body. He was listening to another student as he walked, wearing that friendly smile of his. He always listened so intently, like every word was important. Shownu nodded at something, and then he looked up and spotted Kihyun.

The smile dropped. It was only gone for a second before Shownu put it up again, but Kihyun noticed. He also noticed that there was something plastic about the smile Shownu replaced it with, like it was forced.

And Kihyun knew then, for certain, something was wrong.

He started towards Shownu. Kihyun had to talk to him frankly, even if he sounded crazy. He had to know what was going on.

He had taken one step when someone grabbed him by the arm and roughly yanked him back.

Instinct took over as Kihyun whirled around and swung his fist at the person. They caught him easily with a hand and pushed Kihyun’s arm away. A second later and Kihyun realized it was Minhyuk.

He looked worried. The angel was bouncing on the balls of his feet, clenching and unclenching his fists continuously. He was also not smiling.

“Holy shit, Minhyuk, are you okay?” Kihyun grabbed Minhyuk by the arms to steady him, because the angel seemed to be vibrating. “What happened?”

“I’m fine, I’m fine,” Minhyuk insisted, trying to sound it and failing. “I’m just… a little nervous.”

“Where have you been?” Kihyun asked. He wanted to ask him a whole avalanche of questions, but something about the angel’s behavior told him that wasn’t a good idea.

“There’s been some trouble up top,” Minhyuk said. “Some trouble regarding you… and Hyungwon, and me. Basically I’ve messed up. Big time. I’m not even supposed to be down here anymore, but I had to come see you.” He sighed, and then put up a smile. “So, long story short, I’m being fired.”

Kihyun was about to answer with a casual reply, but he took a good look at Minhyuk. This was not a casual case.

The caring side of Kihyun emerged. He put his arm around Minhyuk. “You alright?”

“I’m fine,” Minhyuk said again, but this time he didn’t even attempt to sound cheerful. “I… I’m just nervous. I don’t know what’ll happen to me.”
Kihyun didn’t say anything. He wanted to tell Minhyuk it was going to be alright, but he didn’t know that.

“I’ve never seen an angel after he was fired,” Minhyuk went on in a hollow voice. “They’re just… gone. Disappeared. When I go back topside I… I don’t know what’ll happen to me.”

He sounded lost. Kihyun had never known anything except a bright, cheerful Minhyuk, one that practically lived on drama. This defeated Minhyuk was just not right. He had to do something.

“Do you eat?” Kihyun asked.

Minhyuk looked at him. “What?”

“Do you eat?” Kihyun repeated. “Can you eat food?”

“I’ve never tried to,” Minhyuk answered after a moment’s thought. “But I think I can, yeah. Why?”

“We’re going to my place,” Kihyun announced, linking his arm with Minhyuk’s. “I’ll make you something to eat. Everyone always feels better after food.”

“You can’t do that,” Minhyuk said, trying to extricate himself. “You have work and stuff.”

“Don’t be an idiot, I can skip one day,” Kihyun said, holding on more firmly. “I want to skip a day. I think I can survive without seeing my boss’s face for one Friday.”

A smile erupted on Minhyuk’s face. He looked more like himself now. “Thank you Kihyunnie,” he said, throwing himself around Kihyun and hugging him tightly.

“Yeah, yeah, that’s enough,” Kihyun said, as Minhyuk rubbed his face against his. “Let go already. You’re making a scene.”

“You’re taking me over to your place for lunch,” Minhyuk said loudly, like he wanted the entire campus to know. “I can make a scene if I want to.”

Kihyun sighed, but he couldn’t help but grin. “Okay, I have to call Wonho-hyung first.” He took out his phone and dialed Wonho, and this time his call was answered on the first ring. “Hyung?”

“Hey, Kihyun,” Wonho answered, and he sounded more relaxed than last night. “Calling again so soon?”

“Yeah, I can’t make it to work,” Kihyun said. “Something came up.”

“Something serious?” Wonho asked, concerned.

“No, not… exactly,” Kihyun said. “I’m, uh… taking care of someone else’s puppy.” Minhyuk laughed at that and shoved him lightly.

“Oh, okay,” Wonho said, and it was obvious he didn’t believe that. “But you’re okay, right?”

“What? No, I’m fine,” Kihyun said. “Just tell the boss I can’t make it. That’s it.”

“Okay. See you, Kihyun.”

“Thanks, hyung. Bye.” He ended the call and looked at the screen a moment. Wonho had sounded a little weird. Better than he had in the morning, but still a little weird. He would’ve thought about it more, but he had more pressing matters to attend to.
Kihyun turned back to the engineering building’s entrance, but the crush of people had dispersed. Shownu was nowhere to be seen. Kihyun thought of calling him, telling him he couldn’t have lunch with him, but he didn’t want to talk to him over the phone. Wonho could tell him at lunch.

“Let’s go,” Kihyun said, putting his phone back in his pocket. Minhyuk firmly kept their arms linked together, and Kihyun let him. For a while he thought they’d have to go all the way to his apartment linked together like conjoined twins, when all of a sudden Minhyuk let him go and darted away with a yell of “Jooheon!”

Kihyun spotted the kid a short distance away, tapping at his phone, and watched as Minhyuk barreled into him and squished him into a hug. Curious, Kihyun followed.

“Hyung, are you okay?” Jooheon asked, gasping for breath. He saw Kihyun and immediately tensed.

“Chill, Jooheon, it’s me,” Kihyun said, and Jooheon relaxed. “You call Minhyuk hyung?”

“Yeah, it just happened,” Jooheon said. “What’re you guys doing?”

“Kihyun is taking me to his apartment for lunch,” Minhyuk said brightly. The prospect of trying food seemed to have returned him to normal.

Kihyun got the secret request in Minhyuk’s words, and asked Jooheon, “Do you want to come with us?”

“Me? I’d love to but I have a class,” Jooheon answered.

“Come on, one day.” Kihyun gave him a smile that told him it was no longer a request. Minhyuk wanted him there and Minhyuk needed support, so damn it Jooheon was going to be there.

“Uh, sure, okay,” Jooheon said nervously. “One day. That’s alright.”

“Awesome,” Minhyuk said. He discarded Kihyun and now grabbed Jooheon, putting an arm over his shoulders. “Let’s go.”

It was actually fun. Minhyuk and Jooheon attempted to help Kihyun with the cooking, but after he made it clear they were more a nuisance than a help, they stuck to playing video games in the living room. Jooheon could not believe Minhyuk had never played video games before. It didn’t matter because Minhyuk was a natural and was soon destroying Jooheon in every game they tried.

“It’s because of my fingers,” Minhyuk explained. “They’re long and pretty. Just like the rest of me.” Jooheon pouted and threw a cushion at him.

Kihyun sent Jooheon out for extra ingredients while he had Minhyuk try the blandest food he could make. He’d read a novel where these beings who’d never tasted anything before had some chocolate, and they exploded because of the strong taste. He did not want to spend the rest of the afternoon cleaning Minhyuk off the walls.

Fortunately Minhyuk didn’t suffer from such a problem, but he did suffer from picky preferences. Half of what Kihyun made didn’t suit his taste, which Kihyun thought was ridiculous because just half an hour before Minhyuk didn’t even have taste.

Jooheon returned and they sat down for a good lunch. Afterwards, Kihyun got out his laptop and...
(possibly illegally) downloaded every episode of the drama *I Remember You*, and Minhyuk got to actually watch it. Kihyun was surprised to find Minhyuk didn’t cry even once, not even in the saddest scene, unlike Jooheon who dissolved every time the sad OST came on. When Jooheon took a bathroom break, Minhyuk leaned into Kihyun and said confidentially, “If I ever come back to Earth, I’ll be stalking Park Bo Gum all the time.” Kihyun laughed and hit him with a pillow.

They had dinner with Jooheon, and then he left, but not before Minhyuk almost squished him to death. Minhyuk helped Kihyun clean up, and then flicked through TV channels until Kihyun told him they were going to sleep.

“I haven’t done that,” Minhyuk said. “Ever.”

“Now is the time to try, then,” Kihyun said. “Come on, you can have my bed.”

“And you?” Minhyuk asked, getting up and following him. “With me?”

“I’ll be on the couch,” Kihyun said firmly. “If I find out you attempted to grab me in the middle of the night, I’ll skewer you.”

Minhyuk laughed. “Sure.” He climbed into Kihyun’s bed and felt it with his hands. “This is nice. And soft. I don’t know how you manage to get out of it in the morning.”

“Yeah, it can be hard,” Kihyun said with a smile. “I’ll be back.” He went to the bathroom to brush his teeth, take a brief shower and change into his sleeping clothes. When he returned, Minhyuk was already asleep.

*Just like a puppy*, Kihyun thought fondly. He would miss Minhyuk, he really would. Minhyuk was convinced he would disappear after he got fired. Kihyun didn’t believe that. It was just Minhyuk’s love of drama taking over, making a big climatic situation. The angel would be fine. But Kihyun would still miss him.

He turned off the lights, grabbed a pen and the notebook he and Hyungwon shared, and went to the living room. Then Kihyun sat down and started writing.

*Hyungwon.*

*I don’t know what you did but everything’s all weird now. Shownu-hyung is upset over something. Wonho-hyung is acting even stranger than before. I don’t know what you did last night, but UNDO it.*

Kihyun stopped for a moment, thinking about what to write. So many thoughts were running through his head, but he couldn’t get them out with the pen.

*I saw Minhyuk again today. He seemed worried. I brought him to my place and made him lunch and dinner. If he’s still there when you wake up, talk to him. I think he needs some friends right now.*

And that was it. Kihyun couldn’t think of anything else right then. He wanted to swear at Hyungwon, grab him by the collar and give him a good shake, maybe even punch him right in that pretty face. He’d stolen Kihyun’s body half the time and messed up his life like this. And Kihyun couldn’t even retaliate. He couldn’t even say anything, because how could he, when Hyungwon was in a coma and he was losing out on his own life?

Kihyun stared at the half-written page, and sighed. Then he closed the notebook, turned off the lights and went to sleep.
Pain and Timing

Chapter Notes

Thank you for all the support and patience! We break two records today, 60k words and 600 kudos! Thank you~

Hyungwon woke up, stretched, and hit the floor with a thud.

That got him awake, and sore. He fell mostly on his arm, and as he sat up he rubbed at it. He wasn’t in Kihyun’s bedroom. He’d been sleeping on the sofa, which explained why he’d fallen off the moment he’d tried to spread out. But why would Kihyun go to sleep on the couch?

“Awake?”

Hyungwon jumped and almost hurt himself again against the coffee table. He looked around for the sound of the voice, and found it sitting in a chair nearby.

“Oh, Minhyuk,” he said with a sigh of relief. “It’s just you.”

“Yup, it’s just me,” the angel said with a smile.

There was something off about him. It took Hyungwon a moment to get it, but when he did he was surprised it wasn’t the first thing he’d noticed.

“Are you wearing Kihyun’s clothes?” he asked, getting up.

Minhyuk looked down like it was the first time he’d noticed it himself, and then grinned. This was a proper Minhyuk smile, like a bulb at full wattage. “Oh, yeah,” he said. “Kihyun let me wear them. I slept here.”

So that’s why I was on the sofa. Kihyun liked to act all crusty, but he was a big pile of goo on the inside. “You can sleep?” he asked, heading towards the bathroom.

“Turns out, yeah,” Minhyuk said, following. “Going to sleep is pretty nice, but sleep itself seems like a big waste of time. I mean, there’s so much other stuff I could’ve been doing. And then in the morning that wailing banshee woke me up.”

“Oh, the demon clock? Yeah, it’s like that,” Hyungwon shrugged. He stopped mid-step, and then turned around and went back to the living room. There was a clock on the wall there, and it loudly proclaimed that it was 12:30 pm.

Hyungwon sighed, satisfied. This was the right time to wake up. The calendar confirmed it was Saturday, so he hadn’t missed any classes either. Kihyun was some sort of demon himself to get up early every day, though he had his own reasons. Hyungwon, personally, did not think breakfast dates were worth the effort.

He started going back to the bathroom. Minhyuk had followed him back to the living room, and was following him again. It would’ve been annoying, but Hyungwon had had a good morning’s sleep, so he didn’t mind. “Shownu didn’t come for breakfast today? Or did you chase him away?”
“Nope, didn’t show up,” Minhyuk said with a shrug.

“Anything happen between him and Tiny yesterday?” Hyungwon asked, dousing his face with water. He made sure not to look in the mirror. Until he saw his reflection, he felt halfway normal.

“I don’t think so,” Minhyuk said. “I was with Kihyun from lunchtime yesterday. I don’t know what happened before.”

“Seriously?” Hyungwon stopped to give Minhyuk a look. “You spy on us all day. If you don’t want to tell me, just say that.”

“I’m serious,” the angel insisted. “I’ve been… busy. Heavenly duties and stuff like that.”

Hyungwon snorted. “You’re the least heavenly person I’ve ever known.” He paused, and then added, “Except me, I guess.”

For a moment it looked like Minhyuk might burst into tears. Then he punched Hyungwon’s arm and said, “Shut up. Kihynnie’s right, you’re just an annoying frog.”

“He let you sleep over once and now he’s ‘Kihyunnie’?” Hyungwon laughed. It had hurt, but he was glad for the punch. He’d gotten worried for a moment there.

“Well you’re living in his body and you call him Tiny,” Minhyuk said. “So who’s worse, huh?”

“You,” Hyungwon said automatically, and then the both of them laughed. “Come on, let’s see what’s for breakfast.” He thought for a second and then asked, “Do you eat?”

“Not everything, but yeah,” Minhyuk replied with a grin.

Breakfast was some leftovers from the previous night’s dinner. Hyungwon heated it up in the microwave, and it was pretty good. Minhyuk had a good appetite, but he was picky, and only tried about half the things.

“Have you really been busy with… ‘Heavenly duties’?” Hyungwon asked, halfway through breakfast.

Minhyuk swallowed and nodded. “Barely get any time to come on Earth anymore.”

“So you’re saying I won’t see you for a while?” Hyungwon asked, massaging one of his temples. There was a headache brewing there, and for some reason the pain almost reminded him of something, something he was sure was important but for some reason forgot…

“You might not see me ever again,” Minhyuk said. He smiled, but this wasn’t a full-wattage smile. “My earthly duties are coming to an end.”

“What is that supposed to mean?” Hyungwon took a sip of coffee. Caffeine probably wouldn’t help the headache, but the rest of his body needed it.

The angel leaned forward, resting his chin on one hand. “It means you’re going to go back to your own body soon, Hyungwon.”

It was like time hiccupped. Hyungwon froze for a moment, halfway through putting his cup back on the table, and his breath stopped. And then he could move again, taking a deep breath as he set his coffee down.

“What?” he finally managed to say. “Are you sure?”
“As sure as I’m pretty,” Minhyuk said, still smiling that weird, un-Minhyuk smile. “I thought I’d tell you before I told Kihyun, but it seems his body has had enough. It’s rejecting you.”

“Rejecting me,” Hyungwon said hollowly. Like I’m a disease, or virus. “Is that why I’m getting all the headaches?”

“Exactly,” Minhyuk said. “If you pay attention, you’ll see they’re worse at night. This is because Kihyun’s body is basically missing Kihyun.”

But Hyungwon wasn’t listening anymore. Because he’d suddenly remembered what exactly he’d forgotten. That night, the bar, the headache… Wonho.

“Wow,” Hyungwon said, and his brain suddenly felt overloaded. He needed to see the notebook. He needed to know what Kihyun had done the day before, he needed to know what Wonho had done. But at the same time he was thinking about how this ordeal would finally be over, how he could finally live. Not as Kihyun, but as himself. No more pretending he liked museums, or that he liked getting up early and making breakfast. No more of this short body, these short fingers. He could be Chae Hyungwon again.

But he needed to see the notebook first.

“I think I need to take a minute and process this,” Hyungwon said slowly.

“Sure,” Minhyuk said, reaching across the table to swipe some of Hyungwon’s breakfast.

Hyungwon got up and wandered to the living room, where he spotted the plain red notebook sitting on the coffee table. He went over to it and sat down on the sofa, but before he could open it, he looked up and spotted Minhyuk watching him.

He opened his mouth to say something, but before he could get a word out, Minhyuk said, “Do you ever think about anyone but yourself?”

That stunned Hyungwon. His overcapacity brain tried to think of a response, but all he could say was, “What?”

“You,” Minhyuk said calmly, “and Wonho.”

Now Hyungwon’s brain got it. It jumped to indignation. “You still spy on me?”

“I saw you, yes,” Minhyuk said, a little less calm and a little more berating. “You were pretty much out in the open. A hundred people could’ve seen you.”

“No one saw us,” Hyungwon said, “except you, but that’s only because you literally fly around invisible to watch me. I don’t see—”

“What, you don’t see what the problem is?” Minhyuk asked. “You don’t see what the problem is, with Wonho thinking Kihyun is the one who kissed him? You don’t see what the problem is, for Kihyun to have kissed one of his closest friends, someone he isn’t attracted to at all? You don’t see what the problem is?”

Hyungwon was taken aback. He’d never seen Minhyuk like this. Minhyuk was supposed to be clueless, smiling all the time, a pretty airhead. He wasn’t supposed to be like this.

“Okay, I got it, can you stop lecturing me now?” Hyungwon got up and started walking towards Kihyun’s bedroom, but Minhyuk grabbed his arm.
“No, I don’t think you got it,” he said. “Kihyun is a good person and you’re messing up his life—”

“Because Kihyun actually has a life!” Hyungwon yanked his arm out of Minhyuk’s grip, turned to face him. “Because he can actually experience things as himself, while I have to pretend to be comfortable around people I don’t even know, while I have to think about every action and every word…” He stopped himself, took a breath to calm down. “Look, I know I messed up, but I’m going to fix it. Just…” Hyungwon trailed off. He didn’t even know what he wanted from Minhyuk.

Somehow Minhyuk got it and pulled Hyungwon into a hug. It was weird. Minhyuk, with his tall frame in clothes that were too short for him, putting his arms around Hyungwon, with his small body that was not big enough for his soul.

Hyungwon still felt incredibly overwhelmed, so he just stood still and let Minhyuk hold him. When he got his thoughts in order a little, he said, “Am I really never gonna see you again?”

“Probably.”

“I’ll miss you,” Hyungwon said finally. “I’m kinda surprised myself, but I’ll miss you.”

“Yeah, I’ll miss you too,” Minhyuk said, holding him tighter. “And Kihyun, and Jooheon and—” He stopped, sighed and pulled away. “Tell Kihyun I said thanks. And I know you probably hate me for it, but I’m kinda glad I messed up that whole dying thing with your soul.”

“I don’t hate you,” Hyungwon said. And then he added, “Okay, maybe a little.”

Minhyuk smiled a full-wattage smile.

And then Hyungwon blinked, and Minhyuk was gone.

The apartment suddenly felt very empty. Hyungwon patted his face to try and dispel the surging feeling of loneliness. It was weird to think Minhyuk wouldn’t jump at him randomly with his bright smile, his unending positivity radiating off him.

“He’s just being dramatic,” Hyungwon told himself aloud, but he wasn’t so sure. There had been something off about the way Minhyuk had been acting. It didn’t instill confidence.

Hyungwon tried to get rid of that thought in his mind, and went to brush his teeth and shower. When he was done and drying his hair, he found finally opened the red notebook.

The message was short, and didn't convey anything, just that Wonho was acting weird, which was understandable, and Shownu was upset about something, which Hyungwon didn't worry himself with. What made him think was the last line about Minhyuk.

I think he needs some friends right now.

Hyungwon wanted to smack himself for getting angry at Minhyuk. Whether the angel was just being dramatic or not, Hyungwon still should've been better to him. He was glad Minhyuk had hugged him now, but it just brought up more regret. He should've hugged back. If that really was the last time he'd see Minhyuk, Hyungwon should've hugged him back.

He tried not to eat himself up over it, and looked for Kihyun's phone, hoping for some sort of distraction. He got it. He had a text. From Shownu.

Sorry I couldn’t make it for breakfast. Do you want to meet up for lunch?
Honestly, Hyungwon did not. What he wanted to do was talk to Wonho and spill the whole truth, whether Wonho believed him or not. But he didn’t want to disrupt Kihyun’s life any more than he already had, so he texted back, *Sure. Where?*

The reply was almost immediate. *We can go to that restaurant in the park by campus. Around 1.30?*

*Okay, I’ll see you there,* Hyungwon replied, and that was that. He worried that his replies were too short and brusque to be from Kihyun, until he remembered that was exactly what Kihyun was: short and brusque. And in any case, Hyungwon could never be comfortable with trying to play Kihyun’s role in the weird relationship-but-not-relationship he had going on with Shownu.

He deliberated for a moment, trying to ignore the headache already pulsing at the ends of his brain, and then called Wonho.

He picked up on the second ring. “Kihyun. Hey.”

Wonho didn’t sound awkward or anxious, which was good. “Do you wanna meet up after lunch?” Hyungwon asked.

“Okay, sure,” Wonho said, and now he sounded a tiny bit awkward. “Done… puppy-sitting?”

It took Hyungwon a moment to get it, and when he did he laughed. Minhyuk *did* resemble a puppy sometimes. “Yeah, I’m done puppy-sitting,” he said. “So after lunch? At the park by the university?”

“Yeah, sounds good,” Wonho said, and now he definitely sounded awkward. “I’ll be there.”

“Two-thirty sound good?” Hyungwon asked, trying not to let his grin come through his voice.

“Two-thirty sounds great,” Wonho said. “I’ll see you then. Bye.”

“Bye,” Hyungwon said, waited until Wonho cut the line, and then burst out laughing. The laughter died when he remembered what Minhyuk had said. Wonho didn’t know Hyungwon was the one he was talking to. He thought it was Kihyun.

“Not good,” Hyungwon said aloud, and then started getting ready for his lunch date.

It was nice at the park. There were a fair number of people, but not enough for the place to be crowded. The weather was perfect, still chilly, but none of the biting cold of the February mornings Hyungwon had to endure on the way to Kihyun’s morning classes.

He was in a light coat and wearing a scarf, not because he thought he needed one but because it seemed Kihyun had a preference for them. After almost two months of playing Kihyun, Hyungwon had gotten a good grasp of Kihyun’s fashion sense, and taken it upon himself to improve it a bit. He’d gone clothes shopping with Kihyun’s money (and with Wonho) and since Kihyun had only griped a little bit, he decided he’d done well.

Hyungwon spotted Shownu standing on a path by the lake, and quickened his steps. He hadn’t known Shownu for that long, but he still realized something wasn’t right. Shownu smiled at him, but it wasn’t his usual looking-at-Kihyun-smile; it didn’t eat up his features or make his eyes crinkle. Hyungwon ran a hand through his hair, willed his headache to fade, and braced himself for whatever was coming.

“Hyung, hi,” he said, walking up to Shownu. “Ready for lunch?”
“Kihyun,” Shownu said, shifting a little. “I didn’t… actually lunch wasn’t the main reason I wanted to see you. There’s something I have to say.”

Hyungwon felt his stomach drop. It was happening. Shownu was going to confess his feelings to Kihyun.

And it was happening at the worst possible moment.

“Hyung, let’s have lunch first,” Hyungwon said, trying his hardest to keep a smile on his face. “We can talk after lunch.” After lunch, Hyungwon could think up some sort of escape plan.

“No, Kihyun, I have to say this now, or I don’t think I ever can,” Shownu said, showing the most extreme emotion Hyungwon had ever seen on that usually-calm face. “I’ve been thinking about it and–”

“No, not now,” Hyungwon insisted, and he was getting desperate. He shouldn’t be hearing this. This was for Kihyun. “Let’s just eat, and then you can tell me later.”

“Kihyun, listen,” Shownu said, and he grabbed Hyungwon’s arms and held him in place. “Just listen. I… I think… that we–”

“No, please, just shut up,” Hyungwon said, shaking free. “You can’t tell me this right now.”

Shownu stopped. “You don’t even know what I’m going to say.”

“I do, which is why I’m telling you, I can’t hear this right now,” Hyungwon said, half-frantic. “You can’t tell me this, not right now. Just–”

The ringing of Kihyun’s phone in his jacket pocket interrupted him. Hyungwon fished it out, glad for the disruption, and looked at the caller ID. It was Wonho. He cancelled it and put the phone back in his pocket, and looked up to find Shownu watching him.

“Was that Hoseok?” he asked, and he was suddenly, eerily calm.

Hyungwon could feel walls closing in on him, even as the headache intensified. He swallowed. “Does it matter?”

“It matters if it’s Hoseok,” Shownu said. He ran a hand through his short, dark hair, glanced around like he was looking for an answer written somewhere. “Kihyun–”

“I’m sorry, I have to go,” Hyungwon burst out. It was stupid and a transparent lie, but he couldn’t be there anymore, not with Shownu like this, not with the headache deepening every second. “I have to…”

The darkness attacked suddenly, starting from the edges of his sight and closing in. The last thing Hyungwon was aware of was a searing pain throughout his head, and Shownu’s voice calling out Kihyun’s name.

White. Everything was white. Why was everything white?

Hyungwon blinked once, twice, and then the details settled in. He was looking at a white ceiling.

A hospital ceiling.
His body was too weak to move, so he turned his head. On his right was a window, closed, with soft white curtains standing still.

On his left, on a small white table, a bouquet of bright, carmine flowers.
Room and Red

Chapter Notes

Thank you for all the love and reactions on the last chapter!
(And we crossed 50 bookmarks too; I'm so surprised and honored)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kihyun blinked rapidly as his vision cleared. Where was he? Why were his cheeks cold?

“Kihyun? Kihyun, are you okay?”

He recognized that voice. Kihyun ran a hand through his hair, trying to get his brain back in order.
He was standing up, but barely; someone was holding him up. He wasn’t in his apartment. He was
in a park. And Shownu was with him, asking him if he was alright.

“I’m fine,” Kihyun answered, although he didn’t know himself. “What… what just happened?”

“You blacked out for a second,” Shownu said, looking deeply concerned. “Are you sure you’re
okay?”

“I’m fine, really,” Kihyun insisted, and now that his brain was up to speed, he was sure he was. It
was midday, and he was in the park. His body must’ve gotten here somehow. Hyungwon must’ve
gotten his body here. And according to Shownu, Kihyun had only blacked out for a second.

A second? Was one second enough, for a soul to leave a body?

Something told Kihyun that yes, yes it was.

“I have to go,” he said, straightening. His legs were stable, and he started walking. “I’m sorry,
hyung, it’s urgent. I’ll talk to you later.”

Shownu followed. “You should see a doctor, Kihyun. It could be serious.”

“That’s exactly where I’m going, hyung,” Kihyun answered, not stopping. He pulled out his phone
from his pocket; he had a missed call from Wonho, and made a mental note to call him later. Right
then he had someone else he needed to talk to.

“Really? I can take you.”

Kihyun stopped, gripped Shownu by his toned arms. “Hyung, I’m sorry, but I really have to go
alone. It’s important. We’ll talk later.”

He turned and rapidly walked away before he could catch the look on Shownu’s face. Kihyun knew
Shownu was probably confused as all hell, but Kihyun just couldn’t stand there and waste time
talking to him. Not when Hyungwon might be waking up in a hospital room.

He found Changkyun’s number and called just as he hailed down a cab. The call was picked up on
the second ring.
“Hyungwon-hyung, hey,” Changkyun’s deep, smooth voice came through. “What’s up?”

“It’s not Hyungwon,” Kihyun said, and he sounded as excited as he felt. All his emotions felt ready to snap, and he didn’t know if it was a good feeling or a bad one, just that it was intense.

There was a long pause on the other end of the line, and then finally, “What?”

“I’m Kihyun,” Kihyun said, trying not to yell and freak out the cab driver. “Not Hyungwon. I opened my eyes like a minute ago and found myself standing in a park.”

Another long pause which Kihyun suffered through patiently, and then Changkyun said, “What?”

“Just go to the hospital, damn it,” Kihyun snapped. “I need to know if Chae Hyungwon’s alive or if his soul’s been sucked into the void.”

“What?”

Kihyun sighed and ended the call. Changkyun needed some time to process, but he’d get it eventually. Somehow Kihyun felt like he was going through the opposite. He got it immediately—his body was finally his—but now his mind couldn’t absorb anything else. What would he say when he finally saw Hyungwon? The thing about Hyungwon’s soul disappearing was a joke, but what if it was true? What if something went wrong, and Hyungwon was just… gone?

He didn’t know what Hyungwon had eaten in the morning, but Kihyun suddenly felt like throwing it all up.

The cab couldn’t move fast enough. As soon as it reached the Lady Mary Memorial Kihyun paid the driver the exact amount he’d counted out ages before, and sprinted into the lobby. It was a hospital, so no one paid attention to him running down towards the elevator, and then taking the stairs when the elevator took too long. All this while his heart was in his throat, refusing to move.

When Kihyun finally reached the right floor and turned into the corridor, he saw Changkyun, sitting on one of the chairs outside Hyungwon’s room.

“Changkyun-ah?” Kihyun blinked in surprise. “What… how did you get here so fast?”

“I was already in the lobby when you called me,” Changkyun answered, his voice surprisingly calm and steady. “So I just had to go up in the elevator.”

“Oh, okay,” Kihyun said. He shuffled, and then finally asked, “How… how is he?”

“If you’re asking if his soul got sucked into the endless darkness of space, that’s a no,” Changkyun said, with a little smile. “He seemed alright. A little dazed. He asked for my phone and then gave me the stink-eye until I left, so his personality’s the same.”

“As long as he’s not dead,” Kihyun said, dropping down to a seat next to Changkyun. He leaned his head back. “So this whole thing’s finally over, I guess.” He didn’t know how to feel about that. Relieved, obviously, but there were so many other emotions surging along with it that he just felt jumbled up.

“I guess,” Changkyun said with a shrug. He stood up. “It’s been a while, he’s probably done with his phone call. Come on.”

Kihyun stood up too. His legs were surprisingly steady. Changkyun pushed the door open a little, looked inside, and when he had confirmed it was okay to enter, opened the door all the way. Kihyun
It was a plain hospital room, and looked just as it had two months ago, which was the last time Kihyun had been inside. It was white, and bare, with soft curtains still in front of a closed window, and a hard-backed chair beside. A small table held a vibrant spot of color, a bouquet of red, red flowers, and next to it, a bed.

A bed with an occupant with short, dark hair, a handsome face and full, pretty lips, sitting up.

Kihyun stared at Hyungwon. Hyungwon stared back.

And then finally, after what seemed like an age, Hyungwon spoke. “You’re just as short from the outside,” he said.

And Kihyun replied, “Wow your voice is annoying.”

“I’ll just leave you two soul mates alone then,” Changkyun said, discreetly stepping out.

When they were alone, Kihyun walked up to Hyungwon’s bed and sat down in the chair beside it. Chae Hyungwon really was handsome. He looked refreshed, like he had just been napping, instead of waking up from a coma over two months long. His short black hair was flat on his head, and he noticed and started running long fingers through it, trying to add some volume.

“How do you feel?” Kihyun finally asked.

“Taller,” Hyungwon answered, and then laughed. “No, I actually feel good. Really good. I thought my joints would ache or something, but I feel perfectly alright.”

“That’s good,” Kihyun said.

He suddenly realized that he’d never spoken to Hyungwon before. This was their first verbal conversation. It could even be counted as their first real conversation, since diary entries didn’t count, did they? Kihyun had shared his body for two months with this stranger in front of him, and this was the first time they were speaking.

“You know,” Kihyun said suddenly, “I told myself that if I came in here and you’d lost all your memories in some sort of shitty makjang plot twist, I’d put you in a real coma.”

“It’s kind of funny,” Hyungwon said, “but I actually considered doing that. Looking at Changkyun and asking, ‘who’s this Tiny?’”

“Consider yourself lucky you decided better.”

“I don’t really remember everything, though,” Hyungwon admitted. “Just there were a lot of headaches.” He paused. “I think… Minhyuk said something about that…”

“So he was there in the morning?” Kihyun straightened. He always tried not to get overly attached, especially to weird blonde young men who loved drama and Park Bo Gum, but he couldn’t help but be concerned for the angel. “How was he? Do you remember?”

Hyungwon closed his eyes, like he was thinking hard. “He was… weird,” he said after a while, eyes still closed. “He hugged me.”

“That’s normal for him,” Kihyun said. He had been on the receiving end of Minhyuk death grips numerous times, the last one in front of everybody on campus.
“No, it was a weird hug,” Hyungwon said, opening his eyes. There was concern there, a bit of regret.

It was strange, but Kihyun suddenly felt like he had walked blindly into something. That the three of them—he, this tall handsome frog, and the weirdo angel—had forged some unusual bond beyond regular friendship. Hyungwon looked at him knowingly, like he felt it too.

He opened his mouth to comment on it, when the click of an opening door interrupted him.

Kihyun turned around to see Wonho standing in the doorway, a bouquet of white lilies in hand.

Wonho stared at the scene in front of him, frozen. And then he cleared his throat and said, “Hello.”

It was such an ordinary greeting that both Kihyun and Hyungwon burst out laughing at the same time. Wonho’s cheeks colored pink, and he shifted a little before saying, “Can I come in?”

“Sure,” Hyungwon said with a casual shrug, and Wonho entered and closed the door behind him.

Very slowly Kihyun got the idea his presence was no longer desired. No one said anything, of course, but Kihyun liked to think he wasn’t a complete idiot. He was a little offended, honestly, since the only reason Wonho and Hyungwon knew each other was because of him, but he had known for a while now from the diary entries that the two of them had gotten close. The fact that Wonho didn’t know that didn’t really change things, did it?

“I have to go make a phone call,” Kihyun said, the most transparent excuse ever, but it didn’t matter anyway. “Hyungwon, I’ll talk to you later.”

“Great,” Hyungwon said, and he actually looked like he meant it. Kihyun gave one glance at Wonho, and then left the hospital room.

* *

Hyungwon attempted a blank face with all he had. I don’t know him, I don’t know him, he repeated in his mind, over and over. He wasn’t supposed to know Wonho. He sure as hell wasn’t supposed to know Wonho had kissed who he thought was Kihyun in a little corridor in an old bar.

So he cleared his throat and said, “You know Kihyun?”

“Um, yeah,” Wonho said, approaching the bed rather gingerly. He put his lilies down on the table. “We’re pretty good friends.”

“Oh, okay,” Hyungwon said. He paused, like he was thinking about it, and said, “I think I’ve seen you before.”

“Just for a second, I think,” Wonho said with an awkward smile. “I, um, nagged you about your headphones, and then…” He trailed off, looked almost ready to cry.

“Oh, yeah, thanks for that,” Hyungwon said, and he wasn’t sure why he laughed, but it seemed to make Wonho feel better. He looked at the flowers. “Are those for me?”

Wonho turned almost as red as the blooms in the vase. “Yeah,” he said. “You know, because you were in a coma and everyone likes guys with flowers, right? And…” He stopped when he suddenly
realized what he’d just said, and he looked like he wanted nothing more than to just disappear on the spot.

It was endearing. When Hyungwon had been masquerading as Kihyun, Wonho had been perfectly comfortable with him, and Hyungwon had found him charming. Now Wonho was shuffling and uncomfortable and Hyungwon still found him charming, maybe even more so.

“Thanks,” Hyungwon said, and he meant it. “For the flowers. For coming to see me. Thank you.”

Wonho returned the smile, a beautiful, warm expression. “It… you’re welcome.”

Hyungwon wanted to talk to him more, but he couldn’t find anything to say. What could he say? *I’ve been possessing one of your best friends, and when you thought you were putting your tongue in his mouth—surprise, it was actually me. Let’s date.*

It was so ridiculous that Hyungwon actually chuckled aloud. Wonho regarded him with an amused smile, and then asked, “What?”

“Nothing, it’s just kind of weird,” Hyungwon said, and that was the truth. “Just… according to Changkyun I’ve been unconscious for more than two months, and now I’m awake and I feel okay. Like nothing changed except… everything has.”

“It’s warmer now,” Wonho said.

That made Hyungwon laugh. “Yeah, it is.”

Wonho spotted the phone in Hyungwon’s lap and motioned to it. “Yours?”

“Changkyun’s,” Hyungwon replied. “I thought I should call my mom. She and my dad live in Germany.”

“Oh, so that’s why I never saw your parents here,” Wonho said, mostly to himself.

Hyungwon jumped on the opening. “You come here often?”

“Occasionally,” Wonho lied through his teeth. Hyungwon personally did not consider daily to be occasionally, and he was betting neither did Wonho.

But he liked this. It felt right. Wonho talking to him, smiling at him and blushing a little, lying to try and make it seemed like he wasn’t so attached. Even the smallest of blush was stark in Wonho’s flawless white skin, and Hyungwon had seen it many times before, but this time was special. Because this time it was for him. For Hyungwon, not Kihyun.

Only then did Wonho feel comfortable enough to sit down. “Are you sure you’re okay, though?” he asked. “I mean, you’ve been out for like two months.”

“I feel a little stiff, I guess,” Hyungwon said. “I think I’ll feel the full effects later. But right now I feel great. Honestly I don’t even feel like I was in a coma.”

“I tried to talk to the doctor about it,” Wonho said, “but he didn’t want to tell me anything after I let it spill that I didn’t really know you.” He paused, as if thinking that over, and then said, “Anyway, from what I got, the whole hospital was kind of… puzzled by your coma.”

“Puzzled,” Hyungwon repeated, hoping desperately the laugh bubbling up his throat didn’t show on his face.
“Yeah, you seemed fine,” Wonho said with a shrug. “I guess they were right. You seem fine.”

Hyungwon stretched his arms over his head. “I feel fine,” he said. “But I could murder a sandwich right now.”

Wonho laughed, which in turn made Hyungwon smile. It was a little strange. Hyungwon knew Wonho pretty well, but he still felt slightly awkward, knowing that when Wonho looked at him, he actually saw him. Not Kihyun and his cute face with his hard cheeks, but Hyungwon. Wonho was looking at him, smiling at him. It made him feel good. It reminded Hyungwon that he was actually alive now, living his own life.

Living as Kihyun had been hard and painful at times, but Hyungwon decided it wasn’t the worst thing to happen to him.

There was a soft knock on the door, and then it opened up and Kihyun stepped inside. “Hyungwon, the doctor wants to see you,” he said. “Is anything up?”

But Hyungwon wasn’t looking at him. He was watching Wonho. He’d seen the change in his expression when Kihyun had walked in. It had gone from a normal bright smile to something else, something softer. It was still there on Wonho’s face as he stood up, made his way towards Kihyun.

“Nothing,” Hyungwon said, when he realized he hadn’t answered Kihyun’s question. “It’s all good.”

“We’re going to grab lunch now, okay?” Kihyun said, motioning his head a little towards Wonho. “If all goes well, Changkyun will smuggle something in for you later.”

Hyungwon nodded, trying to look at Kihyun and not at the way Wonho was looking at Kihyun. Not at the way Wonho kept his gaze on Kihyun, how warm his eyes were.

“I’ll see you later, then,” Wonho said, turning to Hyungwon for a moment. The smile on his face was bright, happy. Normal. But the second he turned back to Kihyun, that look was back. That look like he was glowing, like there was actual, liquid warmth pouring out of his body. All for one person.

And that person was not Hyungwon.

“Okay, let’s go,” Kihyun said, hand on the door handle again. “We’ll talk again later.”

Wonho followed Kihyun out the door, leaving Hyungwon alone in his room again. And as Hyungwon sat in his bed with nothing but two bouquets of flowers by his side, he realized he might’ve made a mistake. He might’ve made two months of mistakes.

Chapter End Notes

First mid-chapter POV switch. Wasn’t too confusing, I hope. Comments, critique, kudos-- all appreciated : )
Hello everyone and sorry for the late chapter! Also, I'm sorry if the formatting is wonky; I'm uploading from my phone so it may not come out right.
If you follow Daily Monsta X on tumblr you know my PC's been giving me shit recently. I've actually been putting off uploading this until I could do it from the computer, simply because there is a lot of essential formatting in this, but it's been 11 days and I can't delay any longer. So here it is, and apologies once more.
Hope you enjoy.
(I spent like an hour fixing HTML on my phone)

Kihyun didn't even bother trying to pay attention in class anymore.

He'd stopped being a top student some time in the last two months. It did not help that Hyungwon had had to give some exams in his place. Hyungwon had done pretty impressively, not failing a single one. Kihyun suspected it was because he was skilled at cheating, not studying, but as long as he passed, he didn't give a damn. But in the end Hyungwon was just a literature student, and Kihyun's grades had dropped.

This, and the fact that he'd barely paid attention in the classes he did attend, meant Kihyun had resigned himself to even more caffeine-fueled sleepless nights when semester finals came around. Even more than he'd had the semester before, where he'd broken a previous record and given all his finals on six hours of sleep total.

Well, how much sleep do I need anyway? I can cut down to at least four before dying, so four and a half seems doable—

Jung Joon Young’s OMG cut off Kihyun’s thoughts, and it took him a moment to realize it was his ringtone. The professor glared at him and Kihyun dropped his head in a silent apology before quickly taking out his phone. It was an unknown number, and he cancelled it and then put his phone on silent. A minute later and it vibrated in his hand.

This time it was a text, from the same number.

Tiny it's me. You're in class?

Kihyun knew who it was. Only one person referred to him as Tiny. It was him.

He thought of ignoring the text, but he wasn't paying attention in class anyway, so he sent a reply: You've memorized my schedule by now, you know I'm in class. How did you get this number?

The reply back was quick: You think I memorized your schedule but not your number? Ha

It's that old guy's class right? Did his toupee fall off yet? One time it literally hung off his neck, how the hell did it not slip off?

Kihyun coughed down a laugh. He was very familiar with Professor Choi’s unusual hairpiece. He replied, and soon they were texting back and forth. Hyungwon texted with perfect pronunciation,
which Kihyun liked. Not only that, but communicating through messages felt… natural. Kihyun had
gone to see Hyungwon in hospital again on Sunday, and it was kind of weird to see him talking and
moving around. This was better.

Hyungwon had been released from the hospital that morning. His whole case had frustrated the
doctors from the beginning—from the sudden coma to the even more sudden waking up—but they
had no reason to keep him there. They’d run a billion tests and they all came back the same: he was
fine.

*One of them did tell me to eat less junk food. That's all they got. My eating habits are bad.*

*How’s it being back in your own apartment?* Kihyun asked.

*It's messy,* came Hyungwon’s reply. *Changkyun is staying with me for a while. I told him I
was fine but surprise surprise he doesn't believe me either*

*You came out of a 2 month coma,* Kihyun sent. *It's normal he doesn't
I guess. How's Wonho?*

It was such a sudden question it took Kihyun aback. He wondered for a moment why exactly
Hyungwon was interested in him, and then chalked it up to regular curiosity. Hyungwon and Wonho
had been hanging out regularly for over two months, even if Wonho didn’t know it. Hyungwon
must’ve become at least a little close with him. Something about that bothered Kihyun. Probably the
fact that Hyungwon had become friends with Wonho while wearing Kihyun like a skinsuit.

He decided to send back a joking reply. *Why, miss him?*

*Maybe I do*

The short answer, without any punctuation or emoticons, pinged something in Kihyun. It seemed so
sincere. It made Kihyun remember that Hyungwon had spent a lot of time with Wonho. A lot more
than Kihyun usually did, and Kihyun actually knew Wonho. A lot more than a regular friend would.

And then another text came in a second later: *He bought me food :(

Kihyun relaxed. Okay. That was normal. *He’s doing pretty good,* he sent.

*Still acting weird?*

Hyungwon didn’t know the half of it. Wonho had been acting weird, but different weird. He wasn’t
awkward or uncomfortable around Kihyun anymore. On Sunday Wonho had asked Kihyun to have
lunch with him, but Kihyun had been busy at the hospital and had to turn him down. Wonho had
then asked him to dinner but Kihyun refused again because he and Changkyun had spent the whole
day making Hyungwon’s apartment livable and he was dead tired. It was strange, how enthusiastic
Wonho suddenly was to spend time with Kihyun alone, especially since just a couple of days ago it
seemed like he was dying to get away.

*A little weird,* Kihyun wrote. *Getting better, I think

*And Shownu?*

*And Shownu?* He hadn’t seen Shownu since that time at the park, when he’d woken up and found
himself not in his bed. Kihyun had called Shownu that night, hoping to figure out what he they had
been talking about before Hyungwon had returned to his body, but he hadn’t picked up. It had been
pretty late, so Kihyun assumed he’d fallen asleep and left it at that.

But then Shownu hadn’t shown up for breakfast on Sunday. Or on Monday.

On Sunday Kihyun had been too busy to give it much thought. But now he was getting kind of worried. Shownu had given a plausible excuse as to why he didn’t show up, but that was exactly what it sounded like—an excuse.

*Shownu-hyung is fine too*, Kihyun sent.

*That’s good*, Hyungwon replied. And then a few seconds later: *He’s a really good guy*

That came out of nowhere. Kihyun didn’t know what to reply, but he didn’t have to, as Hyungwon kept writing.

*Really sweet*

*And he’s good-looking too*

*And strong and manly*

It was starting to irritate Kihyun. He already knew about Shownu’s many attractive qualities, and he never minded when people praised him like that, since he deserved it. But the mental image of Hyungwon sprawled over a sofa, long legs hanging over the edge and cellphone glow on his small pretty face as he went on about how amazing Shownu was…it annoyed Kihyun. Hyungwon had spent a lot of time with Shownu too, Kihyun remembered.

*Yeah and?* he finally typed back.

*Nothing*, Hyungwon texted. *Just that if someone really liked him, they should make a move. Right now. No time to waste*

*I’ll pass the message along*, Kihyun wrote.

Hyungwon didn’t reply after that, which Kihyun was actually glad for since his class had just ended and he had something he had to do. He packed up his books and shuffled out of class, right in the middle of the pack. He only had a few minutes before his next class, but he took the elevator down and walked out of the building. The mechanical engineering rooms were on the east side of the campus.

Kihyun walked at a brisk pace, and soon he was standing in front of the elevator, waiting for it to come down and then carry him up to the fifth floor. There was a library there, and sometimes Shownu liked to sit there and read in between classes. Kihyun had sat with him before, paging through books or going through old notes. He didn’t need to talk with Shownu. The silence was comfortable enough.

That was something Kihyun had never felt around another person. How he could be perfectly content with just sitting together, not saying anything. It was one of the unique things about Shownu.

The elevator dinged, pulling Kihyun out of his thoughts. The sliding doors opened up, and Kihyun found himself face-to-face with Shownu.

Kihyun smiled, a little brighter than usual. Shownu looked at him blankly, blinked a few times, and then stepped out of the elevator. He started walking towards the double doors leading out of the building, and asked, “Don’t you have class?”
“In a couple of minutes,” Kihyun answered, walking beside him. Shownu’s legs were longer but he went at a casual pace, so Kihyun was able to keep up easily. “I came to see you, actually.”

“You should go, you’ll be late for class,” Shownu said. He didn’t look at Kihyun when he spoke—he hadn’t looked at him once since they’d made eye-contact the first time. Kihyun quickened his pace so that he walked a little ahead of Shownu, turning his head to look at him. Shownu glanced at him once, and then looked straight ahead.

“I told you, it’s a few minutes later.” Kihyun put on his best smile. “You didn’t show up for breakfast. I bought that cereal you like.”

“And I told you, I woke up late,” Shownu said, still looking forward, brow furrowed.

Kihyun’s steps faltered a moment. Shownu’s voice was clipped, rough. He’d never been so cold to Kihyun before, not once in all the time they’d known each other. Not only his words, but his expression, his tone, all growled at Kihyun to get lost. Kihyun was hurt. And then he was angry.

“Hey, what’s wrong with you?” Kihyun grabbed Shownu by the arm, yanked him around.

Now Shownu looked at him, and he could see how angry he was. “Me?”

“Yeah, you,” Kihyun said, too pissed off to keep his voice down. They were standing in front of the building and there were students everywhere, but he didn't care. “Any reason you're being an asshole to me right now?”

“You really can't think of a reason?” Shownu said, and the bite in his tone didn't suit him. “You always know what I'm going to say, don't you? You can't think of it now?”

“What?” Bewilderment cut through Kihyun’s anger. “Where the hell is this coming from?”

Shownu ran a hand through his hair roughly, and then sighed. When he finally spoke he didn't sound as mad as before, but he was far from calm. “I saw you, okay?” He looked right at Kihyun, and there was a whole tempest of emotions in his eyes, everything from anger to disappointment to betrayal. “That night at the bar. You stomped away and I felt bad so I followed you and… I saw you.”

“What are you talking about?” Kihyun could feel his anger ebbing away under that gaze.

“Just— don’t bother,” Shownu said, turning away and running his fingers through his hair again. “Just let me be alone for some time, okay? I got it.”

Kihyun stood where he was. That night at the bar? At Blacklight? He couldn't remember a thing from that night, but he must've done something, because he'd never seen Shownu look at him like this before, look so hurt.

“Look, hyung, I'm sorry,” Kihyun said, not knowing what he was apologizing for, but knowing he had to. “I was drunk, I don't—”

“You weren't drunk, Kihyun,” Shownu cut off. “Don’t… don't lie to me. I got it. I just need some time alone.” He smiled, a sad, sad smile.

“Hyung…” Kihyun didn't know what to say. He didn't know if he could even say anything in front of that smile.

Shownu put his hand on Kihyun’s shoulder. “I understand. I mean it. You can tell Hoseok that too, alright? I'd just like to be alone now.”
Kihyun nodded, almost in a trance. Shownu smiled, nodded once, and then turned around and walked away.

Only after those eyes were off him did Kihyun return to his senses. “Hyung, wait,” he called out uselessly, but Shownu was already gone.

Wonho pulled his bag off the chair as Kihyun sat down. He looked him up and down and then asked, “You okay?”

“I’m fine,” Kihyun said, waving away Wonho’s concern with a hand and hoping he’d move on to a different topic.

Wonho didn’t look convinced, but obliged just the same. “You seen Hyunwoo?” he asked. “He’s late for lunch.”

“I don’t think he's coming,” Kihyun said, mostly to himself. He still didn't understand. Shownu had seemed so hurt, smiling at him like that, and Kihyun had just stood there like an idiot. He should've asked him. Now he felt like it was too late.

“Did something happen?” Wonho asked, swallowing a mouthful of ramen.

“I… don't know,” Kihyun said, but that was a lie. Something had definitely happened, if not now, then at that bar. Kihyun just didn't know what. Shownu had told him that he got it, that he understood… what, exactly?

Finally Kihyun sighed, and said, “He said he wanted to be alone for some time.” Even as he said it, he could hear how miserable he sounded. It made him feel even worse, how badly he was responding to this, but he couldn't help it.

Wonho put down his chopsticks. “He said that?” He was perfectly serious now, his handsome face grim. “Did he say anything else? Like… why?”

Kihyun stared blankly at that good-looking face all set in serious lines. And then he answered, “No.”

“Are you sure?” Wonho persisted. “He didn't say anything about me?”

“No,” Kihyun repeated. “He didn't say much at all. You know how he is.”

“Did… did he seem hurt?” Wonho asked after a pause. “A lot?”

“I don't know,” Kihyun lied again. He couldn't bring himself to say yes.

Wonho fell back in his chair, pensive. Kihyun started eating, just for something to do. He wasn't sure why he'd lied to Wonho. For some reason, he just wanted to keep this between him and Shownu. This was the two of theirs.

But he wanted answers. “Hyung,” Kihyun said after a while. “Do you have any idea why Shownuhyang is acting like this?”

“No,” Wonho said, but it came out too fast, too high. Wonho had always been a bad liar.

“Okay,” Kihyun said, keeping his head down as he mixed his rice. “But if you have anything to say to me, I'm here.”
The silence was long, the only sound being Kihyun’s chopsticks against his bowl. Wonho wasn’t eating. It left a hollow space in the air. Kihyun tried to concentrate on eating, but his brain was too full. He felt like he was in the eye of a storm, but he couldn't see what had caused it or how to stop it.

And then finally, after an age, Wonho spoke. “No.”

Kihyun looked up. “Hmm?”

“No,” Wonho said again. “I don’t have anything I need to tell you, Kihyun.”

Kihyun looked at him, and Wonho didn't break eye-contact. He was hiding something— he and Shownu both. And somehow Kihyun found himself being buffeted by the winds.

“Okay,” Kihyun said, and they left it at that.
Ripped skinny jeans in dark blue. A black, soft-knit sweater top. Black and white sneakers, a thin bracelet in black, a little curl in his hair, and he was ready.

Chae Hyungwon was going courting.

His thought process was simple. If he could make Wonho fall for him in Kihyun’s short, plain body, then he’d have no problem winning him over in his real one.

He looked over his appearance once again in the mirror. Damn, he’d done a lot. He’d even put on makeup— just a little tint on his lips, enough to look almost natural, and a little BB cream to hide some blemishes. Two months in a coma and away from his usual skincare routine had not been good for Hyungwon’s skin. *I should’ve asked Changkyun to do it for me,* he thought, and then laughed aloud at the mental image of the kid sneaking into the hospital with cleanser to wash a comatose Hyungwon’s face.

Changkyun had unceremoniously moved into Hyungwon’s apartment, despite repeated assurances everything was okay, and slept in a makeshift bed in the living room. Hyungwon walked over to him and prodded him with a foot. “Hey, get up,” he said. “I’m going out.”

The figure heaped under the blankets groaned, and then Changkyun’s bloated face poked out. “Wha?” he slurred, and then rubbed his eyes. “Hyung?”

“I said I’m going out,” Hyungwon said, a little louder. “Get up. Don’t you have morning classes?”

“Not today,” Changkyun said, forcing himself up. He looked so absolutely miserable that Hyungwon almost cackled with glee. “What’s the time? How are you up?”

“I have places I have to be,” Hyungwon said, looking over his shoes. Kihyun had been here. It was obvious from the way the shoes were actually in the shoe cabinet.

“Are you wearing makeup?” Changkyun asked, incredulous. He was more than half awake now.

“Yes, I had to borrow some of your stuff,” Hyungwon said, trying to appear casual.

“Where the hell are you going?” Changkyun was climbing out of bed now. “I thought you only wore makeup when you went someplace fancy.”

“That was when my skin was clear, beautiful and flawless,” Hyungwon said, making a face. “Now my face looks like a 3D map of the moon. These are emergency measures.”

He was trying really hard to act like it was no big deal, but Changkyun kept closing in on him suspiciously. “Where are you going, hyung?”

“Nowhere,” Hyungwon said innocently. “I thought I’d go see Kihyun.”

Changkyun’s eyes narrowed even more in suspicion, and then he suddenly broke out into a huge grin. A very disconcerting grin. “Oh, I see,” he said. “Going to Kihyun-hyung’s university?”

“Yes.” Hyungwon tried to look as busy as possible as he took out his shoes.

“Kihyun-hyung’s university,” Changkyun repeated, “which just so happens to be Wonho-hyung’s university too.”
“Yeah, and?” Hyungwon turned to him and stood up straight, trying to use his height to look intimidating. “What are you getting at?”

“Nothing,” Changkyun said, not intimidated at all. He looked at Hyungwon, and though it shouldn’t have been possible, grinned even wider. “You’re wearing lip tint.”

“Shut up,” Hyungwon snapped. “Go back to sleep. I should’ve just locked you in here and left you to starve.”

“Your fridge is stocked, courtesy of me and Kihyun-hyung, so, nah,” Changkyun said. “And come on, no need to get testy. Jokes aside, I’m actually glad.”

Now Hyungwon was suspicious. “Really?”

“Yeah, really,” Changkyun shrugged. “You like him, he seems alright. And I think it’ll help Kihyun-hyung in the end too.”

“Kihyun?” Hyungwon stopped. “What about him?”

“Oh come on, don’t tell me you didn’t see that,” Changkyun said, raising an eyebrow. “Wonho-hyung was shooting serious heart eyes at him. He was literally that heart attack meme.”

“That obvious, huh?” Hyungwon said with a frown.

“Completely,” Changkyun said seriously. “Kihyun-hyung should be declared legally blind. I can’t believe he didn’t realize.”

“Yeah, Tiny’s dense like that,” Hyungwon said. “You would not believe—”

“Okay, okay, I got it,” Changkyun said rolling his eyes. “Two months of sharing his body has made you an expert on his love life.”

“I know it better than he does, yes,” Hyungwon said, fixing his shoes. “Now stay here like a good kid. I’ll be back by lunch.”

“Whatever, go flirt,” Changkyun said, shoving him out the door. Hyungwon just laughed, and set off for the subway station.

He had pretty much memorized Wonho’s schedule, so he knew when he had a free period. He’d also planned it so he wouldn’t bump into Kihyun. If Kihyun really didn’t know Wonho liked him, that was good. Hyungwon was going to fix this problem before Kihyun even realized it existed.

The subway car was pretty empty, but Hyungwon still had to stand the whole way. He was just glad it wasn’t packed. He’d spent a good half hour trying to make his hair as shiny and smooth at it had been before the accident, and he did not want it ruined.

The campus was pretty quiet too. Most of the students were in class, Hyungwon thought. He knew Wonho liked to sit on the benches outside, so he started wandering randomly. He was already planning what he’d do when they ‘coincidentally bumped into’ each other. Hyungwon would smile just a little (enough to look good, but not too obviously) and Wonho would blush just a little—

Hyungwon’s thoughts were interrupted by a person barrelling right into his chest. He staggered backwards and was about to snap something at the person who’d walked into him when he noticed who it was.
“Jooheon-ah,” he said. “You should be more careful.”

Jooheon smiled that sweet, innocent smile, the one that made his eyes disappear and his dimples appear. “Sorry, hyung,” he said. “But I'm pretty sure you walked into me.”

Hyungwon was starting to think the kid was right, so he quickly moved on. “How've you been?” he asked. “Enjoying living alone?”

“No,” Jooheon said with a frown. “The whole apartment felt so empty, it was super creepy. I'm staying with my friend Soonyoung for now.”

“I see.” Hyungwon liked Jooheon, he really did, but he was on a mission, and he wanted this conversation to end.

But Jooheon asked, “How was it like being in a coma?”

Hyungwon had heard this question at least four hundred times in the last five days. He was about to give his usual answer, how he couldn't remember anything from that time and how he felt the same as before, when he got a different idea.

“It was really weird,” he said with a heavy sigh. “I felt like I was on the line between life and death. I could feel shadows and whispers of ghosts on my skin. It's as though I walked among the shades, and even now I feel them among me, clinging to my body.”

All the blood drained out of Jooheon’s face. “Really?” he whispered.

“Really,” Hyungwon said, trying to look serious even though he was so close to bursting out laughing.

“Oh, uh, okay,” Jooheon said, and now he looked like he wanted to leave, desperately. “Well… this was nice, seeing you… b-but I have to go. Yes. Right now. Goodbye.”

Before Hyungwon could even answer Jooheon had turned and pretty much sprinted away. When he was out of earshot, Hyungwon doubled over in laughter. He'd never spouted such bullshit before in his life. Shadows and whispers of ghosts? Jooheon was just too easy.

He was still grinning to himself as he turned a corner and found Wonho sitting on a bench.

He was not alone. There was another guy with him, tall, with black hair styled away from his face, and they were talking about something. Hyungwon ducked behind a tree. He hadn't planned for this. In hindsight, he realized it was stupid to assume Wonho had only two friends. Even Kihyun had other friends. Hyungwon had had to ditch them sometimes.

He hovered there, unsure of what to do, when Mr. Long Legs got a phone call. He only spoke for a few seconds before giving Wonho a nod of farewell and then jogging away.

An opening. Hyungwon waited an appropriate time, until Wonho got out his phone and tapped at it boredly, before casually making his way to the bench.

When he was a few steps away and Wonho still hadn't looked up, Hyungwon started to panic. *Maybe this was a mistake. I look like an idiot. What am I even doing?*

He was just about to turn around and walk away just as casually, when Wonho finally noticed him. He was surprised a moment, and then his features softened into a smile. “Oh, Hyungwon-ah, hello. What're you doing here?”
“Oh, Wonho-hyung, hi,” Hyungwon said, pretending to be just as surprised. “I came here to see a friend. This is a coincidence.” As soon as Hyungwon said it he wanted to smack himself. Could I sound any more fake?

If Wonho noticed he didn't let it show. “Do you have anywhere you need to be?” he asked. “I was about to go grab a coffee.”

“Sounds great,” Hyungwon said, and he meant it. Wonho got up, and they started walking together.

It was a little weird for Hyungwon. As Kihyun, he’d walked to lots of places with Wonho. But things were different with him back in his own body. For one, it turned out Wonho was not as tall as he’d seemed.

Also, Wonho didn’t know him. To Wonho, Hyungwon was a stranger. But that, Hyungwon could change.

There was a little café just outside the campus, and Hyungwon recognized it as the place he and Changkyun had had lunch ages ago. Wonho found an empty spot and they ordered—an espresso for Hyungwon, Americano for Wonho—and sat together at a cozy table for two.

It was nice. Wonho made small talk about his classes, Hyungwon bitched a little about the semester he’d had to drop, and all the imminent paperwork. Wonho laughed at that and said, “Seriously? That's the worst thing about falling into a coma?”

Hyungwon paused, and then said, “Not really looking forward to paying the hospital bills either.”

They both laughed, Wonho with his dopey, carefree laugh that Hyungwon liked to hear so much. “I guess it kind of sucks I missed out on so much,” Hyungwon continued, “but honestly I'm just glad I'm alive.”

“Me too,” Wonho smiled.

Hyungwon must have been staring at him blatantly because Wonho shuffled a little uncomfortably, and blushed. That just made Hyungwon stare more. There was nothing more endearing in the world than that little pink in Wonho’s cheeks, the way he tried so hard to busy himself with other things in a futile attempt to look unembarrassed.

He was fiddling with the bracelet around his left wrist, and Hyungwon smiled when he realized it was the one he’d given him. Wonho still wore it. It boosted the hope in Hyungwon’s heart.

“Can I see that?” he asked, motioning to the bracelet.

For a moment he thought Wonho would refuse, but then he said “Sure,” and held out his wrist.

Hyungwon held Wonho’s wrist, fingertips lightly brushing against the back of his hand. It had been so long since Hyungwon had felt Wonho’s skin. The last time it had been his collarbones beneath his fingers, while their lips and tongues were busy.

But that had been Kihyun’s body, and Hyungwon tried not to think of it.

Instead he turned his attention to the twisted leather, as though it was his first time seeing it. He lifted the metal tag and said aloud, “Morpheus.”

Wonho was surprised. “You can read it?”
“Not really,” Hyungwon said. “I used to be really into Greek mythology. Morpheus was one of my
favorites. I just recognized some characters.” It was the truth, though stretched. Hyungwon could
recognize the characters for Morpheus, but he had learned them from the bracelet.

“That’s amazing,” Wonho said, and he looked like he meant it. “How did you get into mythology
anyway?”

“I like reading,” Hyungwon shrugged. “I found a book of myths in the library, and it just started
from there.”

That got him talking about myths, and Wonho listened and pitched in every once in a while. The
conversation moved to books, then movies, and sports, and it kept on moving. Hyungwon felt
comfortable talking to Wonho, even when he was saying nothing worth anything.

He would’ve been happy if they just sat there forever, but eventually Wonho checked the time and
jumped up. “Sorry, I have to meet someone for lunch,” he said. “I have to go.”

“That’s okay, I’ll head home now,” Hyungwon said, getting up. “This was pretty fun.”

“Yeah,” Wonho said, and then he hesitated and said, “It’s just Kihyun. You wanna join us?”

“Only Kihyun?” Hyungwon was surprised. “What about Shownu?”

Now Wonho was surprised. “You know Hyunwoo?”

“Kihyun told me about him before,” Hyungwon invented quickly. “I thought the three of you always
ate together?”

“Hyunwoo’s been… busy,” Wonho said slowly. “So it’s just me and Kihyun. You can join us.”

“Sure,” Hyungwon said, maybe a little too enthusiastically. He didn’t care. Leaving Wonho and
Kihyun alone together was dangerous. What if Wonho suddenly confessed? Hyungwon silently
cursed both Shownu and Kihyun in his head. If either of them would just make a move on the other,
Wonho could be free of this ridiculous Kihyun infatuation. The fact that Hyungwon was the source
of it just made it all worse.

He and Wonho bought lunch from the cafeteria, and then made their way to the usual table. Kihyun
was already sitting there, busy with bibimbap, but when he looked up and made direct eye-contact
with a beaming Hyungwon he put his chopsticks down. “What are you doing here?” he asked,
looking genuinely surprised.

“Just thought I’d drop by,” Hyungwon said innocently. “Mind if I join you for lunch?”

“No, of course not,” Kihyun said, pulling his bag off the table as Hyungwon sat down. He was still
surprised. “You should’ve texted me. I was in class.”

“No, it's okay, I came to see someone else,” Hyungwon said casually.

Kihyun just looked at him a while, and then he got it. Hyungwon knew the exact moment Kihyun
got it, because he narrowed his eyes at him, turning on an accusing stare. Hyungwon went on
looking as innocent as he could, while Wonho was busy with his ramen, completely oblivious.

“Hyungwon-ah,” Kihyun said finally. “I need to have a word with you. Alone.”

“That’s okay, I'm all good,” Hyungwon said airily. It was fun seeing Kihyun so mad.
“I insist,” Kihyun said, and before Hyungwon could respond he'd been grabbed by the arm and dragged away. He tried to break free, but Kihyun’s tiny body was deceptively strong, and two months of coma had given Hyungwon’s already-skinny body the muscle definition of a wet noodle.

“Why did you come here?” Kihyun growled in a low tone, so that a perplexed Wonho couldn't overhear. “To see Wonho-hyung?”


“It feels weird,” Kihyun said. “Like… like you're still trying to be me.”

“I'm not,” Hyungwon said, offended. “I'm trying to befriend Wonho, as myself. Is that so weird? We did meet once before this whole mess, and he visited me all the time while I was in the hospital. He probably thinks it's normal if we become friends.”

Kihyun stared at Hyungwon a long time, and then finally gave up and sighed. “I guess you're right,” he said. “It's still weird to me, seeing you moving around and stuff.”

Hyungwon grinned. “Get used to it. I don't plan on going back to your body any time soon.”

Kihyun grinned back, and they went back to the table.

“Your secret conversation done?” Wonho asked. “It's getting cold, and Kihyun and I have work afterwards.”

“Yes, the secret conversation is done,” Hyungwon said with a grin as he sat beside Wonho. “Let’s eat.”

They talked as they ate, mostly about Hyungwon. Kihyun obviously still felt awkward talking to him face-to-face, but not too much, and Wonho was as warm and friendly as ever. Hyungwon was almost having fun, until he realized how hard Wonho was working to not look at Kihyun. He would make one second of eye-contact and then immediately look away, like he'd been caught doing something wrong. Kihyun didn’t even notice. He glanced at the empty chair next to him every half-minute.

It was incredibly frustrating. Finally, right at the end of the meal, Hyungwon said, “Shownu-hyung is really not going to show up? I was looking forward to meeting him.”

“No, like I said, he's… busy,” Wonho said awkwardly. He glanced at Kihyun, who still didn't notice.

Wonho was the worst liar in the world, but Kihyun was the most clueless idiot in the world. Hyungwon wanted to smack them both. Shownu was obviously not as clueless as Kihyun, though, and neither was Wonho. He knew why Shownu wasn't coming for lunch. He was the reason after all.

“We gotta get to work, Kihyun,” Wonho said, standing up. “Come on.”

“She'll catch up,” Hyungwon said, getting up with Kihyun. “I need to talk to him for a sec.”

Wonho shrugged, and then said, “It was nice to finally talk with you, Hyungwon-si.”

He smiled, but it was the polite smile he used with strangers, and it didn't make Hyungwon happy. “Yeah, it was good to talk with you too,” he said. Wonho nodded, and then turned around and
walked away.

“Well?” Kihyun asked, once Wonho was out of earshot. “What’s this about?”

Hyungwon suddenly felt a little awkward, but plunged forward. “Have you thought that maybe we should tell Wonho and Shownu the truth?”

“What truth?” Kihyun asked, confused for a moment, and then he got it. “The truth?” he said incredulously. “You mean the truth where I say my body was half-possessed by some guy I’d never met before? That truth?”

“Okay, it sounds ridiculous,” Hyungwon conceded, “but I think it’d help.”

“Help what? The argument that I should be sent to a mental hospital?”

“Changkyun believed me—”

“Changkyun is an exception in every case and you know it,” Kihyun said. “He wanted to stock your fridge with fancy cheeses. He’d never even tried any of them! He just liked the names!”

“Just listen,” Hyungwon said, getting annoyed. “Everything’s messy now because they think you have a split personality or something. If we just calmly told the truth, we could fix everything.”

“What do you mean?” Kihyun narrowed his eyes.

Hyungwon wanted to say it, but he needed to convince Kihyun, and this seemed like the only way. He sighed and said, “I mean I may have done something to upset Shownu.”

Kihyun stared at him a moment, and then swallowed once. “What did you do?” he asked, trying to keep his voice even, but the anger still edged through. “What, Hyungwon? What did you do?”

_I fell for Shin Wonho, and I was too obvious about it._ “I was just too unlike you, okay?” Hyungwon huffed. “Point is, if we just told them—”

“Told them what, that I lied to them every day for more than two months?” Kihyun said. “You want me to tell Shownu-hyung and Wonho-hyung that I let a literal stranger into their private lives? That I let them believe he was me?” He sighed in frustration, ran a hand through his dark brown hair. “And that’s even assuming they believe me…”

Hyungwon stood still, thinking it over. For more than two months Hyungwon had lived in Wonho’s life pretending to be one of his closest friends. Would Wonho forgive him, if he learned the truth?

“Okay,” he said finally.

“Okay?” Kihyun raised an eyebrow.

“Maybe you’re right,” Hyungwon said. “We shouldn’t say anything.”

Kihyun looked a little taken aback by the sudden concession, but nodded once, satisfied, and walked away. Hyungwon dropped back into his seat.

It was cowardly, he knew, but he wasn’t willing to risk Wonho never talking to him again, even if he deserved it. He would fix this by himself. After he’d successfully lured Wonho away from Kihyun, Shownu would be happy, and he and Kihyun could do whatever they wanted. Hyungwon and Wonho would have each other, and they’d laugh about Wonho’s dumb crush. Shownu and Kihyun could go back to their old, half-relationship, or maybe they’d actually make it a full one. It didn’t
matter. The point was the mess would be over.

But first Hyungwon had to win over Wonho.

He took a deep breath. He could do it. He could fix this whole thing.
“Going stalking again?”

“I’m not stalking him,” Hyungwon said as he picked out a pair of shoes. “I’m just going to coincidentally bump into him at the mart where he goes grocery shopping every week.”

Changkyun rolled his eyes. “Yeah, sure. Because that’s not stalking, nope, not at all.”

“Shut up,” Hyungwon said. “It’s Saturday morning. Don’t you have anywhere you need to be?”

“Nope,” Changkyun said airily, spreading out over the sofa. “I don’t have anyone to stalk, poor me.”

“I told you, it’s not stalking,” Hyungwon insisted. “And he likes me too, he just doesn’t know it yet.”

“Oh yeah, that’s totally not a stalker-thing to say.”

Hyungwon grabbed the nearest thing he could find, which turned out to be an old envelope for last month’s bill, and threw it at Changkyun’s head. It didn’t even go halfway. “You ungrateful brat,” he said. “I let you stay in my house, eat my food, and now you’re running up my electricity bill—”

“You can’t expect me to give up Saturday morning cartoons, that’s against the Geneva Convention,” Changkyun said. “And might I remind you, the only reason this place is even livable right now is due to the heroic efforts of me and Kihyun-hyung? You owe me.”

Hyungwon just glared, because he honestly had no comeback to that. “You need to get laid,” he finally snapped, for no other reason than he really needed to retaliate.

“I do?” Changkyun stuck his head out over the handle of the sofa, and gave a huge upside-down grin. “I’m the one going halfway across the city to a supermarket to see a crush?”

“Shut up,” Hyungwon said again, but this time he meant it. He opened the front door and stepped out. “Make sure you eat,” he said. “If all goes well, I won’t be back for lunch.”

“You mean if you don’t get a cease and desist?”

Hyungwon didn’t reply to that (because he didn’t have a reply) and shut the door behind him as he left. It was a short walk to a subway station, and then after a ten-minute wait for the right train, he was standing and shuttling away towards Wonho.

He was confident this would work. Wonho went grocery shopping every week, he had told Hyungwon himself. Well, technically he’d told who he thought was Kihyun, but Hyungwon knew. So he’d just nonchalantly go to the mart, wander around the aisles, and then Wonho would spot him standing near the oranges and walk up and say hi. That part was very important. Wonho had to
approach. If Hyungwon approached Wonho, he might come off too strong. Wonho had to decide by
himself that yes, he wanted to talk to that beautiful young man who’d just come out of a coma and
who he’d dedicated a portion of his every day into bringing flowers for.

There was no way Wonho would not walk up to him. Right?

As the train reached his stop, Hyungwon felt a slight queasiness. What if this didn’t work? What if
Wonho decided he just wanted to shop for lettuce in peace?

Or worse, what if Wonho caught on?

Hyungwon tried to assure himself that wouldn’t happen. After all, to an outsider, why would
Hyungwon stalk Wonho? Wouldn’t it be much more plausible for it to be the other way around?
Wonho was the one who daily visited a guy he didn’t know at all. Hyungwon thought about it. It
was kind of creepy. He was actually sort of glad that he had lived in Kihyun’s body, because if he
didn’t know Wonho he might have been freaked out.

This was okay. Sure, it was a little messed up at the moment, but Hyungwon was sure he could fix
this.

He had never actually been to the mart Wonho shopped at, so it took some looking around to find it.
As planned, Hyungwon strode in casually. One of the employees working the registers, a round-
faced girl around his age, stared at him for a moment and then quickly turned away, blushing
furiously. Hyungwon forced back a smirk. He’d worked extra hard on looking effortlessly gorgeous,
and he was glad to see it paid off.

It was almost lunch time, so Wonho should have been finishing up his shopping by now. Hyungwon
grabbed a small trolley, and started walking around the aisles. He’d brought some cash along, of
course, but he wasn’t planning on doing any shopping. Kihyun had put his foot down on the matter
of the fancy cheeses, so Hyungwon’s fridge was already filled with things he’d actually eat. So he
hung around, put a few cheap things in his basket for the look of it, and generally hovered.

It took a few minutes of hovering before Hyungwon found Wonho, looking at some fruit.
The sight of that brown head bent over some apples killed all the confidence Hyungwon thought he
had. What was he doing? He was watching Wonho buy fruit. Changkyun was right, Hyungwon had
ventured into serious stalker territory. Wonho lifted his head a bit, and instinctively Hyungwon hid
behind a shelf.

Not for the first time, Hyungwon found himself missing Minhyuk. He had been weird, definitely, but
there was something… comfortable about him. There was no one else Hyungwon could even
imagine talking to about his feelings as he hid behind a display of mayonnaise jars. Minhyuk could
make Hyungwon feel better, maybe convince him this wasn’t such a bad idea, or at least laugh and
be annoying and make things feel weirdly normal.

But Minhyuk wasn’t there, and Hyungwon had to deal with this on his own. He went into
emergency retreat mode. He could not let Wonho see him. He discreetly abandoned his trolley in an
empty aisle, grabbed a candy bar so he wouldn’t look weird, and stood in line at a register. There
were only two people in front of him. Just a few more minutes and Hyungwon could walk out of
there, forget this stupid plan—

“Hyungwon-ah?”

God damn it. Hyungwon fixed his features into a surprised expression, and turned around. “Oh,
“Hi.”

“I didn’t expect to see you here,” Wonho said with a smile.

Of course he didn’t, because they’d ‘bumped into each other’ just the day before yesterday and what the hell was Hyungwon thinking? Minhyuk would’ve laughed or at least grinned that disconcerting grin of his, for sure.

“Just… buying a snack,” Hyungwon said, trying like all hell to sound casual. “You live around here?”

“Yeah, just a couple of streets away,” Wonho answered, hefting his basket. “And you?”

Hyungwon, like the idiot he now realized he was, had not planned for this question. “No,” he answered, since he knew he’d eventually be caught if he lied. “Was visiting a friend.” This theoretical friend was really helping Hyungwon out.

“Aww, and he didn’t let you have lunch with him?” Wonho grinned.

“Didn’t want me third-wheeling at his lunch date, no,” Hyungwon said with a laugh. He hoped that was a good enough hint that he was single.

“Well, that sucks,” Wonho said. “Jonghyun-hyung is busy with his own girlfriend and I don’t want to eat alone, so you can join me if you want.”

“Are you sure? What about your groceries?” Hyungwon had no idea why he’d said that, when what he really wanted to say was he’d been hoping Wonho would ask.

“It’s fine, there’s nothing that needs to be frozen,” Wonho shrugged. “Unless you don’t want to eat with me and a few apples?”

“No, I do,” Hyungwon said, way too quickly. “Lunch… sounds good.”

Wonho smiled. “Great.”

They paid for their things, and then Wonho led the way to a café he recommended. Hyungwon still felt a little weird. He’d spent so much time with Wonho but he still felt nervous. Because now Wonho actually saw Hyungwon, and he saw him as a stranger. If Hyungwon messed up, that was the end. As Kihyun, Hyungwon had had a lot of leeway.

The café was nice, and the food was good too. Wonho talked a bit about his roommate Jonghyun, tall and pretty and absolutely terrifying, and Hyungwon mentioned the new permanent fixture in his house, Changkyun.

“And he hates wearing pants in the house,” Hyungwon grumbled. “It’s freezing cold and he’s still walking around pants-less. It’s so annoying.”

“It can’t be that bad,” Wonho laughed.

“I just want to eat my cereal without an eyeful of his hairy man legs,” Hyungwon sighed dramatically. “Is that too much to ask for?”

“That’s what happens when you live with someone,” Wonho said wisely, taking a sip of his drink. “I personally hate wearing shirts indoors when it’s hot. Fortunately Jonghyun-hyung doesn’t seem to mind.”
I wouldn't either, if it was you. But Hyungwon couldn't say that aloud, so instead he just grinned into his own drink. He was about to move onto another topic, when Wonho suddenly asked, “Is this okay?”

“What do you mean?” Hyungwon asked calmly, but his heart was pounding. *This? Does he mean us eating together like this?*

“I mean, you don't really know me at all,” Wonho said. “This is like our third time meeting and I'm already talking informally with you.”

“Fourth,” Hyungwon corrected with a grin. “This is our fourth time meeting. And I don't mind at all. Do you?” He leaned forward a little, almost afraid of the answer.

“No, I'm fine,” Wonho replied, without hesitation. “It’s just I keep forgetting that I don’t know you.”

Hyungwon couldn't help but smile. Somehow it was just such a Wonho thing to say. Wonho realized it too, because he flushed pink, and quickly busied himself with finishing up the rest of his lunch.

“I think I get it,” Hyungwon said finally, picking up the last bits of his pasta. “I think it's the same for me.”

He sneaked a glance at Wonho, but Wonho was too busy failing being casual to notice. Hyungwon just smiled even more. Was it right for a grown man to be this cute?

With lunch done and the bill paid, the two of them walked out of the building, Wonho carrying his grocery bags. “I have to get these home,” he said, “but this was fun.”

“Yeah, I think so too,” Hyungwon said genuinely.

That made Wonho smile, and in that moment Hyungwon took the plunge. “Can I have your phone number?” he asked, before he could convince himself it was a bad idea.

Wonho was a little taken aback at the sudden request, and Hyungwon quickly added, “So if I'm ever around here, maybe we could meet up again.”

There was one millisecond where Hyungwon wanted to throw himself off a cliff, and then the smile returned on Wonho’s face. “Sure,” he said. “Hand me your phone.”

Hyungwon wanted to punch the air in victory, but something told him that was a little beyond the boundary of casual, so instead he just took out his phone, unlocked it and passed it to Wonho. Wonho tapped his number in and handed it back with a smile saying, “Don’t hesitate to call if you need anything.”

That was the thing about Wonho. He genuinely meant it. It didn't matter that he'd only met Hyungwon a couple of times before. Hyungwon had cracked into his friend circle, and Wonho would do anything for his friends. Hyungwon knew that very well.

“See ya,” Wonho called out as he started walking away. Hyungwon only smiled and nodded in response. He checked his phone, and found one new contact: Shin Wonho. He broke out into a full grin.

Things were going perfectly.

As Hyungwon walked back to the subway station he wanted to skip, or dance or something. But what he really wanted to do was call Changkyun and laugh for a full minute in triumph.
The subway car was pretty empty, and Hyungwon actually managed to get a seat. At the second stop a fair amount of people got off, and a few got on, making the car even emptier than before. So when one tall, handsome, well-built young man took a seat nearby, Hyungwon saw him clearly.

Shownu. Hyungwon automatically turned his face away, before he realized that Shownu didn’t know him. Had he even seen Hyungwon once? Hyungwon couldn’t remember. It was super weird, to think that the guy he’d been around all the time had possibly never even seen him.

If Shownu had spotted him in the car right then, he didn’t let it show. He was busy fixing his bag and jacket, and after he was done he leaned back and closed his eyes. Hyungwon shuffled uncomfortably. Should he go and say hello? What would he say anyway? I’ve been possessing your sort-of boyfriend, and half the time when you thought you were flirting with him—surprise, it was actually me. Let’s hang out.

The smart thing to do would be to ignore Shownu’s presence and quietly get off at the stop. But Hyungwon had already done one stupid thing that day, and it had worked out. He was starting to embrace the fact that he was kind of an idiot, since it seemed to be an advantage.

So with no plan at all or any sort of thought for what might happen afterwards, Hyungwon took out his phone and dialed Kihyun.

The call was picked up on the second ring with an irate, “What do you want?”

“I don’t want anything,” Hyungwon said innocently, and that was kind of true. He didn’t want anything from Kihyun. He wanted Shownu to overhear his conversation. “Are you ever not grumpy, Kihyun?” He said the last bit a little louder, and then discreetly checked for a reaction. Shownu hadn’t moved or shown any indication he was even alive.

“Because you’re yelling at me over the phone?” Kihyun said. “No, seriously, why did you call?”

“Just wondering if you were free for dinner tonight,” Hyungwon said, still watching Shownu out of the corner of his eye. Had he fallen asleep? “Let’s eat together.”

“Why.” It wasn’t even a question.

“Because everyone’s been weird around me since I came out of that two-month coma,” Hyungwon raised his voice a little. Still no response. How fast could a guy fall asleep on a hard subway seat?

“Why are you yelling at me?” Kihyun was bewildered.

Because your boyfriend is half-deaf. “I’m not yelling,” Hyungwon said at normal volume. “Do you want to eat with me or not?”

“No, I don’t.” Kihyun answered. “I just want to laze around at home for one day. Go eat with Changkyun.”

“Come on, Kihyun, just once,” Hyungwon said, now getting annoyed. He didn’t even want to eat with Kihyun, couldn’t the Tiny just be grateful and accept?

“I said no,” Kihyun said irritably. “Get yourself a boyfriend or something.”

“Go fall in a hole, Yoo Kihyun,” Hyungwon snapped, and cut the line. Kihyun was even more annoying when they were in separate bodies. Why did he even want to eat with him?

Right. The plan. Hyungwon sneaked a glance at Shownu again. He was awake, and sitting up. They
made eye-contact, and Hyungwon smiled apologetically. “Sorry about that,” he said. “Did I wake you?”

“No, it’s fine, I wasn’t sleeping,” Shownu answered with a polite smile.

Hyungwon smiled back, and then went back to pretending like he hadn’t been watching Shownu all this time. *Come on,* he silently urged, but Shownu didn’t initiate a conversation. Hyungwon was about to give up and just say something directly, when Shownu suddenly spoke up. “Do you mind if I ask you something?”

“Not at all,” Hyungwon said. Everything was just going his way today.

“I’m sorry but I overheard,” Shownu said a little tentatively. “Were you talking to Yoo Kihyun on the phone? Dark brown hair, wide smile? He studies genetic engineering?”

Short, annoying and squints a lot would have Hyungwon’s description, but he guessed dark brown hair and wide smile worked too. “You know Kihyun?” Hyungwon put every ounce of his acting skill to turn his slightly surprised expression into a realized smile. “Are you Shownu-hyung?”

Shownu seemed embarrassed. “Um, yeah, that’s me.”

“Kihyun talks about you a lot,” Hyungwon said, and he almost laughed aloud when he saw a spot of pink appear in Shownu’s tan cheeks. “I’m Chae Hyungwon.”

“Son Hyunwoo, but pretty much everyone calls me Shownu,” Shownu introduced himself politely. He hesitated a moment and then said, “I went to see you once.”

“Yeah, sorry I was so rude I couldn’t greet you back,” Hyungwon said, and laughed. Like everyone else, Shownu shifted a bit when Hyungwon joked about his coma. Hyungwon loved it. “Thanks for going to see me.”

“Uh, you’re welcome,” Shownu said, embarrassed again. “Kihyun went to see you every day, I just tagged along.”

“Still, it’s nice knowing people come to see you,” Hyungwon said with a smile. He paused, and then said thoughtfully, “You know, I don’t really remember anything from that time, but since I came out of it, I’ve just been so pensive.”

Shownu didn’t say anything, but leaned forward to show his interest.

“About life, mostly,” Hyungwon continued. “All the things I might’ve missed if I’d never woken up. Regrets I would’ve died with. Things I should’ve done, should’ve said to certain people…” He sighed, just on the verge of dramatic, and then smiled. “Sorry, got all weird there for a moment.”

“No, it’s fine,” Shownu said, listening intently.

“Yeah, well, I just mean if there’s anything that should be said to someone, you have to go and say it,” Hyungwon said. “Life is short, you just have to go and be happy.” There was a ding on the announcer, and the car slowed down. “This is my stop,” he said, and got up. “Hope I’ll see you again soon.”

Shownu just nodded, and Hyungwon smiled and got off the subway car.

It wasn’t his stop. He knew that, but after giving a dramatic monologue like that, how could he just sit there? He’d have to take a taxi or walk a while, but to Hyungwon it seemed worth it.
Was that direct enough? Would Shownu get the hint? Hyungwon’s path to Wonho would be so much easier, so much quicker, if Shownu would just get the hint and confess to Kihyun.

Hyungwon couldn’t remember his last couple of hours in Kihyun’s body, but he had a sinking feeling Shownu had told him something important. He might have even told him the important thing. Hyungwon thought of telling Kihyun his suspicions, but he doubted he’d believe him. Tiny could be thick like that. Until Shownu whacked him over the head with it Kihyun would deny it.

A ringing in Hyungwon’s pocket interrupted his thoughts, and he fished out his phone to find it was Kihyun.

He answered the call with a brusque, “What do you want?”

“I changed my mind,” Kihyun said, disregarding the rough greeting. “Let’s have dinner.”

“Well I changed my mind,” Hyungwon said. “I don’t want to eat with a grumpy little dwarf.”

“You are so annoying,” Kihyun snapped back. “This is why no one wants to eat with you, you wet noodle.”

“Ha, I thought you wanted to eat with me?”

“Well I changed my mind again, I don’t know why I even called you,” Kihyun huffed.

“Well don’t call again,” Hyungwon snapped, and cut the line. Damn, Kihyun was the most annoying entity on this earth. How did he get a nice, good-looking guy like Shownu to fall for him? Who would even willingly spend time with him?

Hyungwon and Kihyun had dinner at Kihyun’s apartment, and watched soccer together.

Chapter End Notes

Why does this story still get kudos? I mean, who looks at this 70k+ still-unfinished behemoth and thinks, “yes, I’d love to read this!”? I am of course honoured by all the support, but a little stumped by it as well.

Anyway, thank you for all your love and support; writing this chapter makes me want to finally finish An Unwelcome Reunion lol
Said and Unsaid

**Are you busy today? I need to talk to you**

Kihyun stared at the message. He read it over a couple of times, just to make sure he was reading it right. When the words didn't magically morph after the sixth time, he accepted it. It was real.

Shownu wanted to meet up.

After almost a week of radio silence, Shownu wanted to talk to Kihyun. Face-to-face. Kihyun had tried calling him a few times over the week, even when he knew Shownu just let it go to voicemail, and he'd sent some carefully-worded texts too, even after the first ones had been ignored. Because Kihyun missed him. It was stupid, he knew, missing someone as desperately as he did when he'd talked to them just the week before, but he couldn't help it. Shownu had become such an important part of Kihyun’s life, almost like a steady, solid base. Kihyun felt adrift without him.

Not for the first time, Kihyun wanted to walk over to Hyungwon’s apartment and strangle the life out of that ungrateful frog. He even weighed out the pros and cons of wrapping his hands around that long neck and throttling him. Sure, Changkyun would be sad and Kihyun kind of liked the guy, quirks and all, but apart from that he didn't see any downsides. He’d be doing everyone a favor.

Except maybe Wonho. He and Hyungwon had become sort of friends. They'd exchanged numbers, Kihyun knew, because he'd seen Wonho texting him during lunch. Hyungwon texted a lot with Wonho, even at work. It was almost like he was trying to distract him from something, or keep him busy.

Honestly, Kihyun didn't care. Right then all his attention was on the text he'd just received. *I need to talk to you.* What did Shownu want to say? Something serious, obviously, something he couldn't say over the phone. Kihyun’s stomach twisted as he thought about it. What if Shownu didn't want to see him ever again? What if this was like a final goodbye? Kihyun didn't know if he'd be able to handle that.

Or it could be something else. Something about the lily or the daffodil Shownu had given him, or how they walked with their hands touching, or when they'd gone to the amusement park and jumped off a platform with nothing but rope and harness and each other.

Kihyun didn't know. But he had to find out.

He wrote and rewrote his reply a thousand times before he was half-satisfied. He read it over thrice for typos, took two calming breaths, and then finally hit send.

And then he waited.

After what felt like simultaneously an eternity and the blink of an eye, Kihyun got a reply.

*We can meet at the university park after lunch. 3pm is okay for you?*

*It's perfect.* Before Kihyun could think he'd already typed and sent the message. He wanted to slap himself. ‘It’s perfect?’ What kind of stupid reply was that?

Before he could berate himself any more, Kihyun received a reply. He scrambled with his phone to open the message, but it was the shortest he'd received so far.
And that was it. Kihyun debated sending a reply, but the conversation seemed over. He still wanted to. He wanted to ask Shownu if he was still angry. He wanted to ask if he ate breakfast before he went to class, what he ate, where he had lunch. Kihyun wanted to ask Shownu if he felt as adrift as he did. If he missed him like that.

Kihyun shook his head to try and clear his thoughts. When did he become so mushy? It didn't suit him, and he decided he didn't like it. Not when he kept feeling something so close to loneliness.

He banished those thoughts and focused on the facts. The main one being he was going to see Shownu in four hours. It was a Sunday, and with the church sermon over he was free for the rest of the day. He'd planned to have lunch with Yoongi, but that stupid text had frazzled Kihyun’s nerves, and he didn't think it was a good idea to meet up with anyone before 3 PM. So he decided to spend a few quiet hours at home, before going to the park calmly and meet with Shownu like a sane, rational adult.

If he didn't suffocate first.

Kihyun sent a text to Yoongi canceling lunch, and got a fake-emotional reply on how Kihyun was a traitor of a friend and the next time they met Kihyun owed him a free meal. Which was a pretty usual response, but this time Kihyun agreed. Hyungwon had blown off Yoongi a few times before, and Kihyun thought he ought to make it up. Yoongi replied immediately.

What's up why are u saying yes? Are u dying?

Honestly Kihyun didn't know. He'd find out at 3 PM.

After a quick text assuring Yoongi he was not dying, Kihyun sat down and tried to watch some TV. He flicked through the channels, unable to concentrate on anything longer than a minute, before he finally gave up. He scrolled through his SNS feeds, but he couldn't focus on that either. A part of Kihyun wanted to stalk Shownu’s profile, but he knew there was no point. Shownu rarely posted anything, and when he did, Kihyun was always in them.

So out of desperation, Kihyun called Hyungwon.

He wasn't sure why exactly. What Kihyun really wanted was to talk to Minhyuk, but he hadn't seen Minhyuk since the night he'd cooked for him and put him to bed. The angel had been so nervy. Like a hundred times before, Kihyun wondered where he was, if he was doing okay.

“Tiny. Hey.”

“Why do you hate my name so much?” Kihyun sighed. “It’s a nice name. My dad chose it.”

“It is a nice name,” Hyungwon agreed. “Which is why Tiny suits you better.”

Kihyun snorted, but grinned too. Hyungwon was annoying, but somehow they clicked. Maybe it had something to do with living in the same body for so long.

“Anyway, why’d you call?” Hyungwon asked. “What do you want?”

“Nothing, no reason,” Kihyun said, and that was the truth. “I just felt like calling.” And because he thought an explanation was necessary, “I’m alone.”

For a moment he worried that that came out pathetic, but then Hyungwon said, “Me too. I’ve been
ditched for lunch too.”

“Where’s Changkyun?” Kihyun asked, glad to get off the topic of his possible loneliness.

“This might surprise you,” Hyungwon said, grin evident in his voice, “but the kid does have other friends.”

Kihyun laughed. “And you don’t?”

“I do,” Hyungwon said in a fake offended voice, but then he laughed and said normally, “Everyone acts a little weird around me now. Like if they say something wrong I’ll immediately lapse into a coma or something. It’s annoying.”

“Yeah, I can guess why people might be like that,” Kihyun said with a shrug. “I mean as far as anyone knows you’ve been gone for two months. No one knows you were actually busy ruining my life.”

“Don’t say that,” Hyungwon said with a laugh. On the other end of the line, Kihyun smiled weakly. He’d only been half-joking. “Do you want to meet for lunch?” Hyungwon asked. “Since, y’know, we’re both lonely souls.”

“Nah, I think I feel like eating alone today,” Kihyun said. That was also the truth.

“Why’d you call me then?”

Kihyun hesitated. And then he said, “Shownu-hyung texted me.”

There was a loud rustling on the other end, and then Hyungwon cried, “He did?”

“I don’t know why you’re so excited,” Kihyun said, immediately regretting telling him. “He just wants to meet up.”

“Yeah, I don’t see why I shouldn’t be,” Hyungwon said, still worked up, but less than before. “Hasn’t he been ignoring you for a while now?”

“I wouldn’t say ignoring, exactly,” Kihyun said, except that was exactly what it was.

“Well this means he’s getting over what he was upset about,” Hyungwon said. “The two of you can move forward, and I’ve fixed my mess.”

“What do you mean you fixed your mess?” Kihyun asked suspiciously. If Hyungwon was meddling, he didn’t like it. As annoying as Minhyuk was, at least he kept out of it.

“I just mean my mess is fixed,” Hyungwon said soothingly. “I knew it wasn’t anything unfixable. Everything’s going back to how it should be, you’ll see.”

“I don’t see why you’re so happy about it,” Kihyun grumbled, trying to hide how hard he hoped Hyungwon was right. “If you felt so guilty you should’ve worked harder at being me.”

“Oh come on, I did what I could,” Hyungwon said. “We’re pretty different, especially where it matters.”

Kihyun didn’t understand. “What do you mean, ‘where it matters’?”

“Nothing,” Hyungwon brushed off. “It’s all done with, that’s the important thing. Anyway, you sure you don’t want lunch with me?”
“Yeah, I’m good,” Kihyun said. “Unless you want to come over and help me clean behind my oven?”

“I didn’t clean that apartment even when I lived in it, why would I start now?” Hyungwon laughed. “Have fun. Talk later.”

Hyungwon ended the call, and that was it. Surprisingly, Kihyun felt better. Hyungwon was so convinced something good was going to come out of this, and his enthusiasm seemed to be infectious. He was sure everything was going to be fixed with this one meeting.

Kihyun stared at his dark phone screen. _God, I hope so._

The weather was warm enough now that Kihyun didn’t need a scarf, but he wore one anyway. He liked the heat around his neck. It somehow made him feel better, calmer.

He’d made his way to the park calmly, and he was a sane, rational adult. For now.

Kihyun wandered around, keeping an eye out for Shownu’s large frame. No matter where he went, Shownu always stuck out. Not only because of his tall, strong build, but also the way he carried it. He exuded gentleness and warmth. The kind of person you could look at and know immediately this was someone you could trust.

He was nowhere to be seen, although there were a few people out, enjoying the fine weather. A young girl on the grass with her dog smiled at Kihyun as he passed by, and he forced a smile back. His stomach felt queasy. He’d hardly eaten anything for lunch, but his insides felt full and heavy.

Kihyun didn’t think Shownu wanted to meet just to say goodbye. But he didn’t think Hyungwon was right either. Things couldn’t go back to how they were before.

Something was going to change that day. Kihyun pulled his scarf tighter around himself.

He kept walking, and the heaviness in his stomach got denser and denser. A horrible feeling that Shownu wasn’t coming started to sink in, and Kihyun almost took out his phone to call when he spotted him.

Like most of Seoul, the park was all hills and valleys, and walking down a slope to the west, was Shownu. The sun was at his back so Kihyun couldn’t see his face properly, but he knew Shownu could see him perfectly. So Kihyun tried to put on his best smile, even though his stomach twisted in a mix of queasiness and anticipation.

“Hi, hyung,” Kihyun said, when he was close enough. “It’s been a while.”

“Kihyun,” was all Shownu said in reply.

There was a strange expression on his face, one Kihyun couldn't read, and it was worrying him. “Hyung, you feeling okay?” He tried to say it lightly, but the laugh it came out with was nervous.

“Kihyun,” Shownu said again, and this time he sighed and ran a hand through his short dark hair. “Kihyun, I'm sorry.”

He said it in such a heartfelt voice that Kihyun scrambled to make him feel better. “It’s okay, really,” he said quickly. “You had stuff to think about. It's fine.” He could never tell Shownu how much he'd missed him, not when Shownu was looking at him like that.
“No, Kihyun, it's not fine,” Shownu said quietly. “It was selfish of me. I’ve just been nothing but selfish.”

Kihyun wanted to tell Shownu that wasn’t true, but his throat had closed up. Something about the look in Shownu’s eyes made him unable to speak.

“I was just so angry,” Shownu continued. “I was so sure that I was right, that I knew what you wanted, and I refused to accept that I didn’t. I was angry at you, at life, at Hoseok. And then I was just angry at myself, because I had something so great and I didn't even realize what it was.”

It was wrong. Everything was going wrong. Kihyun felt lost, like a ship in the middle of a storm, but he knew this wasn't right. This wasn't how it was supposed to go.

“So I'm sorry,” Shownu said, and then he smiled. And it was that smile, the same one he'd given the last time they'd spoken outside the mechanical engineering building, beautiful and so sad. “I don't want you to hold back because of me. That— that's not right. You shouldn't be alone because of my selfishness.”

“I’m not.” It was a stupid thing to say, but it was the only thing that could come out of Kihyun’s mouth.

The smile on Shownu’s face changed a bit, so that it was almost normal. Almost. “I just talked to Hoseok too, so don't worry,” he said. He smiled a bit wider, like he was trying to look happy. “And don't worry about me, I'll be fine too. I… just can't hang out with you guys anymore. I hope you understand.”

Kihyun didn't, but he couldn't say anything. He had always been so good at talking, why was he failing now? Only Shownu could make him like that, and now Shownu wanted to leave him and Kihyun couldn't even tell him to stay.

“I’m trying to be mature about it but I haven’t reached that level yet,” Shownu said, and he laughed, but the laugh didn't sound right. “Maybe one day, but… but I don’t think so.” He sighed, and then put up a smile. “I think I should go now,” he said. “Hoseok is waiting for you at the top of the hill. I'll— bye, Kihyun.”

He started walking past Kihyun, and when Shownu’s eyes were no longer looking at him Kihyun finally found his voice. “Hyung—”

Shownu’s arms were around Kihyun before he could even realize what was happening. One moment he was standing there, feeling hollow, and the next Shownu was holding him close. Kihyun felt warmth, a warmth in the pit of his stomach, but his heart still hurt.

“I just want you to be happy,” Shownu said, voice by Kihyun’s neck.

*I'm happy when I'm with you.* Kihyun almost said the words aloud. But then Shownu had let go of him and was looking at him with those eyes again. And in the next moment he was walking away.

Kihyun stood there. He felt shaky, but on the inside. Hyungwon had been so sure this meeting was going to fix everything, but then why did Kihyun get a goodbye instead?

A part of Kihyun wanted to follow Shownu, but another part told him to calm down, think it through. Wonho. Wonho was there. Kihyun started climbing the hill without a second thought. He would talk to Wonho, and maybe see things more clearly.

The hill was hardly a peak, with one single tree right at the top. Wonho was there, like Shownu had
He straightened when he saw Kihyun, and he approached him, looking nervous. “Hey,” he said.

“He straightened when he saw Kihyun, and he approached him, looking nervous. “Hey,” he said.

“Hyung,” Kihyun said, getting straight to the point, “did Shownu-hyung talk with you?”

“He did,” Wonho said, and he shuffled a bit. “Did— did he tell you?”

“He said he couldn't hang out with us anymore,” Kihyun said. “And… and he said he didn't want me to be alone.”

Something like hope came into Wonho’s face. “And do you?” he asked. “Do you want to… not be alone?”

He was acting weird, and Kihyun didn't like it, he didn't like any of this. He could talk now, and he spoke directly. “What are you saying, hyung?”

“I’m saying I can't deny it anymore,” Wonho said, stepping even closer. “I tried, for Hyunwoo, but I can't now.” He stopped, took a deep breath. “I want to be with you.”

Kihyun stared. “What?”

“I think I'm in love with you, Kihyun,” Wonho said, and he said it like he truly believed it.

“What?” Kihyun was stunned almost speechless again.

“And I know you feel something for me too,” Wonho continued. “I just couldn't do that to Hyunwoo but he understands, he really does—”

“Wait, hold on,” Kihyun cut him off. “What do you mean I feel something for you too? When have I ever given any indication I like you like that? Why would I?” It was brutal, but Kihyun was in disbelief. Wonho thought he was in love with Kihyun, and was convinced Kihyun reciprocated. What the hell was going on?

“What are you talking about?” Wonho looked both hurt and confused. “You kissed me.”

“What? No I didn't!” Kihyun couldn't believe what he was hearing.

“Kihyun, how could you say that?” Wonho looked like Kihyun had just driven a stake through his heart. “We kissed. You put your hand in my hair and on my chest and I—”

“What are you talking about?” Kihyun would've thought this was all some sort of joke or illusion, but the look on Wonho's face told him it was real, at least to Wonho. He tried to calm down, think about it logically, but his mind was still shaken from his conversation with Shownu. He took a deep breath. “When did this happen? Was I drunk or something?”

“No,” Wonho said, still as hurt as before. “We’d barely had anything to drink. We went out drinking just the three of us, you, me and Hyunwoo, and… and we kissed.”

Kihyun stared blankly. When did that happen? When did he—?

And then it hit Kihyun.

He didn't.

Hyungwon did.
And he almost screamed aloud. Because it all made sense now, all of it. Wonho acting weird. Shownu avoiding him. Hyungwon doing everything he could to get close to Wonho.

It all clicked into place.

“Kihyun, please,” Wonho was saying, and he reached for Kihyun’s hand. “Don’t pretend like it didn’t happen.”

“I’m sorry, hyung,” Kihyun said, pulling away, and he meant it. “I’m sorry, but I have to. We have to.” He swallowed. He hated hurting Wonho like this, but he had no other choice. “I don’t— just try and forget it ever happened.”

“Kihyun,” Wonho said, and he looked so lost. “I don’t understand.”

“I’m sorry, hyung, I'm sorry,” Kihyun said, and he started backing away, unable to bear that look in Wonho’s eyes. “I’m sorry, I can’t.”

Before Wonho could say another word, Kihyun turned and fled.

Changkyun was the one who opened the door, and he did with a smile and a “Hey, hyung.”

Kihyun pushed past him. He couldn’t talk to the kid right then. His mind was too busy, under pressure from all the words he had compressed down. He walked into the living room just as someone else walked out from the kitchen.


Hyungwon stared back blankly, lost. “What? What did I do?”

“You bastard it was my body,” Kihyun said, too angry to answer. “Mine. You had no right to do that.”

“What the hell are you talking about?” Hyungwon asked, both bewildered and getting angry. “Stop yelling at me and tell me what the hell you’re talking about.”

Kihyun barked a short, mirthless laugh. “You don’t know? Can’t remember? It’s completely slipped your mind that you kissed one of my best friends while you were in my body?”

He was vaguely aware of Changkyun swearing aloud in surprise, but Kihyun’s eyes were fixed on Hyungwon’s face. He watched as that handsome face changed, from bewilderment, to surprise then realization, and then finally, to guilt.

“Kihyun—” Hyungwon started, but Kihyun wasn’t having any of it.

“Don’t bother,” he said. Kihyun didn’t feel so angry anymore, looking at Hyungwon’s face so painted with regret. He felt betrayed. Hyungwon was supposed to be his friend.

“Just don’t talk to me ever again,” Kihyun said, and walked away while Hyungwon just stood there and watched him go.
A soft tinkle of a bell announced Hyungwon’s entrance into the flower shop.

The florist, a beautiful young man with long hair tied away from his face, was busy with a middle-aged man and a bouquet of tulips. Hyungwon was glad. He didn't want conversation, he just wanted some time alone.

It had been two days. Hyungwon had wanted to call Kihyun a hundred times in those two days, but he'd always convinced himself otherwise. He knew it would be pointless. At best, Kihyun would ignore the call. The other possibility was that Kihyun would pick up, and swear at Hyungwon until his ears fell off. Hyungwon actually wanted the latter. He thought it would make him feel better than the silence he was currently suffering.

Changkyun had been distant since then too. After Kihyun had stormed out, Changkyun had given Hyungwon a look of disbelief mixed with an unmistakable sliver of disgust. He didn't say anything, and Hyungwon didn't say anything either. The conversation in the apartment had been thin after that. Hyungwon wished the kid would ask him about it or lecture him or anything, just so Hyungwon could finally spill all his thoughts and emotions out, like vomit from his soul. But Changkyun didn't say anything. There had been no disgust in his eyes after the initial shock, but every time he looked at Hyungwon, the pity was painfully obvious.

And it infuriated Hyungwon. Because he didn't deserve pity. He had created this mess, all of it and by himself, and he deserved anger, not pity. Kihyun was right.

It didn't make Hyungwon feel any better, though. Somehow it just made him feel more alone.

If Hyungwon wanted to call Kihyun a hundred times, he wanted to call Wonho at least a thousand more. He wanted to know how Wonho was doing, if he was okay. If his heart hurt as much as Hyungwon was afraid it did.

Wonho must have told Kihyun about the kiss. Hyungwon was sure of it, just as he was sure Kihyun had broken his heart. He couldn't really expect otherwise. Kihyun had already given his heart away, and it wasn't to Wonho.

Hyungwon didn't know Wonho long, but he knew him well. He knew Wonho was a sensitive person, who carried a lot of love in his heart. If Kihyun had rejected him harshly, he would be crushed. Hyungwon had thought about calling to comfort him, try and make him feel better any way he could, but the thought of it just made him hate himself even more. He'd already conned his way into Wonho’s life, how much more was he going to take advantage of him?

So Hyungwon just lay around his apartment morosely for a Monday and a day more, trying to think about anything except Wonho and failing miserably. Finally Wednesday rolled in and as the clock hit noon Hyungwon suddenly couldn't be in that empty apartment anymore. He grabbed his wallet and the key to the front door and left before he could stop himself. He let his legs take him wherever they
wanted to go, and after some time he realized they wanted to go to Lady Mary Memorial. As Kihyun, Hyungwon had gone there every day at lunchtime. As Hyungwon, he found that he couldn't bring himself to enter that imposing white building. The small, quaint flower shop just a few feet away looked like a safe haven in comparison.

The light scent of flowers in the air was soothing. Hyungwon wandered around aimlessly, looking around. He'd planned on just loitering a bit before slinking away unnoticed, but after a few minutes he was aware of the florist giving him a very pointed look. So he picked out one white lily, and walked over to the counter with it.

“I'd like this, please,” Hyungwon said.

“Just one?” the florist asked. “With how long you were walking around I thought you were going to buy the entire building.”

Hyungwon would've come back with a scathing reply, but he was feeling kind of miserable so he just let it slide. He paid, and as the florist got the receipt ready he noticed the pretty young man was in as bad a mood as he was.

“You okay?” Hyungwon asked, because he thought he should be nice. And then he hazarded a guess, “Romantic troubles?”

“No,” the florist said, in a way which said it obviously was. And then he proved it by saying, “I don’t care. I never really cared that much anyway.” And then he stamped the receipt with such a ferocity that Hyungwon was afraid the counter would collapse.

“Um, okay then,” Hyungwon said, taking the receipt cautiously. “Um, good luck.” He meant it. The florist looked stressed, and there were corners of the shop that looked like they hadn’t been dusted in days. But in a way Hyungwon was almost jealous. The man was defiant and tried to tell himself he was fine, while Hyungwon was busy just being miserable. He knew he had to do something, anything to fix this situation or at least make it a little better, but he had no idea what.

Hyungwon turned around, lily in hand, and found himself face-to-face with Wonho.

He froze. Hyungwon’s entire body froze like he’d been doused in liquid nitrogen. His brain stopped working and he couldn’t even finish a single thought, much less get a word out. For a moment he actually worried he’d just freeze like that forever.

And then Wonho smiled, and Hyungwon automatically smiled back.

“What are you doing here?” Wonho asked, still smiling, and sounding genuinely curious.

“I don’t know,” Hyungwon confessed. “I just started walking and I ended up here. At first I thought I’d go see the hospital, just because, but somehow I couldn’t.” He shrugged. It sounded dumb when he said it aloud, mainly because he never thought he would.

“I get it,” Wonho said, and Hyungwon believed him.

“Anyway, what are you doing here?” he asked. “I thought you had work after lunch.”

“Yeah, I think I might not go,” Wonho said. He laughed a little awkwardly. “Not for any reason, just don’t feel like it.”

Hyungwon didn’t believe that. Wonho wasn’t going because he wanted to avoid Kihyun. Which meant Wonho had confessed, and Kihyun had rejected him cruelly and the next time Hyungwon sees
“And I’m kind of a regular here,” Wonho was saying, “so I thought I’d just drop by and see how it’s going.” He leaned his head to look past Hyungwon. “Hi,” he greeted the florist.

“Hello,” the man said back, but he still sounded slightly upset. Hyungwon remembered going to the flower shop with Wonho, how he’d been secretly jealous of the beautiful florist and Wonho’s flirting attempts at winning a discount. That now felt like so long ago.

“Have you had lunch yet?” Wonho asked, picking up a white carnation and walking up to the counter with it.

Hyungwon shook his head no. He hadn’t even thought about eating, but now that Wonho mentioned it he suddenly felt hungry.

“Good, I didn’t either,” Wonho said as he took out his wallet to pay. “If you're not busy, we could eat together.”

“That sounds great,” Hyungwon said, and he meant it. He liked being around Wonho. Just one look at that smile and he already felt better.

This meeting was a real coincidence, completely by chance, and Wonho was suggesting they have lunch together. And Wonho was asking him. Wonho wanted to be around Hyungwon. The real Hyungwon, not Hyungwon’s poor imitation of Kihyun. It made Hyungwon feel good. It made him hopeful.

Wonho paid for his flower, and then said a brief farewell to the florist. Hyungwon did the same. A part of him wanted to ask the man for details on his dramatic love-life, but Hyungwon would not let himself become Minhyuk, so he shut up and left.

He and Wonho had been walking for a minute or two when Wonho suddenly said, “I didn't know you wore glasses.”

Hyungwon’s body moved on autopilot as the realization came over him. He was not wearing contacts. Or makeup. He was dressed in a baggy hoodie and old jeans, the same clothes he’d been rolling around in at home. He hadn't even bothered to comb his hair.

“Um, yeah,” Hyungwon finally said when he was over the initial shock. He discreetly tried to fix his hair. “I usually wear lenses.”

“They suit you, though,” Wonho said with a grin.

The glasses Hyungwon wore were square and had thick black rims, but he still smiled. “Thanks.”

They went to a small, cheap restaurant near the hospital, one Hyungwon immediately recognized. He and Wonho had eaten there once before, the day Hyungwon had bought Wonho’s birthday present with Kihyun’s money. Wonho had smiled and flushed pink that day, enjoying the time they spent alone together.

*Did he like me ever since then?* Hyungwon wondered as they found a table. *Did I like him?*

He found it completely unfair, all of it. Wonho had fallen for Hyungwon, Hyungwon was sure of it, and Kihyun didn't even like Wonho like that. So why couldn't it just work out the way it was supposed to?
Hyungwon ordered ramen, mostly to make Wonho happy, and it worked. He started talking about the different types of ramen, in flavor and in texture, like an art critic walking through an exhibition. Hyungwon just listened, smile on his face.

“You did good ordering their special ramen,” Wonho said sagely. “It’s good, really worth the extra money.”

“You’ve been here before?” Hyungwon asked for the sake of asking, even though he already knew the answer.

The excited smile slipped off Wonho’s face. “A couple of times,” he said.

Hyungwon regretted asking. In the harsh artificial light of the bulbs above, he could finally see Wonho clearly. Wonho looked stunning, and he looked sad. It was clear in his every action, in the smile he used to try and hide it. Wonho was hurting. His heart was broken and he was trying to keep it hidden, but it still peeked through, like ribs out of a moth-eaten sweater.

“Hey,” Hyungwon said gently. “You okay?”

“Huh? Of course I am,” Wonho said, widening his smile. “Why would you think I’m not?”

Hyungwon almost pushed the question, before he remembered that he and Wonho were practically strangers. Wonho didn't know him. It didn't matter how much Hyungwon cared, how much it pained him to see Wonho down. Hyungwon was a stranger.

For now. Hyungwon knew Wonho, whether Wonho himself knew it or not. And Wonho knew Hyungwon. He’d fallen for him, after all. Hyungwon was going to mend Wonho’s broken heart, and fix his entire mess. He would make sure of it.

He put up his own fake smile. “No reason,” he said. “I’ve just never seen anybody get so pensive over ramen before.”

Wonho laughed, and it was a lovely sound, rich and carefree and a little dopey. “Well I think ramen is a food miracle, so get used to it.”

Hyungwon didn't think he could ever get used to that laugh, but he just nodded and smiled into his drink, his other hand resting gently on the snow white lily.

Students poured out of the building, a steady stream of tired legs and grumbling voices. Kihyun stood in one of the eaves of a nearby building, and waited.

He’d waited in this same spot for the past two days, but this time he was sure he’d catch him. He’d talked it over with Jaebum. Jaebum would talk to him, give him some reason he had to be in front of the building at the right time, and then Kihyun would grab him.

Kihyun was not going to let Shownu avoid him again.

The first thing he had done after he’d calmed down enough from confronting Hyungwon was to call him, but the call had been ignored. So Kihyun waited outside the mechanical engineering building at
lunch the day after, but Shownu hadn’t walked out of it, not even as lunch ended and Kihyun had to leave for work. On Tuesday Kihyun wandered around the building, at Shownu’s favorite spots, and called him twice. Still nothing.

So he’d taken necessary action. Kihyun called Youngjae, a friend who was friends with Jaebum who was friends with Shownu, and made this plan. He’d tried to give as little information as possible, especially why Shownu was avoiding him, but Kihyun was aware of Jaebum’s knowing silence on the phone. Which was at least better than the loud, barking laugh Youngjae gave after forcing a few details out of Kihyun.

But it would be worth it, if Kihyun could finally talk to Shownu. If he could finally get out words that had been clogged in his chest since that Sunday afternoon. He didn’t even know what words they were, but he was suffocating on them. He felt like if he didn’t say them, he’d die with them stuck in his throat.

He had to talk to Shownu. Kihyun could still see that sad smile in his mind’s eye, and he couldn’t let it stay there.

He leaned back against the wall, scanning the thinning crowd for Shownu’s big frame. He was nowhere to be seen, but that wasn’t surprising. Shownu didn’t like getting in the middle of the crush of students escaping class. When people shoved him, they got hurt.

Kihyun was content with waiting in silence for as long as he needed to, when he suddenly spotted a familiar face approaching. Handsome, but with a build the exact opposite of what he was looking for. The sudden mental comparison made Kihyun grin.

“Changkyun-ah,” he said, straightening. “What’re you doing here?”

“I came to talk to Jooheon-hyung,” Changkyun answered, easy smile on his face. “Thinking of moving back into our apartment, so he can stop making Soonyoung’s life hell.”

Kihyun had to smile back. “That’s nice to hear. Jooheon must’ve missed you, I’m sure.”

“He only wants me around so that if a ghost attacks he can use me as a human shield,” Changkyun grumbled. Kihyun laughed, and laughed harder when Changkyun pouted.

“It’s okay, Jooheon can’t run worth a damn when he’s scared,” he said. “So just push him down and start sprinting.”

“Thanks for the advice,” Changkyun said with a grin.

There was a few seconds of silence, and then Changkyun suddenly spoke. “Hyungwon-hyung really is sorry, y’know.”

Kihyun’s warm mood frosted over. “Yes,” he said shortly. He did know. It didn’t make him any closer to forgiving him.

“You can’t stay mad at him forever,” Changkyun said. “If you guys just talked it over—”

“I don’t see what he could say that would make this better,” Kihyun said coldly.

Changkyun opened his mouth as if to say something, and then he stopped and sighed. “Well, I can’t make you,” he said finally. “But he really does feel bad. Just try and look at it from his point of view. Someone he liked so much, and so close, always by his side…” And he trailed off and gave Kihyun a look.
Kihyun pretended like he didn’t notice. “I’m sure he does feel bad.”

Changkyun sighed again. He looked ready to say something else, but at that moment Kihyun spotted the person he’d been waiting for all this while, and he couldn’t waste a second more.

“Sorry, I have to go,” Kihyun said. He flashed a quick smile to show the kid he wasn’t angry at him, and said, “See you.”

“See you,” Changkyun said back, a small smile on his face. Another look. Kihyun just kept on walking, fixing his eyes on his target.

Shownu was standing by the front door of the mechanical engineering building, looking around. He looked good. Normal. For some reason that hurt Kihyun. He was supposed to look as nervous as Kihyun felt.

He tried to walk confidently, but he could feel his steps wavering. But then Shownu turned, and made direct eye-contact.

Shownu didn’t look away. He didn’t try to pretend like he hadn’t seen him, didn’t turn and start walking away. It bolstered Kihyun’s heart, and he walked faster.

“Kihyun,” Shownu said calmly once the distance had closed enough. “I’m guessing Jaebum doesn’t really need my help with a project.”

“Hi, hyung,” Kihyun just said in reply. “You… I called you. You didn’t pick up.”

“Yeah, I’m sorry about that,” Shownu said. “I didn’t really feel like talking to you.”

That hurt Kihyun even more, and even though he’d planned on being collected and talking calmly, he couldn’t keep it in. “Please stop ignoring me,” Kihyun burst out. “You said you don’t want me to be alone, but then why did you…?” He trailed off, unsure where he had been going with it, and then took a breath. “I miss you.” It was embarrassing and he could feel the blood rushing to his face, but he didn’t care.

Shownu just watched him for a while, and then gave a soft sigh. “I’m sorry, Kihyun,” he said, “but I can’t. Not when you and Hoseok — ”

“Wonho-hyung and I aren’t anything,” Kihyun insisted. “We’re not. So please just come back.”

“Kihyun, I told you, it’s okay,” Shownu said, and put on a gentle smile.

“No, it’s not,” Kihyun said, getting almost frantic. “So stop being alone. I hate the thought of you being alone. I hate the thought of you not — ” He stopped himself. He wasn’t sure what had been about to come out of his mouth. He hated the thought of Shownu not wanting to be with him? Was that what he had been about to say? Kihyun took a deep breath, tried to gather his thoughts. “Look, there’s nothing like that between me and Wonho-hyung. Nothing. I don’t understand why you won’t be around me anymore.”

Kihyun waited while Shownu lapsed into another thoughtful silence. “You know,” Shownu said at last, looking at the empty air beside him, “for the longest time, I was just as clueless as you. I really didn’t see it. So when I finally did, I decided I didn’t want to force you. I wanted you to figure it out by yourself. I thought you just needed some time.” He finally looked back at Kihyun. “And then I saw you with Hoseok and I realized you didn’t need time. You just needed the right person.”

Something twisted in Kihyun’s gut at his words, and he didn’t know what it was. He thought he
hated it, but he couldn’t be sure.

“So it’s okay, I’m fine, really,” Shownu continued. “We both know Hoseok is a great guy. He likes you, and you like him. You shouldn’t hold back because of me.”

“I’m not holding back,” Kihyun said. He could feel himself getting worked up again. “I don’t like Wonho-hyung like that.”

“What are you talking about?” Shownu narrowed his eyes. “You’re just playing with him?”

“No—”

“You kissed him,” Shownu said, leaning in. He’d dropped his voice but Kihyun could sense him getting angry. “You know how he is. If you’re just messing with his feelings—”

“I’m not, I’m not,” Kihyun said frantically. “I’m not playing with him! I didn’t kiss him!”

“I saw you, Kihyun,” Shownu said. “You grabbed him.”

“That wasn’t me,” Kihyun said, and all the stupid words were rushing out like a tidal wave. “It was someone else. It was my body but it wasn’t me.”

Shownu straightened, and he didn’t look confused. He looked disappointed. Kihyun could see he didn’t believe him, and he hurriedly tried to set it straight, whether he sounded mental or not. “It started two months ago. Someone started possessing my body. But only half the days, right? And they fell for Wonho-hyung and… and…” He saw Shownu frowning more and more, and he didn’t know how he could make it sound believable. “It wasn’t me that kissed Wonho-hyung, you have to believe me.”

Shownu just sighed. “Don’t hurt him, Kihyun,” he said. “Just don’t.” And he turned and started walking away.

“No, hyung, wait,” Kihyun said, and he tried to grab him, but Shownu was too far and he kept on walking. Kihyun watched him get further and further, and the twist in his stomach turned to lead.
Long chapter! Brace yourself.

It was amazing how quickly things changed. One day Wonho had been happy, healthy, doing alright in his classes and generally satisfied with life. And then, two months later, he was brokenhearted, and he’d lost his two best friends in the world.

It had happened both super slow and in the blink of an eye. It must have been sudden, because Wonho hadn’t been able to stop it, but if it wasn’t gradual then why couldn’t he pinpoint the exact moment it happened?

Wonho stopped that thought as he leaned back against the wooden bench he was sitting on. He raised his left arm until his eyes were level with his wrist. He could pinpoint the exact moment it had happened. It had been the night of his birthday, when he’d gotten that bracelet with the name of the god of dreams. That had been the moment Wonho had irrevocably fallen in love with Yoo Kihyun.

It was ridiculous. Wonho still thought so. He was being ridiculous. He'd known Kihyun for years, and he’d never seen Kihyun in that way. And not only because of Shownu. Kihyun was his friend and nothing more.

But then Kihyun had changed somehow. All of a sudden Wonho found himself watching Kihyun more and more, waiting for him to talk about books Wonho had never even heard of, smile in that almost shy way that was so alien to Kihyun’s personality. His usual personality, anyway. The difference was so apparent that sometimes, when Wonho was feeling especially guilty, he'd convince himself he and Shownu were in love with two different Kihyuns.

Except there was only one Kihyun, and now he wasn't with either of them.

Wonho sighed aloud. He was sitting on one of the many benches on the campus, the one near the administration building. He had his phone out and Instagram open, but he wasn't really looking at it. The main reason he'd taken it out to look busy. It would've looked a little weird for him to just be sitting there, staring out into space and sighing occasionally. Now he was just sitting there and sighing at his phone. Still weird, but better.

He'd been spending a lot of time alone recently, mostly by choice. Shownu had already made it clear they could no longer hang out together, and there was no one else Wonho wanted to talk to about the hole in his chest. The cause of the hole was definitely at the bottom of the list.

Wonho could still remember that Sunday afternoon like it was preserved in glass. When Shownu had called him to meet up in the park, he was sure he was going to get punched. In a way, Wonho welcomed it. He had some vague idea of sense getting knocked into him, literally. But instead Shownu had apologized with a serious expression and told him he was backing off. Wonho had tried very hard not to cry, and, to his own great surprise, succeeded. Then Shownu had said he wanted Wonho and Kihyun to be happy together, and he’d left. Less than fifteen minutes later, Kihyun walked up the same slope, looking lost.
It really was amazing how quickly things changed. Wonho went to the park expecting a beating, and instead he’d received a blessing. And the tumult of happiness and loss, hope and regret, all died when Kihyun looked Wonho right in the eyes and told him to forget his feelings.

It was the worst kind of rejection, because it was so unexpected. Kihyun had kissed Wonho. He’d walked up to him and held his face steady and kissed him. He’d pressed his body to Wonho’s and buried his fingers in his hair and how was Wonho supposed to pretend that never happened? How was he supposed to forget it?

The worst part of it all was that when Wonho finally confessed his feelings, it was like Kihyun had forgotten it.

Wonho wanted to call him as he sat on that cold wooden bench, but he couldn’t bring himself to do it. He was afraid of what Kihyun would say if he did. There was a vain hope in Wonho’s heart that if the two of them just saw each other one more time, Kihyun would change his mind and jump into Wonho’s arms and kiss him again, and then he’d laugh almost shyly and talk about second meanings in old books. But even Wonho’s heart knew that hope was fruitless. The look in Kihyun’s eyes that Sunday afternoon was not something that would change just like that.

Honestly Wonho didn’t know what to do. And it just made the hole in his chest bigger.

He looked up and let his eyes land on the big white building right in front of him. A rumor had started a few weeks ago that the admin building was haunted, that if you walked the empty hallways at the right time you could see a tall, pale figure dressed all in white and with light blonde hair. It was probably bullshit, but Wonho wasn’t taking the chance. Since he’d first heard it he’d strictly avoided the building and going anywhere even near it. He only returned to this bench because the ghost hadn’t been spotted for a while. He vaguely wondered what kind of ghost it had been. Some woman who’d lost her love, and wandered around the building in search of him? How romantic.

A beep on his phone brought him back to the present. A message. From Chae Hyungwon.

They’d run into each other at the flower shop just the day before yesterday. Wonho opened the text, mildly curious.

You’re not busy are you?

The phrasing of it made Wonho raise an eyebrow. He texted back, No why?

The reply came back less than a minute later. Because you’ve been staring at that building for a good six minutes now, and I wouldn’t want to interrupt.

Wonho quickly raised his head and looked around, until he saw Hyungwon leaning against a nearby tree, grinning widely.

He was dressed in all black— long coat with a subtle gray pattern, thin turtleneck, skinny jeans. He looked good. He always did, even when he didn’t try. Wonho was a little disappointed to see Hyungwon was wearing a little makeup. He looked pretty much the same with and without, give or take a few blemishes and dark marks, but when he made himself up he looked distant. Flawless and unapproachable.

“You should just transfer here,” Wonho said with a grin as Hyungwon walked up to the bench. “You’re here pretty much all the time anyway.”

Hyungwon just laughed. “I actually came to see Kihyun, but I forgot he had a class. So I’m a vagabond until lunchtime.”
“Well I'm free until 12:00,” Wonho said. “So we can hang out if you want.”

“You sure?” Hyungwon raised an eyebrow and smiled teasingly. “I’m not dragging you away from important business?”

“Nope, the building will still be here on Monday,” Wonho grinned, getting up. “You, though, will probably be busy with something else.”

“Don’t count on it,” Hyungwon said, and he tried to say it as a joke but he sounded a little bitter.

“What’s wrong?” Wonho asked, as the two of them started walking together.

“Nothing,” Hyungwon said, putting up a smile. “It’s just I’ve lost a semester and it’s kind of hard to adjust to life. Changkyun and Kihyun barred, everyone looks at me weird. Different from before.”

“That’s how I look at you?” Wonho asked, laughing a bit. “‘Weird’?”

“You never looked at me before,” Hyungwon said with a small smile. “We met post-coma, remember?”

Wonho actually had forgotten. He always felt like he'd known Hyungwon for much longer. It was one of his great regrets that he hadn't met him sooner.

They walked to the café outside the campus, the same one they'd gone to before, and sat down at an open round table. Wonho ordered an Americano like usual, but Hyungwon asked for green tea.

“It’s healthy, right?” he said in reply to Wonho’s questioning look. “One of the doctors said I need to fix my eating habits, so I thought I should start.”

“That’s a good mindset,” Wonho said sincerely. “I’ve been trying to cut down on junk food too. If you want, you can join me in my new exercise routine.”

“Yeah, thanks but no thanks,” Hyungwon said. “Not even you could get me to do a pull-up.”

And he laughed, an almost shy laugh that lightly colored his rounded cheeks. Not for the first time Wonho found himself marveling at how good-looking Hyungwon really was. He seemed smart too, and witty, and he was fun to be around. He was confident but not arrogant, surprisingly sensitive underneath a sharp exterior. It all just made Wonho regret everything even more.

Wonho took a sip of his drink and plunged forward. “Hyungwon-ah, do you mind if I ask you something?”

“Go ahead, hyung,” Hyungwon said, putting his cup down. “Unless you’re going to ask me to exercise with you, in which case I’ve just conveniently gotten a sudden stomachache and I have to go home.”

“No, I'm not going to ask you to exercise,” Wonho said, subconsciously matching Hyungwon’s smile with his own. He dropped the smile when he realized he was doing it, and took a breath to let himself get serious. He had to ask now. “I’m just gonna be direct. Hyungwon, do— are you interested in me? Romantically?”

Hyungwon pursed his lips, and then turned away and chuckled. “Well, since you’re asking me so bluntly,” he said, and then turned to face Wonho again. “Yes. I am.”

Wonho knew it. He wasn’t a total blockhead at reading signals after all. But all it did was confirm he
was still a complete idiot all-around. Because he was sitting across a gorgeous young man who'd just confessed he liked him, and yet Wonho could not be happy.

One month. If this had happened one month ago, Wonho would've been over the moon. He would've responded to Hyungwon’s confession in a heartbeat, started planning dates and outings and ways of making Hyungwon cringe and blush at the same time. He would've been happy.

But it was too late, and Wonho regretted everything, especially what he was about to do.

“Hyungwon-ah, I'm sorry,” he said gently, as Hyungwon raised his cup for a brief sip. “I… I'm in love with someone else.”

The cup hit the tabletop with a loud *thunk*, and tea spread across the surface in a wave. Wonho quickly scrambled with paper napkins in an effort to prevent it spreading more. Hyungwon looked like he hadn't even realized.

“What did you say?” he said finally, and he looked stunned, dazed. “You… you’re in love…?”

“Yes, Hyungwon, I'm sorry,” Wonho said, and he truly, truly meant it. “You’re an amazing person but I—”

“You’re in love?” Hyungwon cut him off, and he sounded oddly disbelieving, but still slightly dazed. “So quick, it’s barely been a couple of weeks… you're sure you're in love? That— that's a big, serious thing to say.”

“It’s how I am,” Wonho said, surprised into sincere truth. “I fall in love like that.”

“Wow,” Hyungwon said, falling back into his chair. “I… wow.” He fell into silence, like he was thinking it over. And then Hyungwon smiled.

“Hey, you okay?” Wonho asked, more than a little freaked out at the unexpected reaction. Guys generally did not smile after being rejected. Wonho sure as hell hadn't on Sunday.

“I'm fine, just… taken aback,” Hyungwon said, and now Wonho got a better look at his smile. There was something bitter about it, almost regretful. “I was just surprised, that’s all.”

“I’m really sorry,” Wonho said, “you’re an amazing person and I like you, but… not like that. I’m already in love with someone else.”

“Yeah, I heard you,” Hyungwon said, and then gave a disbelieving chuckle. “You’re really sure about this? I think we’d be good together.”

Wonho thought so too. A part of him wanted to take back his words, try dating him and see where it went. But that wouldn’t be fair to Hyungwon, being with him only as second choice, just to avoid being single. “I’m sure,” he said.

“But, come on, he doesn’t even like you back,” Hyungwon insisted. “Not like that. He’s already in love with someone else, and it’s so obvious, just stop for a moment and think—”

“Wait, what are you talking about?” Wonho interrupted, but a sinking feeling in his stomach told him he already knew.

Hyungwon opened his mouth, closed it, and after a few seconds finally came out with it. “Kihyun. You’re rejecting me because of Kihyun.”
The sinking in Wonho’s stomach became an outright blackhole. So Hyungwon knew. How many other people did too? “How— why would you think that?”

“Because it’s obvious,” Hyungwon said with an exasperated sigh. “Everything is just obvious and frustrating and—” He stopped himself and sighed again, but this one sounded bone-tired. “I’m sorry, it’s not my place,” he said with a tired, rueful smile. “We don’t really know each other at all. I… I’m just sorry.”

He seemed so apologetic it made Wonho’s gut twist. Why did it have to be like this? “You shouldn’t apologize,” he said. “It’s me, I’m the idiot.”

“Well I won’t fight you on that,” Hyungwon said, and he laughed, but it didn’t sound right. Wonho wanted to reply to that, but he couldn’t think of the right words.

He found himself staring at the now drying green tea spread over the once-white tabletop. Hyungwon hadn’t even noticed he’d dropped his cup, chipped it against the fake marble surface. *He must’ve been really surprised,* Wonho thought, and it made him feel worse.

“Hey,” he said, a sudden thought coming to mind. “What did you mean when you said it was so quick?”

Hyungwon looked up from picking dust off his sleeve. “Hmm?”

“When I said I was in love with someone else,” Wonho said, “you said it was so quick, that it had only been a few weeks. What did you mean by that?”

He’d asked it innocently, but Hyungwon seemed to freeze up when he heard it. “Nothing,” Hyungwon said finally, pretending like he hadn’t done anything out of the ordinary. “I just… I didn’t mean anything. You were just so obvious around him you couldn’t have been hiding it for more than a few weeks.”

It made sense, but for some reason Wonho had a hard time believing it. He wanted to push more, grab at some thinly-veiled truth, but he stopped himself. He’d just rejected Hyungwon—interrogating him probably wouldn’t make him feel better. So Wonho just sat there staring at the chipped cup, getting more and more uncomfortable with each passing second, searching for something to say.

He didn’t have to. Hyungwon shook his sleeve off his wrist, revealing a silver chain watch. “It’s almost twelve,” he said. “You should get going if you don’t want to be late to your class.”

Wonho nodded. It felt like he was running away, but he took it. Hyungwon didn’t want him around. Wonho didn’t want to be there.

“Uh, yeah,” he said, getting up. “I’ll… I’ll see you around.” Right after he said it did Wonho realize that wasn’t the right thing to say.

But Hyungwon still put up a smile and said, “Yeah, see you, hyung.”

The class dragged on, thick and slow like molasses. Wonho couldn’t concentrate on one word of it. He couldn’t get Hyungwon out of his mind. It was like a whole typhoon of emotions had been going through him at that cafe. *He really must’ve liked me,* Wonho thought, dragging the end of his pen lightly against his notebook. He couldn’t imagine why. Sure, Wonho was good-looking, but it wasn’t like Hyungwon was lacking in that department. Hyungwon was good-looking enough to
snag much better-looking guys than Wonho, even if Hyungwon was an asshole, which he wasn’t. He hadn’t even known Wonho for that long.

*So why me?* Wonho tapped his pen, frowning to himself. It was the flowers, he eventually decided. The flowers and the hospital visits. That was what had gotten Hyungwon. He didn’t know that the guy bringing the flowers was a grade-A idiot.

It was ironic, because when Wonho had started his daily visits, this was exactly what he’d wanted. He hadn’t admitted it to himself in the beginning, but it was there in the back of his mind. Hyungwon would wake up, ask who the flowers in the case were from, find out that Wonho had been visiting every day and instantly fall for him. And now it had happened and Wonho had rejected him.

And for what? For who? A guy who didn’t even like him back, and was doing everything he could to avoid him.

“Stupid,” Wonho sighed aloud, not caring if everyone heard him. They deserved the warning.

Finally, after an eternity, the class ended. Wonho shuffled out behind everyone else. He would eat lunch on campus before heading back home. Kihyun didn’t eat at the cafeteria anymore, and neither did Shownu. Both of them did it to avoid him, Wonho knew. But he couldn’t eat there anymore either, simply because it made him feel even lonelier, so he just ordered the food to go and ate on one of his favorite benches.

So he walked out of the cafeteria, ramen in hand, looking for a place to sit when he found something else.

Kihyun. It was Kihyun, walking toward the cafeteria, wrapped up in a big white scarf. He didn’t seem to notice Wonho standing just a few feet away, and just a day ago Wonho would’ve pretended he didn’t notice either. And he didn’t know if it was the memory of Hyungwon in the cafe or just his own stupidity acting up, but Wonho’s feet started moving towards Kihyun, and he called out to him.

Kihyun stopped, and when he made eye-contact with Wonho he quickly turned away. He looked like he would’ve run away too, but Wonho had gotten too close.

“Kihyun,” he said, and now that he was in front of him, Wonho suddenly found he had nothing to say. “How’ve you been?”

“I’ve been okay,” Kihyun answered stiffly. “And you, hyung?”

“Not the best,” Wonho replied honestly. And then even though he hadn’t meant to, it all came pouring out. “I don’t understand, Kihyun. Why are you being like this? Is this because of Hyunwoo? Because he said—”

“It’s not because of Shownu-hyung,” Kihyun cut off. He sighed, ran a hand through his hair. “Hyung, I’m sorry,” he said, and he looked it. “I just don’t like you, not like that. I’m sorry.”

“But you kissed me,” Wonho said helplessly.

“That… look, I can’t explain that right now,” Kihyun said. “Just try and forget about that, and forget about me. There’re a lot of people who are interested in you, just… not me. Give up on me and move on. You’ll be happier.”

“A lot of people,” Wonho repeated. “You mean Hyungwon?”

Kihyun was taken aback, but got together in a second. “I didn’t want to tell you behind his back, but
“Yeah, he told me,” Wonho said. “I turned him down.”

“What? Why the hell would you do that?” Kihyun looked genuinely surprised.

“Because I only want you,” Wonho said sincerely. “It doesn’t matter who likes me, I like you. I don’t want to be with Hyungwon.”

“Yes you do, you idiot,” Kihyun said, and he looked frustrated to the point of almost tearing out his hair. “Yes, you want to be with Hyungwon. You don’t want me! You don’t like me! You should just be with Hyungwon and forget this stupid infatuation.”

“It’s not an infatuation, Kihyun,” Wonho said quietly. “I’m in love with you.”

“Don’t you ever say that to me again,” Kihyun said, shaking a finger at him. “Don’t. I’m sorry hyung but it’ll never happen. Just forget about it. You’re not in love with me, and I will never fall in love with you.”

Kihyun turned on his heel and stalked away, leaving Wonho more alone than ever before.

“Hoseok-ah, the door!”

“On it,” Wonho called as he walked over to the front door, just as the bell sounded again. Whoever it was, they were impatient. There was an unspoken rule that Jonghyun never answered the door unless Wonho was dying, so Wonho had to leave his room. It was the first time he’d done so since he’d gotten back to their apartment in the afternoon. It was familiar and safe, and everything on TV reminded him of Kihyun and his hurtful frustration, so he’d just stayed in there and tried not to feel pathetic. It hadn’t worked.

The bell rang again just as Wonho reached the door, and he was in such a hurry that he didn’t bother checking who it was. He wasn’t sure who he’d expected at almost ten-thirty at night, but it certainly wasn’t who he found.

“Uh, hey,” Wonho said, surprised. “What’re you doing here? How did you even find out where I live?”

Changkyun smiled. “Hello, hyung,” he said in that deep, smooth voice, completely unfazed. “I came to see you. Oh, and I called Jooheon-hyung to call Kihyun-hyung for your address. That’s how I found out where you live.”

“Huh? Why?” Wonho was completely confused. What was so urgent that it couldn’t wait till the morning? “Why didn’t you call Kihyun yourself?”

“Because he’d kill me if he knew I was doing this,” Changkyun said calmly. “Him and Hyungwon-hyung both.”

Wonho felt his stomach twist a little. “Hyungwon? What does this have to do with him?”

“See, I told myself I wouldn’t interfere,” Changkyun said, like he hadn’t even heard the question. “And I wasn’t going to, I really wasn’t. I thought Hyungwon-hyung had it all worked out. Even after it all went to shit there I thought he’d fix it in no time. So imagine my surprise when I got to his
apartment this afternoon and found him eating my secret stash of frozen cookies and insisting everything was fine.” He leaned in. “Pro-tip: when he eats my cookies, nothing’s fine.”

So that was what this was about. Wonho knew Changkyun and Hyungwon were close. He wondered if Changkyun came out all this way just to punch Wonho in the face. Wonho wouldn’t mind. He really felt like what he needed was a punch in the face.

But Changkyun didn’t punch him in the face. Instead he reached for the messenger bag he had slung around his shoulder, and started opening it up.

“You can’t tell anyone I did this,” he said, busy with the zipper. “I mean it. I will be murdered twice over. But I can’t just stand back and watch this anymore. I have to do something, and this is the best thing, if the two of them would just see clearly.” He straightened. “This is for you.”

It was a notebook. A plain red notebook.

Wonho took it, puzzled. Kihyun’s name was written on the top, in Kihyun’s familiar handwriting, and he could see from the side that more than half the pages were filled in. He opened a page at random, found Kihyun’s usual neat script. And then he turned the page, and found words written in a smooth, flowing handwriting he didn’t recognize.

“What is this?” Wonho asked, looking back to Changkyun.

“Something very, very important,” Changkyun said, and he looked dead serious. “I know it makes no sense, but just try and make sense of it. Read it. And just think.”

“Think about what?” Wonho was more confused than ever.

“Everything,” Changkyun said. He smiled. “I have to go, Hyungwon-hyung will be wondering where I went. See you.”

The kid turned and went down the stairs before Wonho could say another word. Wonho stood at the doorway a moment, bewildered, and then went back inside and closed the door.

“Who was that?” Jonghyun called from the kitchen.

“A friend,” Wonho said, sitting on the old, battered sofa. “He was dropping something off.”

“Okay,” Jonghyun said. “Dinner’s in ten.”

Wonho just nodded to himself, and then looked at the notebook in his hands. Something very, very important. He ran his fingers over the cover once, resting on Kihyun’s name a moment. And then he opened the notebook, and started reading the first page.

*Chae Hyungwon*

*Try and follow this guide, and try and act like me as much as possible. Might be we’ll both make it through this sane, and we can both return to our usual lives. This is my usual routine:*

*I wake up early, and start breakfast...*
Lyrics and Signs

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was a beautiful day.

Winter had receded quickly in recent weeks, and spring was out in full force. A light coolness lingered in the air, comfortable to the skin. New leaves sprouted, coloring barren branches, and with them came small, delicate buds, filled with unblissed beauty and the promise of a bloom-laden April.

Jooheon sat in the park, notebook in hand, enjoying the weather. He loved Sundays. He went to church in the mornings—which he enjoyed—and then for the rest of the day he was free to do what he liked. Sometimes he went out with friends, but most weekends he just stayed in and worked.

Writing lyrics was not just a hobby for Jooheon, but a passion. It had started just as he’d entered high-school, when he’d been listening to an obscure song and he thought, hey, he could do better. He did do better, but not right away. It had taken studying and time and dedication, and he hadn’t regretted a second of it. After some time he’d moved on from writing everything to writing specifically rap, and somehow, he was pretty good at it.

It had become sort of a routine for Jooheon to spend Sunday afternoons shut up in his room, headphones in, bent over his laptop until the battery died, and then huddled up with a notebook. Changkyun understood and didn’t bother him, until Jooheon burst out of the room with something he was halfway-satisfied with, and then forced the kid to listen to the same forty-five seconds over and over.

Jooheon had wanted to do the same that weekend, but since Changkyun had set up camp in Hyungwon’s apartment, Jooheon had been forced to move in with Soonyoung and his roommates because like hell he was going to sleep alone in an apartment, what if someone died in there before they moved in? Soonyoung was both fun and pretty considerate, so Jooheon didn’t mind his new living arrangements, but almost every Sunday afternoon Soonyoung’s (very loud) friends came over and played video games. No amount of pressing the volume up button could drown out the sounds of explosions and frustrated Chinese swearing. Those were the quiet afternoons. The days his friends didn’t come over, Soonyoung played SHINee MVs at full volume and danced along to the choreography. Years of angry neighbors’ complaints hadn’t been able to stop him, so there was no way Jooheon could.

So Jooheon picked up his phone and notebook, and went outside.

He usually sat in cafes, sipping coffee and riding beats, but that day the weather was so lovely it seemed a shame to stay indoors. He wandered around a bit, enjoying the cool air, until he came across the park near the university campus. It was surprisingly quiet considering it was a Sunday afternoon, but that was exactly what Jooheon wanted—a little quiet. So he found a nice little bench by the man-made pool and sat down, ready to write.

Except he couldn’t. Instead Jooheon found himself thinking about all the things that had happened to him in the last couple of weeks. Or rather, around him. Every once in a while Jooheon got the feeling something major was happening, and he was just outside it. Almost like a spectator, except he couldn’t even see what it was. It was frustrating.
He was sure at least part of it was something to do with Chae Hyungwon. Jooheon had bumped into him on campus once, and had seen him walking around a couple of times after. Of course, he hadn’t approached, not after Hyungwon had mentioned how close he’d gotten to ghosts during his coma. Jooheon chose life, thanks.

He still wanted to. Something was up, ever since Hyungwon got out of the coma. Changkyun knew it too, and honestly it hurt Jooheon a bit that the kid wouldn’t tell him what it was. He thought of asking directly, but there was no point. In any case, he was kind of scared what he’d hear. What if it was more ghost-related stuff?

Thinking of ghosts made Jooheon think of Kihyun. Despite the nice weather, he shuddered. He was pretty sure Kihyun was no longer possessed, and Kihyun himself had hinted it the last time they’d spoken a few days ago. It was still creepy as all hell. The thought that one of his closest seniors had walked around with a ghost inhabiting his body half the time… Jooheon found himself shuddering again, and tried to think about something else.

But thinking about Kihyun brought Jooheon onto thoughts of Minhyuk. He hadn’t seen him in a while, not since the three of them had had lunch and dinner at Kihyun’s apartment. Jooheon missed him. They’d talked three or four times before the thing at Kihyun’s apartment, but Jooheon had gotten close to him. Talking with Minhyuk felt weirdly familiar, like they’d been friends forever. Some rumor had spread on campus that the admin building was haunted, and Jooheon wanted to laugh with Minhyuk about it. _The guy is seriously too ghostly for his own good_, Jooheon thought, looking down at his shoes. They weren’t the ones Minhyuk had borrowed that day, but were pretty similar.

Jooheon sighed aloud and then turned up the volume on his phone, trying to get lost in the treble and bass. He’d gone two minutes into the song when a shadow fell over his notebook. Jooheon took one earphone out, looked up, and almost screamed.

It was a ghost.

Jooheon froze up, his body torn between legging it and screaming his head off or possibly both, when his eyes adjusted and he realized, no, it was not a ghost.

The person looked damn ghostly, though. It was a guy, probably Jooheon’s age, dressed all in white. He was small and pretty and petite, and looked fragile, like a harsh breath would send him floating away. He had dark hair, chocolate brown almost transitioning into black, and light brown eyes. Eyes which were currently fixed on Jooheon.

Jooheon finally found his voice. “Um, yes?” He paused his music. He had a feeling this wouldn’t be brief.

“Are you Lee Jooheon?” the guy asked, and he had a nice voice, sweet, a little high. He’d be a good singer, Jooheon decided.

“Uh, yeah, that’s me,” he said. “Why?”

“Do you know a person by the name of Lee Minhyuk?” the not-ghost questioned, not answering Jooheon’s.


“Understandable,” the pretty guy said, with a short nod. He looked at a file in his hand, and— wait, had that file always been there? It made Jooheon uncomfortable, the thought of a big file appearing
out of nowhere, so he turned away, and found himself looking at another almost-ghost.

This guy was also dressed in all-white, but looked sturdier than the first one. His hair was black, and his skin tan, and he was handsome too, standing a little ways away with his arms crossed. Jooheon was about to start on an awkward greeting, when the pretty not-ghost suddenly looked up.

“Well, you’re listed as Minhyuk’s third emergency contact,” he said. “So this is us contacting you.” He smiled, a very transparent and not-very-genuine smile.


“He’s fine,” the guy said soothingly. “Nothing serious at all.”

“We shouldn’t be doing this,” Not-Ghost #2 suddenly said, walking forward. “Just think about it, Youngjae. Minhyuk got in trouble just talking to this kid, and now we have to contact him? It makes no sense.”

“Well I got this as a direct order from my boss,” the first guy, Youngjae, said. “So this is what we do.”

“Yeah, well my boss said not to contact uninformed humans,” the other guy said. “And this kid counts as one, don’t you think?”

It was literally like Jooheon was not there. He was about to speak up, but Youngjae rebutted, “We’re forbidden from contact with those two, so what are we supposed to do? Drop him in the middle of nowhere, just like that?”

The other guy huffed, obviously without a comeback. “This is a mistake,” he said eventually.

“Your whole existence is a mistake, Daehyun,” Youngjae snapped back. He turned back to Jooheon without any warning, plastic smile on his face. “So we’ve confirmed you’re Lee Jooheon and know Lee Minhyuk, yes?”

Jooheon nodded, and he thought he got it. These guys were wearing all-white, just like Minhyuk did, and the way they talked about their bosses was familiar too. “You work with Minhyuk-hyung?”

Youngjae started in surprise. “He—he told you about us?”

“No, just a lucky guess,” Jooheon said. “How is he? His boss still giving him hell?”

“Not exactly,” the other, Daehyun, said, walking up. “His employment has been terminated. And by the way, Youngjae, your face is a mistake.”

“Wait, Minhyuk-hyung’s been fired?” Jooheon jerked his head up as Youngjae rolled his eyes at Daehyun. “Why? Is it because of me?”

“No exactly,” Youngjae said, “but yes, exactly. And come on Daehyun, you can think of something better than that.”

Jooheon tuned out the bickering. Minhyuk had looked absolutely terrified at the prospect of getting fired, and now Jooheon remembered his private suspicions that Minhyuk worked for a mob boss. He eyed the two guys in front of him. Was this all-white some secret gang symbol? The two of them didn’t look like mafia, and neither did Minhyuk, but Jooheon had never met a real-life mafioso so he couldn’t really compare.
“Uh, excuse me,” he finally cut in. “Could you please just tell me if Minhyuk-hyung is okay?”

The two not-ghosts-but-possibly-gangsters stopped. “We told you, he's fine,” Daehyun said, and then immediately turned back to Youngjae. “Why don't we just talk to the guy Minhyuk was tagging?”

“Because compensation, Dae,” Youngjae sighed exasperatedly. “The higher-ups want to avoid him in case he asks for compensation. The other guy too.”

“They’re entitled to it, though,” Daehyun grumbled. “Our side messed ummf—”

His words were cut off by Youngjae’s’s hand. He looked at Jooheon, but Jooheon was still trying to wrap his mind around the whole thing. “I’m sorry, who exactly are you?” he finally asked.

“Daehyun, Youngjae,” Daehyun introduced, with a brief motion first towards himself and then to the other. “We’re part of the communications and liaison department.”

“Liaison?” Jooheon repeated. That didn’t sound particularly mafia-like, but it didn’t make him feel much better.

“Okay, that's enough small-talk,” Youngjae said with a nervous laugh. He held out his hand, and immediately there was a sheet of paper in it, like he'd conjured it out of nowhere. “Sign this,” he said, handing it to Jooheon, along with a pen.

Jooheon took both pen and paper cautiously, and started reading through the document. The script was in gold ink, and was nothing but a declaration that the person signing was indeed who they claimed they were.

“What happens if if I sign this?” Jooheon asked suspiciously. He was uneasy around legal stuff.

“Why wouldn't you?” Youngjae huffed. “You are Lee Jooheon, aren't you?”

“Well, yeah,” Jooheon said, “but still. What does it do, if I sign it?”

“Nothing, really,” Daehyun shrugged. “It’s just paperwork. Sign it or not, we're still dumping him with you. I saw a bagel cart a while back, and I want one.”

Jooheon stopped the tip of the pen just above the surface of the paper. “Dumping him?”

“Look, are you gonna sign it or not?” Daehyun asked impatiently. “If that bagel cart leaves, I'll never find it again. So if you're who you say you are, just bloody sign.”

Jooheon stared at the blank line all ready for his signature. Well, he was Lee Jooheon. And it wasn't like he was selling his soul or anything. He lowered the tip of the pen and signed his name with a flourish.

“Congratulations, Lee Jooheon-ssi,” Youngjae said with a polite smile, taking back the page and pen. And then he started talking, smooth and fast, like a businessman trying to close a profitable deal before the other shmuck has any idea what's happening. “You will be reunited with your… friend in a few minutes. Of course, for security reasons some things had to be wiped, but he should be the same. All matters regarding his background and identity will be handled on our end. But if he has any questions, we can be reached here.”

Youngjae placed a calling card into a stunned Jooheon’s’s hands. Had he heard all that right? Background? Identity?
The writing on the stiff card was embossed in gold, and made the card look rich and fancy. There was no name, just a number. Jooheon looked up, ready with a million questions, from the mafia to the contract to Daehyun’s bagel preferences.

Youngjae and Daehyun were both gone. Jooheon stood up, looking around, but he couldn't see either of them. How could they have disappeared so fast?

He sat back down, staring at the card. More events he couldn't even see.

He gathered up his bag and notebook, deciding he'd had enough of the outdoors for a day. Even Ring Ding Dong playing at full volume for the twentieth time seemed like a better option. Jooheon organized all his things and stood up, ready to leave, when he spotted someone.

Another almost-ghost. A tall, thin figure coming up the slope, all dressed in white, and with pale, shining skin. Hair pure silver, good-looking features a little too pretty to be called handsome exactly. And as he walked up the slope until the two of them were almost silver, Jooheon saw that he had no shoes.

“Minhyuk-hyung!” Jooheon yelled out before he could stop himself, and then he was running to him, and hugging him tightly. “Where have you been, hyung?” Jooheon asked, still hugging that tall, slim body. Apart from the change from blonde to silver, he was just the same. “Are you okay?”

“I… I'm fine,” Minhyuk said, and then he slowly extricated himself from Jooheon’s grip. He held Jooheon at arm's length and looked right into his face. “And who are you?”

Jooheon’s jaw dropped. “What?”

“You really should’ve introduced yourself before grabbing me,” Minhyuk continued in that calm, light tone. “I mean, you’re good-looking and all, but I’d like at least your name first, y’know?”

“Hyung, you don’t remember me?” Jooheon studied Minhyuk’s eyes carefully, trying to see if this was some big joke. It didn’t look like it. “It's me, Jooheon,” he cried. “We met in the admin building. I lent you shoes! Come on!”

Minhyuk peered at him closely. “I feel like I might know you,” he said eventually. “But I don't know you.”

Jooheon was about to panic, whine and freak out about Minhyuk’s sudden amnesia, when he remembered something Youngjae had said in the middle of the flood of words. “Some things had to be wiped.” Some things? Things like Minhyuk's memories?

Jooheon shuddered. The mafia was scary.

“Okay, hyung, you might wanna sit down,” he said. “I’ll tell you what I know.”

“You don't seem to know a lot, Jooheon,” Minhyuk said pensively, chewing on the end of his spoon. “I told you, we only talked to each other like five times,” Jooheon whined. “It’s not my fault. You should've picked someone else as your emergency contact.”

“Nah, I picked you for a reason,” Minhyuk grinned. “You’re pretty alright, Jooheonnie.”

They were sitting together in the restaurant in the middle of the park, sipping hot coffees. Jooheon
had ordered chili fries, but Minhyuk had eaten half of one before declaring he hated them and he wasn’t hungry anyway, so they sat half-eaten in the middle of the table. Jooheon had also given his shoes to Minhyuk, just because he felt like he should.

“Thanks, hyung,” Jooheon said, and he meant it, but he was still worried. “You really should’ve chosen someone else though, like a family member or somebody.”

“I don’t think I have any family, Jooheon,” Minhyuk said, after a pause.

“Come on, you don’t know that,” Jooheon said. “You might have a bunch of siblings and cousins and extended family, maybe outside of Seoul.”

“No, I don’t think so,” Minhyuk said easily. “Otherwise, why would you be my third contact? And according to the conversation between Dumb and Dumber, one of my first two contacts was the brat I was babysitting? If they can’t contact the second person, then they’re probably involved in the organization or whatever too. Thus, not family.” He nodded, pleased with his logical thinking, and took another sip of his latte.

Jooheon felt the mood at the table drop a bit, and he didn’t know if it was Minhyuk’s mood or his own, but he put up a smile and said, “It’s okay, hyung, just think of me as your brother. We already have the same surname, Lee and Lee. From now on, I’m your family.”

Minhyuk blinked twice in surprise, and then a huge grin broke out on his face. “Thanks Jooheon, you big softie,” he said, and flicked a chili fry at him in a weird gesture of gratitude.

“You’re welcome,” Jooheon grinned back. “You can thank me by finally buying me a meal later.”

“You really think they’ll help me get a job or something?” Minhyuk asked, spinning the gold-embossed card around in his fingers. “I don’t really have any qualifications.”

“I’m sure they will,” Jooheon said firmly. “They cared enough to leave you with me, didn’t they? You’ll get something good enough to survive on, at least. In the meantime, you can live with me.”

“Wow, thanks,” Minhyuk said, and he looked very genuine. “You really are the best, Jooheon.” And he flicked another fry at him.

“It’s nothing,” Jooheon shrugged, but he was super-pleased. “You’ll actually be helping me out. I can move back to my apartment now.”

Minhyuk leaned forward, interested. “Why did you have to move out?”

“My roommate abandoned me,” Jooheon said dismissively. “And I don’t sleep in apartments alone.” He was about to elaborate more on ghosts and the very real danger they presented, when he was interrupted by the ringing of his phone. He fished it out of his pocket and took a look at the caller ID.

It was Wonho. Unexpected. He and Jooheon had exchanged numbers that night at Blacklight, before Wonho had gotten too drunk, but they hadn’t spoken. Jooheon smiled apologetically to Minhyuk and then picked up. “Hello.”

“Jooheon-ah, hey,” came Wonho’s voice. “You’re not busy, are you?”

“No, hyung, not busy,” Jooheon said, and Minhyuk threw another chili fry at him in fake outrage. “What’s up?”

“I kind of need to talk to you,” Wonho said. “Can you swing by the campus?”
Jooheon might’ve thought about refusing, simply because Minhyuk needed someone around, but there was something in Wonho’s voice that made him hesitate. Something urgent.

“Sure,” he said. “When? Right now?”

“As soon as possible,” Wonho said, and yes, there was something a little strangled in his tone. Like he was trying very hard to stay calm, and failing. “I’m already here, actually, so…”

“Okay, cool, I’m nearby too,” Jooheon said. “I can be there in less than ten minutes.” Minhyuk threw another chili fry and frowned, but Jooheon ignored him.

“Oh, yeah, great,” Wonho said. “There’s a bench right in front of the admin building, we can meet there.”

“Oh, I’ll be there,” Jooheon said. “See you, hyung.”

“Thanks, Jooheon-ah.”

“You’re abandoning me,” Minhyuk declared dramatically as soon as Jooheon ended the call. “I knew it.”

“I’m not abandoning you, I just have to meet this hyung I know,” Jooheon said. “It sounded important. You can come too.”

“Great, let’s go,” Minhyuk said, completely over it. “Do you want one of your shoes?”

“No, it’s all good,” Jooheon laughed, getting up. “Come on, let’s go.”

It was a short walk to the admin building, and Jooheon took the time to give Minhyuk a more in-depth account of their first meeting, ghost-vibe and all. Minhyuk accepted it all in that casual way Minhyuk accepted all weird truths.

When they rounded the building, Jooheon spotted Wonho sitting on the bench, and stopped. Wonho was fidgeting, gripping a battered red notebook in both hands, and generally looking extremely stressed-out.

“Hyung, I think it’s better if you wait here,” he said to Minhyuk. Minhyuk got it immediately and nodded.

Jooheon started towards the bench, putting on a bright smile. “Hey, hyung,” he called out.

Wonho looked up, smiled back and stood. “Jooheon-ah, thanks for coming,” he said.

“No problem,” Jooheon said. “What’s up?”

Wonho hesitated, shifted on the spot, and then finally said, “I need to ask you about Kihyun. Do you — have you noticed anything… off about him recently? Like he’s not been himself?”

Jooheon wanted to explode. Finally. He wanted to scream about it, but tried to play it cool. “Oh, you mean how he was possessed recently?”

Wonho looked like Jooheon had just punched him in the face. He believes me! Jooheon wanted to dance in triumph, but then noticed how absolutely stunned Wonho was and and felt guilty.

“So… it’s true?” Wonho breathed out, and it didn’t seem like he was talking to Jooheon anymore. He opened up the notebook and started paging through it. “But it can’t be possible… I mean…
“I know it’s hard to believe at first,” Jooheon said soothingly, “but I conducted a thorough investigation, and I’m sure. Kihyun-hyung pretty much confirmed it too.”

It didn’t seem like Wonho heard. He was still going through the notebook, muttering in shock. Jooheon was about to try and bring him back to earth, when someone suddenly barreled into him from behind and slammed an arm around his shoulders. “How much longer? I’m freezing,” Minhyuk whined. “Is this your Wonho-hyung?”

Wonho’s head snapped up. His eyes fell on Minhyuk’s face and they widened, and his mouth fell open. “Are… are you Minhyuk?” he finally managed to say. “Lee Minhyuk?”

“Yeah, that’s me,” Minhyuk said brightly. “You know me? Sorry but right now, I don’t know anyone at all— except Jooheon, of course.”

“He’s lost his memories,” Jooheon explained helpfully. Minhyuk nodded.

“But you’re Minhyuk?” Wonho asked, with dogged determination. “You are the same Minhyuk who…” He trailed off, and then vigorously rubbed his face with a hand. “Oh, my god.”

“Hyung, you okay?” Jooheon asked, concerned.

“I’m fine, Jooheon-ah, I just…” Wonho dropped down onto the bench. “I just need to process this. It’s real. I can’t— it’s actually real.”

“You need anything?” Jooheon was reluctant to leave Wonho like this, even with Minhyuk impatiently tugging on his sleeve.

“No, I just need to think,” Wonho said. He looked up at Jooheon and smiled. “You can go, I’m alright.”

“Okay then,” Jooheon said rather unwillingly. “See you later then. Let’s go, hyung,” he said, addressing the last to Minhyuk.

“See you around,” Minhyuk said to Wonho, who smiled weakly in return.

As the two of them walked away, Jooheon saw Wonho pull out his phone and call someone. “Oh, Hyunwoo, thank god you picked up,” Jooheon heard him say, and then he was out of earshot.

And again Jooheon got the feeling of things happening around him. But this time he felt like he was getting there.

“ Weird,” Minhyuk remarked aloud. Then he shrugged and said, “Take me home, brother.”

Jooheon laughed aloud, putting it out of his mind. “Sure thing, brother.”

Chapter End Notes

The other day I (rather shamelessly) searched up Mint and Poppy on Twitter. I'm sorry for writing the cause of so much stress lol I hope this chapter was less stressful? If you want to yell at me about my writing or just talk to me in general, you can reach
me on my tumblr~ (I have Twitter too but I don't get on much ^^")
The apartment felt empty.

Hyungwon knew it was ridiculous for him to think that, having lived alone for years now, but he thought just the same. The apartment felt empty, and he felt alone.

He’d lived alone as Kihyun too, but that was different. Minhyuk would pop out randomly, and as much as Hyungwon pretended otherwise, he liked it. Every diary entry from Kihyun made him feel like he had a very nagging roommate who was always out. It was annoying, and yet Hyungwon found himself missing it.

How did he end up actually missing his time in Kihyun’s body?

Hyungwon glanced over at his phone lying on his bedside table. He wanted to call Kihyun. He really, truly missed him. He wanted to ask if the trouble between him and Shownu was over, if they were back to being a sort-of-couple or if they’d progressed beyond that. Hyungwon doubted it, but he still hoped.

He wanted to call Wonho too, but that seemed an even worse idea. The conversation at the cafe kept replaying in Hyungwon’s mind. When Wonho had asked him if he was interested in him, Hyungwon had just plunged forward. He’d been rejected. And yet, at the same time, it felt like a confession too.

Wonho was convinced he was in love with Kihyun. And Hyungwon just dropped his cup and sat there and said whatever stupid thing came to his mouth.

He should’ve said something better, but even now, almost a week later, he couldn’t imagine what. Everything had gone wrong, just like that.

Well, the truth was it had gone wrong a long time before, but Hyungwon only realized in that moment. That moment in which Wonho had apologized and told him he was in love with someone else.
Hyungwon reached out and grabbed his phone. He had to talk to someone. Changkyun had already packed up all his stuff and was over at his own apartment at that very moment. Apparently Jooheon had been letting one of his homeless friends live with him, which led to an awkward situation now that Changkyun wanted to move back. It would turn to a whining competition. Jooheon and Changkyun arguments generally did. Hyungwon thought of calling him, but thought he’d just be interrupting and decided against it.

He scrolled through his contacts list, and it seemed so empty. There was still some awkwardness when he talked to his other friends, almost like a wariness. Hyungwon was sure it’d fade, eventually, but for now he was alone. He couldn’t call Kihyun. He wouldn’t call Wonho. But he needed someone.

As if it heard him, Hyungwon’s phone started ringing in his hand.

It was Changkyun. Hyungwon wondered if the kid needed anything, and picked up. “Hello?”

“Hyung!” Changkyun’s voice was loud, and excited. “Hyung, you have to come over to our place. Right now.”

“What? Why, did something happen?” Hyungwon was concerned, but Changkyun didn’t sound distressed.

“Yeah, something big,” Changkyun said. “Something you absolutely would not believe, unless you come over here right now.”

“Is everything okay?” Hyungwon was already up and grabbing his coat.

“You’ll know when you get here,” Changkyun said. “Just hurry, okay?”

Hyungwon did. He knew that Changkyun occasionally got excited over random things—including that time he dragged Hyungwon out of a date to show him a Vine of a boy screaming at a gas station—but this sounded important. And in any case, Hyungwon was glad for the distraction. He wanted to see Changkyun, even if it was just to watch boys neck-chop each other. The two of them had been distant of late, ever since Kihyun had burst into Hyungwon’s apartment that one Sunday. Hyungwon felt like Changkyun was hiding something from him, but after hiding the kiss from Changkyun for so long he felt he didn't have the right to ask.

So Hyungwon started walking. Changkyun and Jooheon’s place was not far enough for the subway but too close for a taxi, so walking it was. He went at a brisk pace, and in a few minutes was in the building lobby. The apartment was on the seventh floor, so Hyungwon pressed the button for the elevator and waited.

“You.”

Hyungwon knew that voice. He'd used it for months. He hadn't expected to hear it again today.

He turned around, surprised, and found himself looking at an irate Kihyun. “What're you doing here?” Hyungwon asked, genuinely curious.

“Changkyun called,” Kihyun said. “He said it was important.”

His tone was gruff, but Hyungwon was just glad he was talking to him. “He called me too,” he said.

Kihyun frowned. “Don’t tell me this is some kind of ploy to get me to talk to you again.”
“I don't think so,” Hyungwon said. “He sounded… excited.”

Kihyun nodded, but didn't say anything. The elevator arrived with a soft ding, and the doors opened. Hyungwon stepped in. Kihyun followed.

Confined in the small space, Hyungwon attempted conversation. “How… how've you been?”

“Fine,” Kihyun said shortly. “Y’know, considering neither of my best friends are talking to me.”

“What? Wonho isn't trying to win your heart?” Hyungwon was surprised, and then smiled and shook his head. “Seems I got rejected for nothing.”

“I heard,” Kihyun said, as the elevator reached their floor. “And no. I don't know if he's avoiding me but I haven't seen him around.”

“He's not the type of person who'd give up so easily, though,” Hyungwon said as the two of them walked down the hallway.

“I know that,” Kihyun said irritably, but there was no acid in his voice. As they reached the right door, he sighed. “I tried to reject him harshly so that he'd give up sooner. I didn't expect it to happen so quick.”

Hyungwon didn't know what to say to that, so he rang the doorbell. Not two seconds later the door opened to reveal Changkyun’s grinning face.

“Oh, good, you're both here together,” he said, moving out of the doorway. “You will not believe this.”

“This better be quick,” Kihyun said, walking in ahead of Hyungwon. “I have to get to work after this.”

“Oh believe me hyung,” Changkyun said, secret smile on his face, “you won't want to go to work after this.”

“I never do,” Kihyun said, and Hyungwon had to swallow a chuckle. “Hey, Jooheon.”

“Oh, hi hyung,” Jooheon said from the couch. He spotted Hyungwon and added, “Hyungwon-hyung, hi to you too.”

“Hey, Jooheon-ah,” Hyungwon said. Jooheon frowned at that, like he was remembering something, and Hyungwon was about to panic and say something else when someone came out of the kitchen.

Hyungwon froze, and stared, unable to peel his eyes away.

Lee Minhyuk.

“Surprise,” Changkyun said, but it barely registered in Hyungwon’s brain. He walked up to the angel and put his hands on his shoulders. He was solid. Real.

“Hey,” Minhyuk said, grinning widely. He looked just the same. Tall, lean body, pretty face, that bright smile that hinted at mischief. The only difference was his hair, which had changed from light blonde to silver.

Kihyun was next to Hyungwon now, patting Minhyuk on the head and chest to determine that, yes, he was real. He looked dazed.
“I can't believe you're okay,” Hyungwon said. And like he did when he was shocked, he became mean. “You little bastard, how dare you make me worry?” He shoved him, but not hard. “I thought you were dying or something! Making a big deal out of nothing, you and your drama-crazy ass.” Kihyun said nothing, still stunned.

“Wow, you guys really like me a lot,” Minhyuk said, looking both surprised and touched. “Please tell me I'm dating one of you.” He looked at Kihyun and added, “I hope it's you.”

“What? Have you become completely stupid?” Hyungwon said harshly, but he could feel the steam running out. Something wasn't right. He exchanged a glance with Kihyun, and saw worry in his eyes too.

“Oh, yeah, forgot to mention,” Changkyun suddenly piped up. “He lost all his memories.”

There was a brief silence, and then Kihyun said, “What?” the exact moment Hyungwon snapped, “Bullshit.”

“Yeah, Minhyuk-hyung doesn't remember anything,” Jooheon said, and then added in a whisper, “They erased his memories.”

Hyungwon and Kihyun shared a look, and then Hyungwon said, “Are you sure? Because this is exactly the type of shitty makjang plot twist Minhyuk loves.”

“He didn't recognize me when he saw me,” Jooheon said, “so yeah, he's memoryless.”

“Yes, but you see, Minhyuk is a snake,” Hyungwon said calmly. Minhyuk gasped in fake outrage, and was ignored. “You literally cannot believe a thing out of that pretty mouth. He lives for drama like this. It would be exactly like him to pretend he has amnesia, just to… keep things interesting.”

“I can prove if he's faking,” Kihyun announced all of a sudden. He put both hands on Minhyuk’s shoulders and turned him so they were looking squarely at each other. “There was a special fanmeet at our university and Park Bo Gum came,” Kihyun said seriously. “He shook my hand and I took a selca with him.”

Minhyuk looked from Kihyun to Jooheon and then back, confused, and said, “Who?”

“He lost all his memories!” Kihyun yelled, staggering back in shock. “He actually doesn't remember!”

Hyungwon grabbed him and steadied him. “Are you sure?”

“He could never fake that reaction,” Kihyun said. “He doesn't remember, Hyungwon.”

Hyungwon didn't know how to respond. It was all so unexpected. And only then, after seeing Minhyuk standing in front of him with that sunny smile, did Hyungwon realize exactly how much he'd missed him, how scared he'd been that he'd never see him again. He suddenly felt overwhelmed, and he could feel the relief threatening to spill out of his eyes. Hyungwon willed them back. He was not going to cry for this annoying sort-of angel. Nope.

He looked away, and his eyes met Kihyun’s. And he could see Kihyun’s eyes were wet too, shining with suppressed tears.

They exchanged another look, one that swore to never mention this ever again, and turned to Jooheon.
“Tell me how you found him,” Hyungwon demanded.

Kihyun closed in on Jooheon. “Why is he like this? What did you do?”

“I didn’t do anything,” Jooheon said, eyes darting from one to the other. “There were these two guys, and they said they worked with Minhyuk-hyung—”

“Wait, they worked with Minhyuk?” Hyungwon interrupted. He and Kihyun shared another look. More angels? “What else did they say?”

“Okay, wait, everyone stop.” Minhyuk’s loud voice cut through. He walked until he was between Hyungwon and Jooheon, right in the middle of the five of them. “The first thing anyone’s saying is exactly how I know the two of you,” he said firmly, motioning to Hyungwon and Kihyun.

“We will tell you later,” Kihyun said slowly, after a glance at Jooheon. “When you’re... less busy.”

But Minhyuk was too quick not to notice that. “Whatever you need to say to me, you can say in front of Jooheon,” he said, and his tone said he would not budge.

Kihyun looked at Hyungwon for an answer, and Hyungwon just shrugged. Now that he was out of Kihyun’s body, he really didn’t care who knew anymore, as long as Wonho didn’t. And he needed Minhyuk, he needed Minhyuk’s annoying grin and bright laugh, and Minhyuk refused to leave Jooheon in the dark.

“Okay,” Kihyun said finally. “But I think everyone needs to sit down for this.”

“Sweet,” Changkyun said excitedly, and bounded to the kitchen and returned with popcorn.

The five of them sat in a circle on the living room floor, as the whole ridiculous thing was explained. Hyungwon did most of the talking, but Kihyun pitched in once in a while with what he thought were important details, such as that Minhyuk once said he had a nice body. Minhyuk, for his part, believed everything at once. Jooheon had a harder time of it.

"I can't believe it," Jooheon echoed hollowly for the millionth time.

"Well, it's the truth," Hyungwon said, "so it doesn't matter if you believe it or not."

They were sitting in the living room, all five of them, eating the dinner Kihyun made. As Changkyun had predicted, Kihyun had skipped work, and as soon as he saw it getting dark he insisted on cooking something for them, saying only he knew Minhyuk’s picky tastes. Hyungwon was pretty sure he heard Kihyun crying tears of relief in the kitchen, but he didn’t say anything. This made them even, since Hyungwon was also pretty sure Kihyun heard him crying in the bathroom earlier.

“I can’t believe you believe it,” Jooheon said to Minhyuk. “How?”

“I think it’s because he has no preconceived notions as to what is normal and what is not,” Changkyun said. When Jooheon and Minhyuk gave him a blank look in reply, he continued, “We think it’s weird because our experiences on Earth have taught us that. Minhyuk has had pretty much no experiences on Earth, so he doesn’t really know if it’s weird or not.”

“Makes sense,” Minhyuk said. “And it’s Minhyuk-hyung,” he added, making Changkyun grin mischievously. He sighed. “I still can’t believe I didn’t get together with either of you.”
“Well, it’s the truth, so it doesn’t matter if you believe it or not,” Hyungwon repeated drily, and he was flattered but at the same time disappointed that Minhyuk liked Kihyun better.

“You know, you look a lot like Hero Jaejoong,” Changkyun said thoughtfully to Minhyuk. “Have you ever considered cross-dressing?”

“I can’t remember, but I doubt it,” Minhyuk said, grinning. “And that’s sweet, but you’re not my type.”

“What? Kihyun-hyung and I have the exact same body type—”

Hyungwon’s ringtone interrupted Changkyun mid-whine. Hyungwon pulled out his phone from his pocket, and the caller ID wiped the smile off his face.

It was Wonho.

They hadn’t talked for a while, not since Hyungwon’s rejection. He debated on picking up, and then finally decided to. What was the harm, right? Hyungwon just hoped it meant Wonho was getting comfortable to the idea of them still being friends.

He made his way to the empty hallway before picking up. “Hello?” Hyungwon hoped he sounded normal, instead of oddly nervous, which was how he felt. Minhyuk’s sudden reappearance had not been good for his nerves.

“Hey, Hyungwon,” Wonho said. “Sorry to bother you right now, are you busy? I wanna meet up.”

There was something different about his voice, something off, but Hyungwon was so elated by the prospect of a meeting that he overlooked it. “No, I’m not busy,” he said. “When do you wanna meet?”

“I was thinking right now, actually.”

That surprised Hyungwon, but he quickly got over it. “Uh, okay, sure,” he said. “Where, then?”

“Your apartment is near Lady Mary Memorial, right?” Wonho asked. “We can meet in front of it.”

Now the weirdness in his voice was more pronounced, and Hyungwon got worried. “Sure,” he said. “Hey, are you okay?”

“I’m fine,” Wonho said, but he didn’t sound it. “Just make sure you show up.”

“Yeah, of course,” Hyungwon said. He was still worried, but he wasn’t going to push, not over the phone. “Heading over there now.”

“Okay, see you there.”

Wonho ended the call, and Hyungwon stared at his phone screen, feeling a weird sense of foreboding. The only way he’d find out what was going on was to actually talk to Wonho, so he grabbed his coat and headed for the door.

“I’m going out,” Hyungwon called out, searching for his shoes.

“Out? Out where?” Kihyun sat up from where he’d been lying down on the couch.

Hyungwon was about to answer with some childish retort about how he didn’t have to tell him, but then thought better of it and said, “Wonho called. He wants to meet up.”
Kihyun scoffed and lay back down. “Figures.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Hyungwon asked, putting on his boots. He tried to say it acidly, but he’d found that recently he had a real shortage of acid, especially where it concerned Kihyun. He just felt too apologetic to him to snap at him.

“Nothing,” Kihyun sniffed. “Go, date the guy you snagged while in my body. Never mind that he was my friend first.”

“Hold up,” Minhyuk jumped up. “You guys didn’t tell me about this! Spill all the details.”

“Tiny will fill you in, I gotta go,” Hyungwon said, already out the door. He hoped he hid his grin well enough.

The air outside was cold, and Hyungwon was glad for his light coat. Spring was heavy in the air, but a few whispers of winter stubbornly resisted. The walk to the hospital from Changkyun’s apartment wasn’t short, but Hyungwon wasn’t going to refuse Wonho. He was worried. Wonho hadn’t sounded like his usual bright self. What happened? Had Kihyun really succeeded in pushing Wonho away?

Hyungwon was in front of Lady Mary Memorial in a few minutes. The hospital poured light from every window, and Hyungwon took up position under a streetlight. He waited, not knowing what to expect, when he spotted someone approaching.

Wonho looked good, dressed in black skinny jeans, a black tee, and the rider jacket Hyungwon had helped pick out. Hyungwon smiled, and straightened. “Hey, hyung,” he said. “I’m here, as requested.”

He realized a moment too late that Wonho was not smiling. He stopped a few steps away, and said flatly, “This is yours, I think.”

He tossed something over, and Hyungwon caught it before seeing what it was. When he did, his heart almost stopped.

A red notebook. *The* red notebook.

Hyungwon looked up, lost for words. Wonho was looking at him, and his expression was hard, ungentle. Hyungwon stared back, half-formed words choking his throat and thoughts endlessly running in his head. He knew what that look meant. Wonho had read the notebook. He’d believed it. He knew.

“Well?” Wonho said finally, and there was no kindness in his voice. “Do you have anything to say?”

A million thoughts clamored for attention in Hyungwon’s brain, but one kept fighting to the forefront, and he finally spoke it.

“Did you tell Shownu?”

Wonho opened his mouth, stopped, closed it, and blinked in surprise. “What?” he finally said, sounding stunned.

“Did you tell Shownu?” Hyungwon asked again. “Please tell me you did. Please tell me he believed you.”
“That’s what you want to say?” Wonho was in disbelief. “Asking if I told Hyunwoo?”

“The thing between him and Kihyun was ruined because of me,” Hyungwon said. “If he knows the one ignoring him was— wasn't Kihyun, I think it'll fix things.”

“Fix things.” Wonho repeated quietly.

“For Kihyun, at least,” Hyungwon said. “And Shownu.”

“That’s all you have to say?” Wonho’s tone was cruel and hurt at the same time. “That’s it? You're not even going to apologize?”

“I didn't think it would matter if I did,” Hyungwon said. He swallowed. He hadn't planned for this, any of this, and all the words spilled out earnestly. “You're not going to forgive me, which I guess is okay, because I don't really deserve it.” Hyungwon tried a smile, but he could already imagine how pathetic it came out.

Wonho stared at him. He was too far for Hyungwon to see into his eyes, but he could see his lower lip tremble. “Done?” Wonho said, and his voice was surprisingly calm. “Nothing else to say?”

Hyungwon lowered his head, thought it over. He had so many things to say, so many things, but he couldn't. He could feel them inside, wave after wave of regret, shame, sadness, and they just kept coming.

“I hope,” he finally said, “you’ll stop pursuing Kihyun.” Hyungwon licked his lips, swallowed, and continued, “You’ll just get hurt that way. He might not say it aloud, but he is in love with Shownu.”

“And me?” Wonho said, and his voice cracked. “Who am I in love with?”

Me. You're in love with me.

Hyungwon wanted nothing more than to yell those words, tell Wonho they should be together, that they would be happy, but he didn't have the right anymore. He wasn't sure he ever did. So instead Hyungwon forced up a smile, and said, “I don't know. But I'm in love with you.”

There. Those words he didn't think he'd say, hadn't ever planned on saying. And not like this, standing in front of a hospital, with Wonho in front of him so close to tears.

Neither of them said anything for a while. And then Wonho raised his left hand, and said, “The one who gave me this was you.” His voice was a little thick, but steady.

It wasn't a question, but Hyungwon nodded. In the light of the street lamp, the woven leather bracelet was hardly more than a shadow.

“And the one I went to the museum with,” Wonho said. “The guy I ate chocolate with, who told me all about the great Chinese novels. It was also you.”

Hyungwon nodded again, eyes locked with Wonho’s. No use in being a coward now.

“The one who chose this jacket for me,” Wonho said, and his voice was thicker now, clouded with choked down tears. “The one I ate ramen with. The one I went with to the hospital, to the flower shop.” He swallowed. “The guy I bought a white lily for. All of them were you.”

Another nod.

“And the person who kissed me in my favorite bar,” Wonho said, and his voice shook a little at the
Hyungwon nodded. “That was me.”

“That was you,” Wonho said, dropping his head. “You.” His words sounded hollow.

“I’m sorry.”

Wonho looked up, and gave a short, bitter laugh. “I thought you weren’t going to apologize?”

“I hurt you, and I’m so, so sorry,” Hyungwon said. “I meant what I said, about not deserving forgiveness. But I need you to know I am sorry, for hurting you, for ruining everything.” He tried another smile. “So I guess it was stupid of me to say it didn’t matter. I say and do a lot of stupid things. I’m sorry.”

Wonho just stared at him. And then he raised a hand, and ran it through his hair. “Were you ever going to tell me?” he asked, and his voice was steadier.

“I don’t know,” Hyungwon said honestly. “It wasn’t supposed to go on this long. We never knew it would get this serious.”

In reply Wonho just laughed, a laugh nothing like the full-hearted sound Hyungwon had become used to. “Yeah, who could’ve imagined, right?” he said, looking up at the night sky. He lowered his head, looked Hyungwon right in the eye again, and said, “Thank you for meeting me here, Hyungwon.”

And Hyungwon felt his heart break away, piece by piece. “Thank you,” he said, and he didn’t know why he said it, but he knew he meant it.

Wonho smiled, beautiful and sad, and turned around and walked away.
Kihyun got it. Hyungwon could see it in his eyes, as soon as he walked in, as soon as he held up the notebook in his hand. Neither of them had to say anything. Kihyun just got it.

As Hyungwon dropped down onto the sofa heavily, Kihyun finally spoke. “How?”

The question was obvious from one word: how did he get the notebook? Hyungwon sighed. “I don’t know,” he lied. He had more than a hunch as to how Wonho had gotten his hands on it, but he wasn’t sharing that information with Kihyun, not yet.

“How… was he?” Kihyun asked hesitantly.

“Angry, I’d say,” Hyungwon said, but that one word didn’t seem to be enough. “Betrayed, I guess.”

Kihyun groaned and fell onto the other end of the sofa. “Damn it,” he said, rubbing at his face. “We messed up, huh?”

That phrase seemed so laughably inadequate to what they’d actually done that Hyungwon chuckled aloud. Kihyun didn’t comment, and the two of them sat side by side in silence for a while. Jooheon read the atmosphere first and motioned to Minhyuk and Changkyun, and the three of them quietly filed out. The room felt even emptier than before.

“I asked him,” Hyungwon said finally, when the two of them were alone, “if he told Shownu. About… the notebook.”

Kihyun straightened. “What did he say?”

“Nothing,” Hyungwon said. “He didn’t answer me.”

“Oh,” Kihyun said, all energy leaving his body as he slumped back down.

“I’m sure he did though,” Hyungwon said. “The two of them are pretty close, and the whole thing affects Shownu just as much as it does Wonho.”

Kihyun didn’t say anything in reply. Hyungwon was about to continue talking, about anything, anything to try and lift Kihyun’s spirits when Kihyun suddenly spoke. “I told him,” he said heavily. “I did. He didn’t believe me.” He barked out a laugh. “I said it kind of like an idiot, though, so I’m not surprised.”

Hyungwon didn’t know what to say to that. He’d been lost for words a lot recently. He couldn’t think of anything else and put a hand on Kihyun’s knee in a gesture of support. Kihyun didn’t push it off, which was a good sign.

“I think he’s more upset with me than he is with you,” Hyungwon said after a while. In reply to Kihyun’s questioning look he added, “Wonho, I mean. You can try calling him. He’d probably talk to you.”

“Probably,” Kihyun agreed. “But that’s kind of what I’m dreading. What the hell should I say to him?” He paused, thinking about it, and then said, “Probably an apology.”
“Probably,” Hyungwon echoed. His mind was still on what he’d said to Wonho himself. He wished he could have said something else, but even sitting there on Changkyun’s couch he couldn’t imagine what. Everything Hyungwon had said he’d genuinely meant, but he still regretted all those words. He should have said something better. He should have apologized more, comforted Wonho, defended Kihyun. He should have said something better.

“I think I’ll go home now,” Kihyun suddenly announced. He got up in one motion, looked down at Hyungwon. “You?”

“A little later, maybe,” Hyungwon said, getting up with more difficulty. He felt so, so tired. “I’m sure the kids are eavesdropping right now, and I’d like to talk with them a bit.”

That brought something of a smile to Kihyun’s face, and Hyungwon was glad to see it. “I’ll talk to you later, I guess,” Kihyun said, picking up his jacket.

Hyungwon doubted it. Kihyun hadn’t forgiven him, and wouldn’t forgive him for a while. This was dazed Kihyun talking. Once he got over the shock, he’d turn cold towards Hyungwon again. Hyungwon knew it for sure, but he allowed himself to enjoy the moment. “See you,” he said, with a smile that was only half-forced.

Kihyun returned the smile, and then he was out the door and gone.

It took only ten more seconds for the other three to return to the living room, completely unashamed. Minhyuk went up to Hyungwon, and put an arm around his neck in a way that was both comforting and burdensome. Jooheon hovered, as clueless to the seriousness of the situation as Minhyuk but not so forceful with affection. Changkyun just stood by in silence.

Hyungwon let Minhyuk hug him for a while, and then extricated himself. “Jooheon-ah,” he said, startling the guy. “Can I borrow your phone?”

“Sure,” Jooheon said, already pulling it out of his pocket. “What do you need it for?”

“I just need to get someone’s number,” Hyungwon said. He scrolled through Jooheon’s contacts until he found the one he wanted, and then copied it into his own phone. “Thanks,” he said, handing it back. “I’m going home now, I’ll see you guys around.”

“So soon?” Minhyuk frowned. “We literally just met.”

“Yeah, I’m sorry, I just don’t feel like hanging around anymore,” Hyungwon said with an apologetic smile. “But if you want, you can come over to my apartment tomorrow. It’s not far, and I’m sure Changkyun will take you. I’ll be home all day anyway.”

That cheered Minhyuk up. “Sure,” he said, trademark grin returning to his face.

“You better show up,” Hyungwon said, grinning back. Minhyuk had a way of doing that, making people smile back. Hyungwon was still wearing his coat, and took a few seconds to put his shoes back on. They were still warm inside. “Jooheon-ah, I’ll see you later,” he said, putting on a friendly smile. And then Hyungwon turned his attention to Changkyun.

The kid didn’t say anything. He just stood there, a little defiant, a little guilty.

“We’ll talk about this later,” Hyungwon said grimly, and he left the apartment before Changkyun could respond.

The air outside was cold, but it didn’t soothe Hyungwon’s nerves. He knew it was Changkyun
who’d given the notebook to Wonho. He knew it. He could read it off his face, just like that. And no one else had access to Hyungwon’s apartment, to the drawer he’d precious kept the notebook in, like Changkyun did.

He wanted to be angry at the kid, but he couldn’t be. Because in a way Hyungwon was glad Changkyun had done it. Yes, Wonho was angry now, and would probably never look at Hyungwon again, but Hyungwon knew Wonho deserved the truth. He had deserved the truth in a better way, maybe straight from Hyungwon or Kihyun, or right at the start of all this, but it was too late for that. It was too late for a lot of things.

But not everything.

Hyungwon walked quickly, but the few minutes’ journey felt like hours. Cold, empty air greeted him as he finally reached his apartment. He threw off his coat, climbed into his still-messy bed, and pulled out his phone. He opened his recently-saved contacts, and before he could let himself think better, he called.

It rang once, twice, and then finally, the call was picked up. “Hello?”

“Hello,” Hyungwon answered. He took a deep, silent breath. “Is this Son Hyunwoo?”

Shownu spoke in that calm, blank voice he always did. “Yes. And this is?”

“I’m not sure if you remember me,” Hyungwon said. “We met once on the subway. I’m Chae Hyungwon.”


“Yeah, Kihyun’s friend,” Hyungwon lied. He didn’t think Kihyun thought him much of a friend anymore. “Actually I got your number from Jooheon because I wanted to talk to you about him. Kihyun.”

“Why, did anything happen?” Shownu asked, concern touching his voice.

“Yes, some time back.” Hyungwon paused, considered the best way of going about this, and then finally asked, “Did Shin Wonho talk to you? About… me and Kihyun?”

He was answered with a silence, a long one. It told Hyungwon what he wanted to know.

“Yes, he did,” Shownu finally said. “The same weird story Kihyun tried to tell me once.”

Hyungwon couldn’t read his voice, if Shownu believed Wonho or not, but he wasn’t taking any chances. “Yeah, well, I’m confirming that that weird story is true,” he said. “I don’t know how much Wonho told you, but it’s all true. I lived in Kihyun’s body.” Hyungwon snorted at his own words. “Sounds ridiculous, even to me, and I actually experienced it.”

There was another silence, shorter than the first, and then Shownu said, “So that’s why you called?”

“Yes, and no,” Hyungwon said. He still wasn’t completely sure Shownu believed him, but he knew pushing it wouldn’t help his case, so he moved on. “I also want you to know Kihyun is not interested in Wonho. At all. The only person he’s interested in is you.” And the only person interested in Wonho is me. If Shownu did believe Hyungwon, that went without saying.

“You sound pretty sure of that,” Shownu remarked, sounding a little surprised.
“Oh, believe me, I know,” Hyungwon said. “You have to, too. So stop avoiding him and just get out with it.”

“I don’t want to force him into a decision.”

But that’s what you’re doing, aren’t you, by refusing to be around him? Whether you realize or not. “Then just talk,” Hyungwon said. “Can’t you see he’s miserable without you?”

Shownu didn’t say anything. Hyungwon listened to the soft static for a while, and then said, “Kihyun never meant to hurt you like this, he really didn’t. He had no idea what I was doing, or what it seemed like. It was only supposed to be for a few days, and I convinced him not to tell either of you about the whole thing.” Hyungwon had wanted to say this to Wonho too, but missed the opportunity. He hoped it reached his ears eventually. Hyungwon and Kihyun had decided by unspoken agreement to keep the body-sharing a secret, but Hyungwon was fully prepared to lie about it. He wasn't the one who was friends with Wonho and Shownu after all. Kihyun needed their forgiveness as soon as possible. Hyungwon wasn't expecting his own apologies to be accepted.

“I see,” Shownu said. Again that same unreadable tone. Another pause, and then, “Do you mind if I hang up now?”

“No, not at all,” Hyungwon said. Shownu had a lot to think about, after all. “Thanks for listening.”

“Yes, thank you for calling,” Shownu said, oddly polite, and then the call was over.

Hyungwon dropped his phone and lay down flat on his bed, staring up at the ceiling. He hoped that was enough. For Kihyun’s sake, he really did.

★

Kihyun felt nauseated.

In all his years, he didn't think he'd ever felt as nervous as he did right then, waiting outside the mechanical engineering building as students poured out.

He knew he should talk to Wonho first, ask if he'd talked to Shownu, what he'd said if he had. But Kihyun could feel everything threatening to burst out of him, and he didn't want to unleash the flood of feelings on Wonho. The flood wasn't meant for Wonho. It was for Shownu.

He'd considered calling Shownu a million times since the night before, when Hyungwon had walked in with the notebook in his hand, but Kihyun knew that wasn't a good idea. He needed to talk to Shownu in person, see his face as he finally admitted everything.

So Kihyun waited. His stomach was twisted in knots, and every breath he took seemed to make it worse. He didn't know what he'd do if Shownu didn't show up. He felt like he might choke on it all and collapse.

All that disappeared as Kihyun saw Shownu walk out of the building. Shownu took a second to spot Kihyun, and then he started walking towards him.
Kihyun could feel his heart thud in his chest. His insides felt heavy and dense, like they were full of mercury or liquid lead. It got worse as Shownu got closer.

“Kihyun, I'm glad you're here,” Shownu said. “I wanted to talk to you.”

“I wanted to talk to you too,” Kihyun said, and that was a laughable understatement. He glanced at the students around them, and said, “Maybe somewhere more private.”

Shownu nodded in agreement. The boundary wall of the campus ran close to the back of the admin building, leaving a gap around five feet across. The two of them made their way to this narrow passage, and Kihyun was relieved to find it deserted. The passage was secluded, out of the way, and a little dark from the stone wall on one side and the building on the other. Seniors considered it a great place for secret kisses.

“I'll go first,” Shownu said, when he was sure no one was even remotely close enough to overhear. He paused, looked right at Kihyun, and said, “I believe you. About how someone controlled your half the time.”

The mercury inside ran off a little. Kihyun felt relief take up the free space. Shownu knew. He'd accepted it, and Kihyun wouldn't have to convince him.”

“I really thought you were making it up,” Shownu continued. “I had no idea why, though. But then Hoseok called me on Sunday, saying the exact same thing.”

Kihyun exhaled a long breath. So Wonho had called Shownu. Hyungwon had been right.

“And then Chae Hyungwon called me last night.”

“Wait, what?” Kihyun stopped, surprised. “Hyungwon?”

“Yeah, he called me,” Shownu said. “And that's when I knew for sure. You… weren't always you. Explained a lot, really.”

Kihyun was still getting over the surprise. Had Hyungwon and Shownu even talked before? Why would Hyungwon call him so suddenly? “And he convinced you?” Kihyun asked.

“Yes, he did,” Shownu said. “I was more than half-convinced anyway. His call just sealed it.”

Kihyun nodded, hesitated, and then finally asked the question weighing on his mind. He was almost scared to ask it, scared of what the answer would be, but he couldn't keep it in. “You don’t hate me, do you?”

“What? How could I hate you?” Shownu seemed surprised even by the thought of it.

“Because I lied to you,” Kihyun said simply. “A lot. And for a long time. Almost seventy days, I think.” I would hate me, he almost added, but stopped himself.

“No, I don’t hate you,” Shownu said, and a small grin appeared on his face. “Actually I kind of understand. The whole thing was kind of unbelievable, and I don’t know if I’d have said anything either.”

“Are… are you sure?” Kihyun was dumbfounded.

“Yeah, I think I’m sure,” Shownu said with a light laugh. “Actually I’m kind of glad.” He seemed almost amused by Kihyun’s shock.
But it made no sense to Kihyun. He’d expected anger, justified anger. Not… this, whatever it was. He wanted to ask Shownu more, just hear him say it again to really make it stick in his head, but that look, that small smile on his face, was more than enough confirmation.

So Kihyun took a breath, smiled, and accepted his beautiful fate. “Okay, then,” he said. He thought for a moment, and then asked, “Did Hyungwon say anything else to you?”

Now Shownu hesitated. “Uh, yeah,” he said. He shuffled a bit, and then said, “He also said you didn't like Hoseok. Not… like that.”

Kihyun could have yelled aloud in relief. “I told you, didn't I?” he said, and now he couldn't keep himself from grinning. “Tell me you believed him, at least.”


“Yes, I guess,” Kihyun conceded, but he was still smiling. His heart felt light, ready to fly. Things were fixed. This was how it was supposed to be, Shownu in front of him, smiling with a touch of embarrassment. This was right. Kihyun ran a hand through his hair, all the heavy nausea gone. “So enough of this avoiding game, right?”

“Yeah,” Shownu said, but he suddenly looked awkward again. He cleared his throat. “Actually I wanted to ask you something. That day in the park, when you blacked out for a few seconds…”

“Yeah, that was Hyungwon returning to his body,” Kihyun said. “Why?”

Shownu shuffled again, looking at his feet for a second. “So you don't know why I called you there.”

“No, Hyungwon can't really remember the last few hours in my body.” Kihyun was no longer smiling. His heart was pounding again, but this didn't feel like nervousness.

“Oh,” Shownu said. He looked up at the sky a moment, and then brought his eyes back to Kihyun. “Do— do you know why I couldn't be around you and Hoseok, when I thought you were in love with him?”

Kihyun swallowed. Shownu was watching him, waiting for an answer, but Kihyun couldn't come out with it. It was like the words were caught in the lump in his throat.

Silence passed between the two walls, with Kihyun and Shownu staring at each other. And then finally, Shownu spoke.

“It’s okay, then,” he said. “If… if you don't. If you don’t want to say you know. It's okay.” He smiled, almost apologetic, and then turned to walk out of the passage.

It was happening. Kihyun could feel it, feel the weird moment passing. They were going to go back to normal, to the comfortable life Kihyun had had before Hyungwon had intruded into his body. All the weirdness would be over, and Kihyun would return to the existence he had loved and been happy with, him and Wonho and Shownu, three close friends. The moment was passing.

“Hyung, wait.”

Shownu stopped and turned to face Kihyun again, confused.

Kihyun swallowed the lump. “I know.”
Another silence fell, as Shownu stared, wide-eyed, and Kihyun looked away, biting his lip and trying to organize his thoughts. He was finding it difficult. It was like that time at the park again, but this time Kihyun refused to let Shownu walk away.

“I know,” he said again, looking up. “I know why you avoided me. Why you were hurt when you thought I kissed him.” Kihyun took a breath, and all the words came out. “I know why you gave me the lily, and the daffodil. Why you wanted to go to the movies alone with me, why we went to the amusement park. Why you come to my place for breakfast every day, walk with your hand touching mine, why you stay close to me in the subway. I know.” He stopped for a moment, and found himself chuckling. “I think, after so long, I finally know.”

Shownu didn't say anything. He just stood there, watching, waiting for his answer.

Kihyun knew Shownu was waiting, and oddly, he felt like he was too. Waiting for an answer he'd known for so long, but never known what it meant. An answer he had never been able to tell anyone, not even himself. And now he had it.

He took a deep breath. “So, yeah, I know,” Kihyun said. He paused. “And I hope you know too.”

Shownu blinked at him, once, twice. And then he understood.

And he smiled. A beautiful smile, one that made all his features glow, touched every corner of his handsome face. A smile Kihyun felt like he could look at forever.

He was aware of Shownu moving closer, hands reaching for him. He's going to kiss me, he realized.

Kihyun closed his eyes.

Shownu’s lips were soft, gentle, tentative. Kihyun leaned into the kiss, pressed his own lips tighter against Shownu’s. He could feel Shownu’s hand settle on his cheek, and he inhaled the scent of him deeply. Shownu smelled like warmth, like vanilla and soft sweetness. He smelled like lilies.

And then, after what felt like both a second and an age, Shownu pulled away. He kept his face close to Kihyun’s, his hand still on his cheek, gently rubbing his thumb against his skin. He didn't say anything. He didn't have to.

“Good, then,” Kihyun said softly. And then he pulled Shownu in for another kiss, the second of every kiss for the rest of his life.

Chapter End Notes

1st chapter of 2017! Somewhat difficult for me to write, but I hope it wasn't too disappointing ^^

Over the next few days I'll be sprucing up the fic; adding tags, writing chapter names (I tried to read a specific chapter once and finding it was hell), all sorts of things. Thank you to everyone who sent me lovely messages on tumblr! One of my new year's resolutions was to get active on Twitter again, so you all can find (and yell at) me here.

As always, thank you for the support, I love you all!
Romantic Dramas and Lunch

Chapter Notes

I'd wanted to keep the story under 100k, but I didn't want to rush it. So here we are, breaking 100 000 words on a Monsta X fanfiction.
Thank you for all the (undeserved) support!

“Lunch,” Minhyuk announced, putting two plates down. “A gourmet feast prepared by yours truly.”

“Minhyuk, you just microwaved two instant meals.”

“Yes, but I pressed the buttons and they'll taste good,” Minhyuk said, with a huge smile, “so what I said is right.”

Hyungwon sighed. Minhyuk had been living with him for the past few days, and it had been a fun, tiring experience. When he'd invited him over on Thursday, Hyungwon hadn't meant permanently. But Changkyun and Minhyuk both gave him the puppy-dog eyes, and he'd given in.

Living with Minhyuk was interesting, at the very least. As an ex-angel he had no idea what was practical and what was not, but he was surprisingly sharp when it came to people. He had an endless love for dramas, and he watched them with concentration. He could go into in depth discussions on plot points and character motives, which, as a literature student, Hyungwon admired. But Minhyuk stubbornly refused to read books, something Hyungwon could never forgive.

“I don't understand,” Hyungwon said once, after trying and failing to get Minhyuk to read his translated copy of *Journey to the West*. “Why won't you just read one goddamn chapter? You know how to, don't you?”

“Yeah, it's one of those inbuilt things the angels left me with,” Minhyuk had answered. “But books are boring. They're just one thing—a story. Movies and dramas are everything combined; story, music, visuals, they all come together. There's nothing a book can do that a movie can't do better.”

“Oh yeah? Can you do this with a movie?” Hyungwon had said, and thrown the 1500-page novel right at Minhyuk's head. Minhyuk complained about it for hours after.

“Okay, what do you want to do now?” Minhyuk asked, digging into his lunch. Ability to use chopsticks was not inbuilt into him, so he had to use a fork.

“I think I'm gonna nap,” Hyungwon said. Saturday afternoon was the perfect time for a nap. Every time was, really.

Minhyuk frowned. He couldn't comprehend the idea of someone using their free time to sleep. “Let’s watch *Big*,” he said. “I feel like watching another Gong Yoo drama.”

“You can, if you want to,” Hyungwon said. “I'll sleep.”

“It’s no fun watching alone,” Minhyuk whined. “Who will I discuss stuff with?”

“Start a blog,” Hyungwon said dismissively, stuffing his face with food. It was mean of him, he
knew, but he couldn't stomach another romantic drama. He was sick of romance.

Just like every other time Minhyuk brought up something related to a love story, Hyungwon thought of Wonho. It was a bit of a stretch calling what happened a love story, since most of it happened with who Wonho thought was Kihyun, but Hyungwon liked to think of it as one just the same. He was in love with Wonho, that much was undeniable. And Wonho, well…

Wonho was hurt, and angry, and he had every right to be. Hyungwon wanted to see him again, apologize a million times over and swear to make it up to him, but he knew forcing Wonho to see his face wasn't a good idea, at least not right then. Wonho deserved the time and space to calm down. And Hyungwon didn't deserve the opportunity to make it up to him.

He knew that, and it hurt, and he was trying to accept it but it still hurt the same.

Hyungwon just hoped Wonho was not angry with Kihyun. Wonho should have both his closest friends with him, and in any case Hyungwon had started the whole mess between the three of them in the first place.

He wanted to call Kihyun, ask if everything had turned out okay, but Hyungwon didn't want to force him either. If Kihyun wanted him to know something, he'd tell him. So Hyungwon stayed home and watched stuff with Minhyuk, trying to forget all the stuff in his own life.

He was just finishing the last bites of his microwave lunch when the doorbell suddenly rang.

“I'll go see who it is,” Minhyuk volunteered, and got up to go to the door. He looked through the peephole, and emitted a shriek of pure glee.

“Who is it?” Hyungwon asked, getting up, but Minhyuk threw the door open and answered his question.

It was Kihyun. He stood in the doorway and smiled sheepishly as he made eye-contact with a surprised Hyungwon. And then he saw Minhyuk poking his head out from behind the door, and broke out into a huge grin. “What are you doing here?” he asked, walking in.

“I’m living with Hyungwon now,” Minhyuk said, throwing an arm around Kihyun’s shoulder. “Changkyun moved back into his place, and honestly I’m kinda glad. Hyungwon’s clothes fit me better.”

“Glad to hear it,” Kihyun said, and then he turned to Hyungwon. “Hey.”

“Hey,” Hyungwon said back, too surprised to say anything else. Kihyun seemed calm standing there, almost apologetic. “Is everything okay?” he finally asked.

“Yeah, yeah, everything’s fine,” Kihyun answered, waving Hyungwon’s concern away.

“So you and Shownu made up?” Hyungwon asked.

“Um, yeah, you could say that,” Kihyun said, and he was suddenly blushing, his cheeks rosy pink. Minhyuk raised an eyebrow, and started poking at the obvious blush in Kihyun’s cheek, asking him what was up. But Hyungwon didn't need to ask. Only one thing could make Kihyun turn red like that. Or rather, one person.

“So he finally confessed, huh?” Hyungwon asked, unable to stop grinning. “Or was it you?”
“Both, I guess,” Kihyun said stiffly.

“Wait, what happened?” Minhyuk asked excitedly. He looked at Hyungwon. “Is it the sort-of relationship between Kihyun and Shownu?”

“Yup,” Hyungwon said brightly, ignoring Kihyun’s sputtering accusations of gossiping. “They’ve finally graduated to actual relationship.”

“Wow, congratulations,” Minhyuk said, clapping Kihyun on the back hard. “Tell me all the details.”

Hyungwon rolled his eyes, but in truth he was interested too. He'd never been so concerned with someone else’s relationship since high school, but this time he felt emotionally invested. Part of it probably had to do with the fact that he had ruined it in the first place.

“There are no details to tell,” Kihyun said, escaping from Minhyuk’s arm. “He said he knew the truth, about me and Hyungwon, and that I didn't like Wonho-hyung like that. And then he asked if I knew that he liked me like that. And I said yes and that was it.”

Sometime during his story Kihyun had stopped blushing, and a soft smile appeared on his face. Hyungwon liked the look of it. It looked like happiness.

“That’s it?” Minhyuk was obviously disappointed. “Now I don't feel so bad about missing it.”

Kihyun ignored him, and instead turned to Hyungwon. “I guess I should thank you,” he said. “Shownu-hyung said you called him Wednesday night.”

“You don't have to thank me,” Hyungwon said, and he meant it. “Don’t be ridiculous. It was just me trying to fix my own mistake. And anyway, I'm sure Shownu would've talked to you regardless.”

“You still helped,” Kihyun insisted. He paused, and then said, “I guess what I'm saying is I no longer hate you.”

Hyungwon blinked twice in surprise, and then smiled. Kihyun’s forgiveness was something he’d needed for a long time.

Minhyuk took this opportunity to pull them both in for a group hug, and Hyungwon let him. Afterwards, he was glad he had.

“Have you talked to Wonho?” Kihyun asked quietly, when Minhyuk went off to the kitchen to get celebratory drinks. “Since that night?”

“No,” Hyungwon answered evenly. “He didn't call me, and I don't think he wants me calling him. And I've been staying home, so no chance of a coincidental meeting.”

“He claims it's for me,” Minhyuk said, reentering the living room, “but I'm pretty sure it's because he's afraid of running into Wonho.”

“I'm not afraid,” Hyungwon said, grabbing one of the beers Minhyuk had brought. “I just don't want to.”

“You should talk,” Kihyun said. “Things will get better faster if you talked to him.”

“And what would I say, Kihyun?” Hyungwon asked. “What could I possibly say to make things better?” He swallowed another gulp of his beer. “And Wonho doesn't want to talk to me,” he said. “I'm not gonna corner him. And not only because he's right.”
Kihyun didn't say anything to that, and for a while the three of them drank in silence. Eventually Hyungwon broke the silence.

“Take Minhyuk,” he said. When Kihyun coughed out his beer in surprise, Hyungwon explained, “I can't keep him with me forever. Take him to your apartment.”

“I can't take care of him forever either,” Kihyun protested. “My apartment’s for one person.”

“Yeah, so's mine,” Hyungwon said flatly. “And it's not forever. Think of it like shared custody.”

“I called the number on the card Jooheon got,” Minhyuk put in. “Apparently it'll take some time before everything’s ready. I gotta stay somewhere in the meantime.”

Kihyun paused, thinking it over, and then finally he said, “Okay.”

Minhyuk did a victory fist pump, which made Hyungwon give him a shove. Yeah he wanted Minhyuk gone, but the guy didn't have to be so happy about it.

“Drop him at my apartment tomorrow around one-thirty,” Kihyun said. “And then you can have lunch before going home.”

In hindsight, Hyungwon realized he should've been suspicious of how quickly Kihyun agreed, or how soon he wanted it done. But at that moment he was just so glad he and Kihyun were friends again that Hyungwon smiled brightly and said, “Okay.”

Minhyuk hefted his small bag. “So how long do I stay with Kihyun exactly?”

“A couple of days,” Hyungwon said, ringing the doorbell. “He’s a better cook than me, so you’ll probably like it better here.”

“Yeah, I know,” Minhyuk said brightly. He paused and then added, “Thanks for the clothes.”

“It’s nothing,” Hyungwon said. “Kihyun’s clothes won’t fit you, and it’s not like I’m giving them to you. Think of it as a loan. You pay me back, with interest.”

“I don’t know what a loan is,” Minhyuk said, very obviously playing dumb, since Hyungwon knew for a fact he had watched numerous dramas all about loan sharks. Hyungwon was about to retort something, when Kihyun opened the door.

“Oh, good, you’re right on time,” he said, and his smile was wide, wider than usual. Hyungwon didn’t consider himself a suspicious person, but there was something about that smile that made him pause. He still entered the apartment, and then regretted it as soon as Kihyun moved out of the way.

There, sitting in the living room, was Wonho.

Hyungwon froze. Wonho made eye-contact, and his eyes widened in surprise. He hadn't been expecting this meeting either, then. Hyungwon was all ready to turn around and flee, but Kihyun already had an arm around him, holding him in place.

“Oh, hi, Wonho,” Minhyuk said, stepping forward. He had a bright, genuine smile on his face. “Good to see you again.”

“Oh, um, Minhyuk,” Wonho said, taken out of his surprise. “Uh, yeah. Glad to see you’re doing well.”
Minhyuk was already heading over to the couch, chattering about his new life. Hyungwon took the opportunity to grab Kihyun by the arm and pull him into the kitchen.

“You did this, Yoo Kihyun you tiny bastard,” he hissed under his breath. “Don’t even try to deny it.”

“The two of you need to talk,” Kihyun said calmly. “I’m giving you an opportunity.”

“You can’t just spring this on me like this,” Hyungwon said, and he was trying very hard not to start yelling. “And Wonho? He doesn't want to see me.”

“Well he has to,” Kihyun said, and he sounded so calm and mature it was infuriating. “Ignoring it won’t solve anything.”

“Because there is nothing left to solve,” Hyungwon said, rubbing his face with both hands in frustration. “He doesn't want to see me. He doesn't want to talk to me. It's done.”

“I don't think so,” Kihyun said confidently, and he strode out of the kitchen before Hyungwon could stop him. “Minhyuk,” he called. “Come on, let's go. I'll show you the part of Seoul my apartment is in.”

Minhyuk looked from Kihyun’s determined face to Hyungwon’s frantic signals and said slowly, “I think I'll stay here.”

“No, you won't,” Kihyun said, and then motioned ever so slightly towards Wonho. Minhyuk’s face lit up with understanding.

“You know, that does sound interesting,” he said. “Let's go then.”

Kihyun smiled, satisfied. Hyungwon mouthed the word traitor to a widely grinning Minhyuk, and then he was left alone. With Wonho.

Wonho didn't say anything but sat where he was, looking away. Hyungwon didn't know what to do. He had a million things to say, but now that he finally had the opportunity, none of them came out of his mouth.

He cleared his throat awkwardly. “How— how have you been?”

It was a stupid question, and as soon as it was out Hyungwon berated himself for saying it. But Wonho looked up, right at Hyungwon, and answered. “I've been… better. Since yesterday.”

Hyungwon understood without being told. “Shownu and Kihyun?”

“Shownu and Kihyun,” Wonho confirmed, and a light smile touched the corner of his lips. “I mean, I always knew it would happen outright, but I'm still glad it did.”

“Me too,” Hyungwon said genuinely. “They actually were made for each other.”

Wonho nodded, and looked down, smiling to himself. He fell into a silence, and Hyungwon didn't try to coax him out of it. It was strange and awkward, but weirdly Hyungwon liked it. He liked just being around Wonho, seeing him smile. It felt good and a little painful too, but he guessed that was what it felt like, to be in love with someone.

All of a sudden Wonho looked up and spoke. “And you?” he asked. “How've you been?”

What could Hyungwon reply to that? He wasn’t sure himself. “I don't know,” he said honestly. “I've… I've been busy. Minhyuk can be a handful.” Hyungwon attempted a smile.
“Yeah, could’ve guessed,” Wonho said, and he smiled back, a beautiful, warm smile, but distant. “What’s it like, living with a… a him?”

“Like living with a kindergartner,” Hyungwon said, and he found himself grinning. “A weirdly perverted, drama-crazy kindergartner.”

“He seems like fun,” Wonho commented.

“He’s fun, great fun,” Hyungwon said. “But it can be frustrating explaining basic things about technology and stuff to him. He’d be better in small doses.”

Another nod, and that was it. Wonho seemed fine with falling into another silence, but Hyungwon couldn’t take it, not after seeing Wonho smile at him. “I’m sorry,” he said, and he couldn’t stop himself. Hyungwon stood where he was, shifted slightly on his feet. “About everything,” he said, when Wonho looked at him. “I am. Truly.”

Wonho bit his lip. “I know,” he said, and he blinked a few times before turning away.

“And I didn’t plan this,” Hyungwon said quickly. “This was all Kihyun’s idea, serious. I had no idea you were going to be here.”

“Yeah, don’t worry, I could tell,” Wonho said, and he smiled, but he still didn’t look at Hyungwon. The missing action was tiny, but so significant.

“I didn’t plan any of this,” Hyungwon muttered to himself. “I never expected it to turn out like this. None of it.”

“I heard you called Hyunwoo, though,” Wonho said, and he finally looked at him. “Apparently you told him to talk to Kihyun.”

“Oh. Yes,” Hyungwon said, not particularly surprised Shownu had told Wonho. “It seemed like the obvious thing to do. You never told me if you told him about the… weirdness.”

Wonho smiled almost apologetically. “Well, I did,” he said. “I don’t think he believed it until you called him, though. So… thanks.”

Now Hyungwon was surprised. “Why are you thanking me? I made this whole mess in the first place.”

“Still,” Wonho said with a shrug. “In the end you fixed it, so thanks.”

But I didn’t fix it. Not everything. Hyungwon couldn’t say that though, and another silence fell. This time Wonho broke it.

“I wonder where Kihyun and Minhyuk went,” he said.

“Nowhere,” Hyungwon answered, absolutely certain. “They didn’t go anywhere. They’re probably right outside the door, trying to eavesdrop.”

Wonho grinned. “How do you know?”

“I know them,” Hyungwon said. “Start yelling. They’ll come running in.”

“What am I supposed to yell?” Wonho laughed.

“Anything, it doesn’t matter,” Hyungwon said, smiling. “Come on.”
Wonho kept laughing, that big, dopey laugh Hyungwon loved so much, but finally calmed down enough to yell, “Yah, Chae Hyungwon! Why the hell are you so tall?”

Hyungwon tried to choke down his laughter, and almost succeeded, until the front door opened and Kihyun and Minhyuk rushed in, trying painfully hard to look casual.

“We’re back,” Kihyun announced. He smiled a plastic smile. “What were you guys talking about?”

“We thought we heard yelling,” Minhyuk supplied, and Kihyun whacked him and gave a look that told him to shut up.

Hyungwon exchanged a look with Wonho, and then the two of them burst out laughing. Kihyun looked from one to the other, a confused expression on his face, and then finally relaxed into a smile.

“Okay,” he said. “I’ll get lunch ready.”

“Um, I actually have to go somewhere,” Wonho said, standing up. “I can’t stay for lunch.” He looked like he was trying his best to keep his eyes on Kihyun. Away from Hyungwon.

“You didn’t tell me that before,” Kihyun said, narrowing his eyes. “I made enough for four people.”

“Sorry, it’s kind of important, and it just came up,” Wonho said, and it was such a transparent lie Minhyuk actually grimaced. Hyungwon just focused on his feet. Wonho didn’t want to stay. He told himself he was fine, but he really, really was not.

“I especially invited you, hyung,” Kihyun said, a touch more forcefully. “Stay.”

“No, I’m sorry Kihyun,” Wonho said, and now he was walking towards the door. Towards his escape. “It was good to see you again Minhyuk,” he added, already opening the door. “I’ll talk to you guys later.”

“Shin Wonho don’t you dare leave this apartment,” Kihyun started sternly, but Wonho was already out the door.

Only now Hyungwon looked up. Minhyuk glanced from him to Kihyun and back again, and then he walked over to Hyungwon and hooked his arm around his neck.

“You wanna eat now?” he asked, and his voice was still positive, but muted.

Hyungwon was aware of Kihyun still glaring at the door furiously, and somehow, it made him feel better. That glare, and Minhyuk’s gentle tone made him realize he wasn’t alone, no matter how his heart told him opposite.

“Yeah, let’s eat,” Hyungwon said, and he forced up a smile.

Kihyun tutted in disappointment at the door, and then he went off to the kitchen. Minhyuk pulled Hyungwon over to the couch and turned on the TV. He flicked through the channels aimlessly, and Hyungwon didn't stop him. He was still thinking about Wonho. The conversation between the two of them had almost been normal for a moment there. Hyungwon had expected Wonho to yell at him, or swear, or stomp out of the room. Instead Wonho had been gentle and kind, and he'd even laughed. Hyungwon didn't know if it made him hopeful or disheartened.

In a few minutes Kihyun called out that lunch was ready. Minhyuk got up excitedly, and Hyungwon followed. Minhyuk’s enthusiasm was oddly infectious, even if it was just lunch. Kihyun had made a whole range of Korean dishes, and true to his word, it was enough for four people.
They had been eating mostly in silence for a while when Kihyun said, “I can't believe he actually ran away.” He was glaring at the ramen.

“You didn't really expect him to stay, did you?” Hyungwon asked, raising an eyebrow. “You literally sprang it on him. On both of us.”

“You guys had to meet eventually,” Kihyun said matter-of-factly. “I was just helping the process along.”

“Well, you can stop helping,” Hyungwon said, ready to shove an entire piece of chicken in his mouth. “I mean it. No more trying to ‘coincidentally’ get us in the same place. He deserves some space.” Kihyun frowned at that, but nodded.

“What did you guys talk about?” Minhyuk asked, leaning forward.

Hyungwon was too busy chewing to answer, so Kihyun took it upon himself to. “Hyungwon probably apologized a couple of times,” he said. “Hyung might've cried. He does that a lot.”

“He didn't cry,” Hyungwon said, after he had finally swallowed. “Mostly we talked about you, and Shownu.”

Kihyun frowned. “Why would you do that? We left you here so you'd figure out your love life, not discuss mine. We gave you perfect privacy.”

“That was expecting too much,” Hyungwon said. “And what did you think, after we made up we'd immediately start making out?”

“No of course not,” Kihyun said, but the words came out just a little too fast. Minhyuk swallowed his mouthful and immediately asked, “Is that what happened with you and Shownu?”

“I said no,” Kihyun said, but his face had turned an obvious shade of red.

“Actually, you didn't,” Hyungwon said smugly, and Minhyuk immediately started demanding details.

The focus on the conversation shifted. Hyungwon ate quietly as Minhyuk and Kihyun talked endlessly, moving from one topic to another. He felt pathetic, and felt even more pathetic for feeling so. He was sitting with his friends, eating good food, so why was he so down? Hyungwon had been okay before—not okay, but better—but seeing Wonho again just put a weight on his chest. He started thinking about Wonho again—his soft smile, his loud laugh, the pink in his cheeks when he was happy. And Hyungwon felt strange, both warm and empty on the inside.

Minhyuk stopped mid-conversation, and put his hand on Hyungwon’s. “Hey,” he said. “You okay?”

Kihyun was watching Hyungwon too, and both he and Minhyuk looked concerned. “Just being overdramatic,” Hyungwon said with a forced grin. “Brooding literature student and all that.”

Kihyun frowned, and then glared at the ramen and said, “I can't believe he ran away. After all my hard work.”

It was such a dramatic line Hyungwon burst out laughing. “Hard work? You just called us here.”

“Ramen doesn't cook itself, Hyungwon,” Kihyun huffed. “I slaved away for this meal, and now there's so much leftover.”
“So?” Minhyuk said with a cheeky grin. “You’re just gonna give it to your boyfriend.”

“Can you shut up with that?” Kihyun was flustered again, and it just made Hyungwon laugh even more. As Kihyun busied himself scooping more rice into his bowl, Minhyuk leaned towards Hyungwon and asked quietly, “You sure you’re okay?”

Hyungwon looked at that pretty, caring face, and then at the still-pink Kihyun as he put aside empty plates. “I will be,” Hyungwon said and he smiled, and this one was only half-forced.
Dinner and Nothing

Chapter Notes

Sorry for the late chapter! Had a mid ^^"

“Are you gonna eat that?”

Kihyun looked up from the rice he was poking around with his chopsticks, and then pushed his bowl forward. “It’s all yours,” he said.

“Great.” Shownu reached across the table and pulled the bowl in front of him. He dug in, and Kihyun watched him pensively.

“You barely ate anything,” Shownu said after a few bites. “You okay?”

“Yeah,” Kihyun said, and that was true. His life was good. He had good grades, a steady job, close friends he’d gotten over difficulties with. He even had a significant other, no matter how unused he was to the words ‘significant other’. So Kihyun was okay. But he couldn't be completely happy. Not when everything felt… unfinished.

When Shownu didn't press on the subject and just kept eating, Kihyun sighed loudly and said, “I’ve just been thinking. About Wonho-hyung.”

Shownu looked up. “And Hyungwon?”

“They’d be happy together,” Kihyun said. “Everyone knows it. Wonho-hyung knows it too. He's just making them both miserable.” The last part was certainly true. Hyungwon was obviously not happy. And Wonho was much quieter than he had been before, and his usual enthusiasm for life had dulled. He had been invited to dinner after work too, but had refused with the excuse he was tired. Kihyun hadn't pushed too much because he wasn't exactly displeased with the idea of dinner alone with Shownu, but he still didn't like it.

“You’ve got to stop obsessing over it,” Shownu said, spooning beef broth into his bowl. “Just let them work it out themselves.”

“You see, I would, except they refuse to,” Kihyun said. “Wonho-hyung won't talk to Hyungwon, and Hyungwon won't make him.”

“Isn’t that good?” Shownu asked.

“No!” Kihyun punctuated his exclamation with a bang on the table, drawing the attention of tables around theirs. He smiled apologetically to the questioning stares, and when everyone went back to their food Kihyun leaned forward and said in a lower voice, “No. Wonho-hyung is running away from a confrontation like he always does. Hyungwon thinks he's helping by keeping his distance but he really isn't.”

“You can't force them to talk, Kihyun,” Shownu said.

“Yeah, because Wonho-hyung runs away,” Kihyun grumbled. “I really thought they'd work it out that
day."

Shownu didn't say anything and chewed in silence. Kihyun leaned back in his chair and said, "Wonho-hyung should just forgive him."

"It's not that simple," Shownu shrugged.

"Yeah, I know it's not," Kihyun said, "but it's been almost three weeks already. Isn't that long enough?"

"Well, think of it like this," Shownu said, sticking his chopsticks in his rice. "It's been three weeks since Hoseok found out. And how long did he think Hyungwon was you?"

Kihyun squirmed guiltily. "Hyung—"

"I'm not upset," Shownu said. "But I can get why Hoseok would be."

Kihyun thought about it as Shownu resumed eating. After a while he finally asked, "Why aren't you? Upset, I mean."

Shownu took a moment, chewing thoughtfully, and then he said, "Because it's you. I know you and I've known you for a long time. But I think mostly I was a little relieved?" He gave a small smile. "I really thought you liked Hoseok, I guess I was just too happy to learn you actually didn't."

That smile made Kihyun smile too. "I guess," he said. Kihyun paused a moment and then said, "You understand why we didn't say anything, right? Me and Hyungwon."

"In a way, not really, because I would've told you," Shownu shrugged. "But you're different from me, so I don't blame you. It was a weird situation."

Kihyun bit his lip. "I'm really sorry, hyung. You know that, right?"

"I know, and I told you, I'm not upset," Shownu said, eating as calmly as ever. Kihyun marveled at it, feeling like he was dating a Buddha. Shownu genuinely seemed fine with it.

"So you're totally okay?" Kihyun had to confirm it. It was just unbelievable to him. "You're really not upset about anything."

"Actually, now that you mention it..." Shownu put his chopsticks down, looked up and said seriously, "You kissed Hoseok before you kissed me."

Kihyun blinked a few times in surprise, and then burst out laughing. "That wasn't even me," he said. "That's really what bothers you?"

"Yes," Shownu said. "It was still your body. And I saw you two, I'm pretty sure he put his tongue in your mouth."

Shownu was completely serious, but Kihyun couldn't stop laughing. "Come on, it's not a big deal," he said.

"It is to me," Shownu said. "It wasn't even a peck."

Kihyun tried very hard to see it as seriously as Shownu obviously did, but he found the whole thing hilarious. "You know, hyung, I have kissed other people before," he said, trying and failing not to grin.
“You don't have to remind me,” Shownu said grimly. “I know.”

He sounded so serious it made Kihyun burst out laughing again. He felt a little bad when he saw Shownu’s grim face, so he reached across the table to put a hand on Shownu’s and said, “How about this? I'll kiss you a thousand times over, until you forget all about that one.”

Shownu flushed an obvious shade of pink (which almost set Kihyun laughing again) and he cleared his throat and said, “That’s fine then.” Kihyun smiled at him fondly, let his hand rest there for a few more seconds, and then straightened again.

They sat in comfortable silence, Shownu eating, Kihyun taking a bite of something every once in a while. It sometimes surprised Kihyun how comfortable he actually was with Shownu. Even after the transition from friends to more, Kihyun had never been uncomfortable with him. A little flustered sometimes, sure, but never uncomfortable.

Kihyun was happy. And he wanted two of his closest friends to be happy too.

Hyungwon had forbidden him from meddling, so Kihyun had stopped himself from taking direct action. But he hated the thought of those two being needlessly miserable, when the answer was right in front of them.

“They just need to kiss and make up,” Kihyun said aloud.

“That doesn't work for everybody,” Shownu said, still busy eating.

Kihyun kicked Shownu’s leg under the table playfully and said, “We made up first, hyung.”

Shownu grinned back, and then he became serious again and said, “You shouldn't try and force them, Kihyun. They're not us.”

“I know,” Kihyun sighed, leaning back in his chair. “And I won't. But it's just frustrating.”

“Yeah, I know,” Shownu said, returning his attention to his dinner. “But it's better to let them fix their own issues. Just stop thinking too much about it, babe.”

Kihyun was about to say something in agreement, when he stopped. “I’m sorry, what did you just call me?”

“You don't like it?” Shownu didn't look up, but his cheeks were reddening again.

“I didn't say that,” Kihyun said, breaking out into a grin.

Shownu didn't answer, but Kihyun could see him smiling as he ate. Kihyun grinned even wider at that, and he returned to his own dinner, pleased.

* 

The couple looked happy.

She was beautiful, and bright, laughing and excited over the bouquet she was planning. Her boyfriend was tall and good-looking, more quiet. But every once in a while he would look at her, and a loving smile would slip onto his face, and he kept his fingers locked around hers.
Hyungwon watched them from behind rows of flowers, trying not to feel jealous. He had always enjoyed watching couples, imagining their dynamics, how they met, where they would end up. He had never really felt jealous of them before. But that was before.

He watched as the girl chose flowers, and then as the florist arranged them into a bouquet. Her boyfriend paid, and she gave him a brief hug in return. Then they took the bouquet and walked out of the shop.

It was a warm April, winter well and truly over and spring in full bloom, and the weather brought more visitors to the flower shop. Hyungwon had become one of them. Since the first time he’d entered in his own body, Hyungwon had dropped by regularly, buying at least one flower every time. The slightly pitying looks the pretty florist had initially given him had now changed into familiar nods.

Hyungwon guessed it was rather pathetic, a grown man continuously buying singular flowers for himself, but it had become something of a routine. And anyway, wasn’t he allowed to be at least a little romantic and melancholy?

He had started working again, mainly because he knew he needed to return to normalcy, but also because he needed money to pay rent. And hospital bills. Hyungwon might not have any dates, but he had no shortage of bills.

He had also started meeting his other friends again, and getting ready for the next semester. Hyungwon could feel things returning to something at least halfway normal. The whole twisted situation was finally ending, and maybe he could move forward.

There were a few black irises, and Hyungwon picked one up and took it to the counter. He waited as the florist wrote out the receipt, eyes wandering from the dusty corners to the help wanted sign.

“I must be an idiot, chasing away a customer,” the florist said, finishing up the receipt, “but can you not show up here on weekends?” He looked up, smiled oddly. “Apart from you I literally have one regular customer, and you're scaring him away.”

Hyungwon’s heart jumped in his chest. Wonho? Of course, who else could it be? “He still comes here?” he asked, trying to sound calm.

“No not when he sees you,” the florist answered frankly, handing over the change. “So please either solve your argument or arrange it so your schedules don't clash.” He smiled brightly.

“I can't believe I give you money,” Hyungwon grumbled. He took his change and his flower, and left.

Outside, Hyungwon found himself staring at the flower and thinking. Wonho still came to this flower shop, probably out of habit. And he made sure to avoid Hyungwon. Hyungwon hadn't seen him, not once, not since that run-in at Kihyun’s place. He’d thought it was because he'd been giving Wonho space. Now he knew Wonho was putting real effort into avoiding him. Hyungwon knew he shouldn't have expected anything different, but it still hurt.

It was a Saturday afternoon with a light breeze and a clear sky, and Hyungwon tried to enjoy it. He knew he couldn't pine for Wonho forever, but it seemed his brain hadn't gotten the message, because every time he came close to moving on, it threw up something to hold him back. Even at that moment, in the good weather and the warm air, Hyungwon was thinking about that cold day he'd sat on the university building steps with Wonho, when Wonho’s cheeks had been red with the cold and with his smile.
Hyungwon was allowed to be melancholy sometimes, but he was getting a little worried it was happening too often.

He tried to put it out of his mind, and instead concerned himself with lunch. It was past two already, and Hyungwon was hungry. He felt a little strange about going there, but he wasn't familiar with any other place nearby so he went to that small cheap restaurant by the hospital. Another place that made him feel regretful and sentimental, that restaurant where Wonho approved of their ramen. Hyungwon convinced himself he was there out of necessity, and ordered lunch.

His brain was throwing memories at him again, and Hyungwon kept his head down and tried to ignore them. Replaying those memories was pointless. Wonho didn't want to see Hyungwon—he'd made that very clear—and Hyungwon wasn't going to force him to. So he ate his lunch, a bowl of special ramen that was worth the extra money, and tried to get over everything.

Shownu walked through Kihyun’s front door, looking embarrassed. Hyungwon gave him a brief wave from the couch, and got a small, shy one in return. It wasn't the first time they had met since Shownu and Kihyun had officially stopped being more than just friends— not even the first time they'd met at Kihyun’s apartment. Hyungwon would admit he went over to Kihyun’s place a lot, maybe a little too often. He would just never admit it to Kihyun.

In a weird way Hyungwon had become friends with Shownu. Shownu was still awkward around him, but Hyungwon didn't mind. Awkwardness was pretty much built into Shownu’s personality, and had strangely become one of his charms. And in any case, talking to the stranger you had accidentally attempted to woo could make a guy a little awkward.

“Oh, you came?” Kihyun asked, coming out of the kitchen. He didn't wait for any kind of response before looking at Hyungwon and snapping, “You’re still here? You have your own apartment, don't you? Go home.”

“Are you kidding?” Hyungwon settled into the couch more comfortably. “And miss this?”

“Miss what?” Kihyun asked warily, but his question was quickly answered by a shriek of excitement.

“Hyung, when did you get here?” Minhyuk asked brightly as he emerged from Kihyun’s bedroom, and linked an arm around Shownu’s.

“Just now,” Shownu replied, smiling back fondly.

Hyungwon could feel the disapproval emanating from Kihyun like a thick fog. Minhyuk had a great liking for Shownu, which Hyungwon thought was not unexpected since Shownu was pretty nice and Minhyuk liked people in general. What was surprising was that Shownu liked Minhyuk too. And possibly due to Minhyuk’s forceful personality, he was nowhere near as awkward as Hyungwon guessed he usually was around new people, and seemed quite comfortable with the ex-angel.

And Kihyun might have been a little… displeased about it.

“Okay, that's enough, let him breathe,” he said irritably. “Minhyuk, since you're not doing anything you can help me in the kitchen. You too, Hyungwon.”

Hyungwon grumbled as he forced himself up. Minhyuk followed more enthusiastically. There was not much left to do, and in any case Kihyun never trusted either of them with anything important
with the kitchen. Hyungwon found himself washing knives and spoons.

“I didn't make any for you, so you can go home,” Kihyun said to him. “Take the annoying puppy with you too.”

“There’s enough here to feed an army,” Hyungwon said. “And I think if Minhyuk left, Shownu would be pretty disappointed.” Minhyuk nodded in solemn agreement.

Kihyun muttered something under his breath about how he could arrange Minhyuk’s permanent departure, but didn’t say anything else on the subject. He was in the middle of nagging Hyungwon on the spoons when the doorbell rang.

“Jooheon and Changkyun,” Minhyuk announced, and promptly left the kitchen to go see them. It hadn't taken long for him to become close to the two of them, and he often stayed at their apartment. Hyungwon thought it was because their mental ages were similar.

“I can't believe he still pretends like he's clueless about everything,” Kihyun muttered, taking up Minhyuk’s abandoned post at the plates. Hyungwon just grinned to himself.

In a few minutes dinner was ready, and Kihyun got the kids to serve. There was not enough space at the kitchen table, so Jooheon and Changkyun moved everything to the living room, and they all took up positions in different seats. Hyungwon was just getting comfortable in an old armchair when the doorbell rang.

“You invited someone else?” Hyungwon asked, as Jooheon got up to open the door.

“I didn't invite any of you, you just called me in the morning and announced you were coming for dinner,” Kihyun said distractedly. He looked over at Shownu and raised an eyebrow. Shownu didn't say anything in reply and his face was perfectly blank, but Kihyun must have read something there because he broke out into a grin and then sighed. Hyungwon was about to ask again when he heard Jooheon say, “Oh, hi, hyung,” and his body tensed up and he just knew.

Wonho walked in, smiling brightly. His brown hair was tousled and his lips were pink, and he looked good. And happy, until his eyes scanned the room and he saw Hyungwon.

Hyungwon didn't move or say anything. He didn’t know if there was anything right to say. He was about to tear into Kihyun for arranging another ‘coincidental’ meeting when Shownu said, “Glad you could make it, Hoseok.”

So it was you, Hyungwon thought, glaring at Shownu’s side profile. Doing this to make your tiny boyfriend happy, no doubt.

Wonho just nodded. His eyes hadn't left Hyungwon for a moment. Hyungwon made tentative eye-contact, expecting distant coldness or surprise or tiredness, but there was something completely different in Wonho’s eyes.

“You’re here too?” Wonho said, and his voice was sharp, angry. “You’re really everywhere, aren't you?”

Hyungwon was taken aback, but then he remembered the flower shop, and what the florist had said. “I’m sorry, I didn't know you were going to come,” he said, sincere. “I'll go if you want me to.”

“Don’t bother, I'm leaving,” Wonho said, and he turned and stomped out of the apartment before Hyungwon could react.
The silence that followed the slamming of the door was eventually broken by a nervous cough and Minhyuk saying, “Well, that was awkward.”

“Go after him,” Kihyun said to Hyungwon. “I’m not letting him leave without having dinner.”

“Then you go after him,” Hyungwon said, trying to pretend he wasn’t as hurt as he actually was. “He doesn’t want to see me.”

“Just go, you damn frog,” Kihyun said, shoving Hyungwon out of the armchair. “Only you can get him to come back.”

Hyungwon would have argued against that, but he was aware of four other pairs of eyes on him too. The others all believed Kihyun, it seemed. So Hyungwon reluctantly walked over to the door, put on his shoes, and went outside to find Wonho.

He found him standing right by the door, glaring at a wall.

Hyungwon jumped in surprise, and then quickly shut the door behind him, in case Minhyuk was watching. “Hyung, what are you doing here?” And then, before he could stop himself, “Were you waiting for me?”

“What? Wha— no, of course not,” Wonho said, but he sounded a little confused as well as angry, like he wasn’t sure himself. He rallied and then huffed, “You’re the one who keeps showing up in front of me.”

“I’m sorry, but I told you, I didn't plan to,” Hyungwon said.

He might as well have said nothing, because Wonho continued, more heated than before, “You go to that flower shop, and that tiny restaurant I like, and it's always when I'm there. Why?”

“I told you, I didn't mean to,” Hyungwon said, a little taken aback.

“I know! And it's so annoying!” Wonho was getting even more worked up now. “You just coincidentally go to the same places I do and you do nothing!”

Hyungwon didn't say anything, but he was getting kind of worried now. He had only seen Wonho like this once before.

“And I have to see you, being there, doing nothing,” Wonho continued fiercely. “I hate it so much. Just seeing your face, watching you watch other people and I just keep ending up in the same place and you, you just won't do anything.”

“I don't understand,” Hyungwon said, bewildered. “What do you want me to do?”

“I want you to stop dangling yourself!” Wonho yelled. “Just stop dangling yourself in front of me!”

“What?” Hyungwon found himself raising his voice to match Wonho’s. “What the hell are you talking about? ‘Dangling myself’?”

“Yes!” Wonho burst out, like it was the most obvious thing in the world, and Hyungwon was purposely being stupid. “Either do something or disappear, but stop appearing in front of me and making me want to forgive you! When I see your face I want to forgive you but you won't do anything and it's really annoying!”

Hyungwon opened his mouth, didn’t say anything, and then shut it again. His brain was still trying to
process what he had just heard. Wonho didn’t want to see him. Or he actually did. Hyungwon hadn’t quite wrapped his mind around it yet, and he just blinked in confusion as Wonho glared at the floor and chuffed in anger.

“So,” Hyungwon said slowly, when his brain got halfway, “you were waiting for me?”

Wonho’s jaw dropped in outrage, and he managed to close it for a moment before saying, “I just told you, I wasn’t.”

“No, that’s what you said,” Hyungwon said. “You want me to do something. You’re waiting for me.”

Wonho stared at him. The anger dissipated quickly, and now he looked a little confused himself. “I, uh… I didn’t say that…”

“I feel like that’s exactly what you said, though,” Hyungwon said, more certain this time. “You want me to do something.”

That made Wonho stop. He looked away and chewed on his lower lip, thinking it over. Finally, he looked back at Hyungwon, and he looked uncertain. “I don’t know,” he said. “You said you were in love with me but I don’t know.”

“I am,” Hyungwon said, surprised. He took a breath to calm down, to gather his thoughts. “I thought you didn’t want to see me,” he said finally. “I didn’t want to hurt you any more than I already have.”

“You aren’t,” Wonho said. He ran a hand through his hair and sighed. “I just don’t know. I look at you and I want to forgive you but I… don’t know…” He trailed off, stared at the wall.

Hyungwon swallowed, licked his lips. “Okay, then,” he said. “You want to forgive me, I want you to forgive me. You don’t know if I’m in love with you, and I’m telling you that I am.” He took a deep breath. “So tell me.”

Wonho looked up. “Tell you what?”

“Tell me what to do,” Hyungwon said simply. “What should I do, so you can forgive me?”

Wonho turned away again, like he was looking for an answer written on the floor. And then he finally looked up and said, “I’m going to eat dinner now.”

It wasn’t a definite answer, but Hyungwon was okay with it. For now. He nodded. “Okay.”

He let Wonho enter Kihyun’s apartment first, and followed him in. The other five had already left two seats empty for them.

As Hyungwon settled back in his armchair, Kihyun gave him a satisfied smile and nod. Hyungwon just smiled back.
In case it's not clear enough, a few old notebook entries between Hyungwon and Kihyun are inserted into this chapter ^^

See the end of the chapter for more notes

When Wonho walked out of the university building, he was surprised to see Hyungwon waiting for him.

Well, perhaps not exactly surprised. After what had happened it wasn’t actually surprising to find Hyungwon there, leaning against a nearby wall, adjusting his fringe. Honestly Wonho would’ve been surprised if Hyungwon hadn’t been waiting for him.

He hesitated a moment, wondering whether to approach him or not. Recently it felt like that was all Wonho’s life was made of. Hesitations. He was still hovering on the spot when Hyungwon looked up and saw him, taking the decision out of his hands.

Hyungwon smiled, a perfect, beautiful smile, and started walking towards Wonho. The sight of that smile calmed down the uncertainty in Wonho’s heart a bit, and he found himself smiling back.

“Hey,” Hyungwon said, when he was close enough. “You don't have a class now, do you?”

“You know I don't,” Wonho said, unable to stop grinning.

“Yeah, but I still have to ask,” Hyungwon said, small smile on his face. “So you don't? Great, I'll take you for coffee and lunch. My treat.”

Wonho had to agree. He really couldn't refuse, not when Hyungwon was looking at him like that.

It amazed Wonho, how weak he was when it came to Hyungwon. He imagined someone else deceiving him the way Hyungwon had, and Wonho couldn't see himself forgiving them, ever. But because it was Hyungwon…

It was infuriating, but just two days after confronting Hyungwon Wonho found himself missing him. *Missing* the guy who had masqueraded as one of his closest friend for weeks, months. Who had fooled him into being comfortable around him for so long, and then used the information he’d acquired to try and get Wonho to fall for him.

And it had *worked*.

Wonho couldn't even deny he had developed feelings for Hyungwon. He had tried, though. He had tried damn hard. But every time he even thought of the things Hyungwon had said to him, or the way he smiled or talked or laughed, Wonho felt lightheaded. Drunk, almost. Strange.

He told himself he shouldn't forgive Hyungwon, that he had grossly invaded his privacy, but that reasoning got thinner and thinner as Wonho continued to read through the notebook entries. He had thrown the notebook at Hyungwon when he had confronted him, but Wonho had made a copy of it first. Now he was beginning to regret it. He paged through it whenever he was alone, opening
random entries and matching dates to his own SNS posts. He was almost obsessed with it.

By now Wonho had a pretty clear picture of which days had been Kihyun’s, and which had been Hyungwon’s. Sure enough, it was only Hyungwon who Wonho had gone to the hospital with. And it was Hyungwon who had shared chocolate with him, given him the bracelet, and done every little thing to make his heart flutter.

“You’re pretty quiet,” Hyungwon suddenly remarked, pulling Wonho out of his thoughts. “Don’t tell me you're regretting this already.”

“Eh? No, not at all,” Wonho said. “Just… thinking.”

Hyungwon grinned. “About me.”

It wasn't even a question, which Wonho thought was pretty rude, even if it was true. “You don’t know that,” he said, giving Hyungwon a small shove. Hyungwon’s body was so thin and light, Wonho couldn't believe he hadn't noticed before. *He should eat more,* he thought.

“Oh really?” Hyungwon raised an eyebrow. “About what then?”

“Uh…” Wonho searched desperately for another topic, and then his mouth blurted out, “Kihyun. I was thinking about Kihyun.”

That wiped the smile off Hyungwon’s face. “Really?” he asked, put-off. “Still?”

Wonho blinked in surprise at this grumpy, frowning side of Hyungwon he'd never seen before. He was about to say something, but Hyungwon was on a roll.

“You know, he might not even have gotten you a birthday present,” he said. “Tiny is a grade-A miser and we both know it. Even if he did get you something you probably wouldn't like it anyway. I got you that jacket, me.” He paused and then added, “And Shownu.”

It was so unexpectedly childish Wonho started laughing. Hyungwon narrowed his eyes at him awhile, but then smiled.

They reached the cafe, the same one Wonho had rejected Hyungwon once, in what felt like many many years ago. One table was available in the corner, and they took it.

“So, what do you want?” Hyungwon asked. “Americano?”

“You’re paying, right?” Wonho said, scanning the menu. “I’ll take… a chocolate frappucino.”

Hyungwon raised an eyebrow. “Did you just intentionally order the most expensive drink on the menu?”

“Maybe,” Wonho said, grinning mischievously. “And you? Green tea again?”

“Actually I hate green tea,” Hyungwon said, looking down at the menu. “I ordered it that time because I thought it made me look erudite and sophisticated. I wanted to impress you.”

“You ordered green tea to impress me,” Wonho said, laughing. He found it hilarious, since he considered himself the worst judge of sophistication. He didn’t even know what erudite was. “I guess I’m flattered?”

“You should be,” Hyungwon said. “Every sip was like poison to my taste buds. I was actually kind of glad I spilled it, it saved me from having to drink all of it.”
“Are you thanking me for rejecting you?” Wonho could not stop laughing.

Hyungwon just looked at him and smiled. “You really do laugh a lot,” he finally said.

“Yeah, I know,” Wonho said, rubbing his face in embarrassment.

“No, I like it,” Hyungwon said, still smiling.

Now Wonho found his face heating up. He coughed to try and hide it, but the way Hyungwon’s smile widened told Wonho he’d failed miserably. Hyungwon’s lips were a perfect warm pink, and it suddenly crossed Wonho’s mind that he had never kissed those lips, never felt their softness against his. It filled him with a curiosity he tried his best to ignore.

They ordered their coffees (in the end, Hyungwon chose a latte), and as they sipped them Wonho asked, “So what else did you do to try and impress me?”

“That depends,” Hyungwon said. “What actually impressed you?”

“Okay, wait, let me guess,” Wonho said, sitting up. “You don’t actually wear makeup to the mart?”

“This is so embarrassing,” Hyungwon said, turning away as he laughed. “But no, I don’t. I’m kind of embarrassed I actually did.”

“So one point for me,” Wonho said. “Next…”

The conversation moved easily, and Wonho was not exactly surprised to realize he was laughing through most of it.

Eventually, long after Wonho had finished his too-sweet drink, ordered lunch and finished that too, Hyungwon smiled at him and said, “You should go if you don’t want to be late for work.”

Now Wonho looked at his watch. “Shit, you’re right,” he said, quickly getting up. He looked down at the still-seated Hyungwon, paused for a moment and said, “This was… okay.”

“Okay?” Hyungwon said. “Better than doing nothing?”

Wonho thought back to his outburst outside Kihyun’s apartment, and felt his cheeks burn. He’d been so embarrassed when he’d returned to his senses later. “Yeah,” he said. “Better than doing nothing.”

Hyungwon looked up at him and smiled, and Wonho felt the heat in his face intensify, but for a different reason this time. He nodded awkwardly as a goodbye, face still hot, and left the café smiling.

It was better than nothing.

*Kihyun,

Thanks for the heads up on the assignment. Two people called already, asking for help with it. I acted exactly as I imagined you would, and was an asshole to them. You’d be proud.*
I went shopping with Wonho today. Bought a few things, they're in your closet. You can thank me later.

Shownu wanted to have dinner, but I said I had a headache. He didn't bother me after, but don't be surprised if he asks if you're okay.

Chae Hyungwon

Hyungwon,

Why would you go shopping with Wonho-hyung? Do you think I'm the kind of person who enjoys spending half my paycheck in one day? Do I really need so many scarves?

Had dinner with Shownu-hyung, so he shouldn't ask for a few days at least. Told him I've been stressing over classes.

I've made a deal with Seungyoon; he's doing the first half of the assignment and I'm doing the second. So if he calls asking for answers, share them.

Yoo Kihyun

Wonho picked up the pace as he approached the cafeteria, mentally cursing himself for letting time get away from him. That tended to happen when he met up with Hyungwon. It had been their third meet-up since that coffee and lunch at the café by the campus, but Wonho still couldn't keep track of the time they spent together.

He had to go at a brisk walk to make it in time for lunch, but Shownu and Kihyun were already halfway through their meals as he made his way towards their usual table.

It was still a little weird for Wonho to remember that the two of them had officially become more than just friends. They didn’t act any different from before, which is what made it weirder. Wonho couldn’t imagine being around the person he was dating and being so… regular. But that was exactly what Shownu and Kihyun were. He guessed it was because they had been unofficially more than friends for a while now, but he still found it weird. It actually made Wonho feel more comfortable when Shownu would get pink and embarrassed over something and Kihyun would smirk at him, which was the extent of their romantic vibes around other people. That, and Kihyun’s quiet fussing.

Which he was doing right at the moment Wonho came to sit down, dividing up the beef stew the two had ordered together. Wonho dropped down into the empty seat beside Kihyun and took advantage of his momentary distraction to sneak a bite from his bowl.

“You came?” Kihyun asked, still busy with bowls. “You came just to steal my food?”

“No, I came to see my most beloved friends in the world,” Wonho said, stealing more of Kihyun’s food. “I thought you might be wondering where I was.”

Kihyun put the bowls down, and turned to Wonho with a smug smirk. “Oh no, don’t worry, we
Wonho could feel himself turning pink, and he cursed how easily it showed on his face. He tried to hide it by eating more from Kihyun’s bowl and asking in what he hoped was a casual voice, “Hyungwon told you?”

“He didn’t have to,” Kihyun said, and he sounded way too satisfied. “When I called him last night and he said he’d be busy in the morning, I knew he was going to meet up with you. Nothing else can get him out of bed before noon.”

That made Wonho not-so-secretly pleased. He had gathered from the notebook entries that Hyungwon really liked to sleep, and it was nice to hear he was giving up a few hours of it for Wonho.

A copy of the notebook was sitting in Wonho’s bag, and he fought the urge to take it out and read it again. He probably would later, but not in front of Kihyun. It was strange. Hyungwon and Kihyun were so close—Hyungwon was probably the person Kihyun was closest to, after Shownu and Wonho—but the entries in the notebook were mostly brief and to the point, hardly more than half a page each. Their closeness probably had to do with their unusual circumstances. It also explained the almost fiery affection Kihyun had for Minhyuk. Kihyun had to like Minhyuk a lot to let someone as messy as him stay in his apartment.

Minhyuk, the guy who had once been an angel. And Wonho had just met with Hyungwon, the guy who’d shared Kihyun’s body.

It was still all so strange to Wonho, but somehow he had accepted it.

“Had lunch?” Kihyun asked. “We have work soon.”

“I didn’t actually,” Wonho said, finishing up the rest of Kihyun’s. He wasn’t brave enough or stupid enough to go after Shownu’s.

Kihyun scoffed. “Who knew romancing the frog could be so distracting?”

Wonho ignored that. Hyungwon did look like a frog, he had to admit, but it was a cute frog.

“Okay, then, let’s go,” Kihyun said, piling up the empty plates and bowls. “We’ll be late.”

Wonho was about to get up, when Shownu suddenly spoke up. “I want to talk to Hoseok awhile,” he said. He looked at Kihyun.

Kihyun got the hint. “Okay, then,” he said, getting up. “I’ll be waiting by the gates. Don’t be too long, hyung.” As he picked up his bag he looked at Shownu and said, “Remember, tomorrow.”

Shownu nodded, and Wonho grinned to himself. He wondered what they had planned for tomorrow, and decided to squeeze it out of Shownu later. After Kihyun had gone Wonho leaned back in his chair and asked, “What is it?”


Wonho found himself shifting in his seat. Shownu wouldn’t start this kind of conversation unless it was serious. “Yeah?”

“What’s going on with him?” Shownu asked directly. “Are you together?”
The question made Wonho uncomfortable, mainly because he didn't know the answer himself. “I don't know,” he said finally. “I like him, I do. But... I don't know... does he really mean everything he said? I mean, is it all really him?”

“Kihyun said he moped for you all the time,” Shownu said, and it did sound like something Kihyun would say. “And he seems set on being with you now.”

It all made perfect sense, but it still made Wonho’s gut twist. He stretched himself over the tabletop face down. “I don't know,” he said, muffling his voice.

“What don't you know?” Shownu asked. “If Hyungwon likes you? Because I'm pretty sure he told you that straight. Kihyun’s sure you're in love with each other.”

Wonho raised his head a bit. “Kihyun is damn set on me and Hyungwon getting together, huh?”

“He’s your friend,” Shownu said plainly. “He wants you to be happy. So do I.”

“And you think I'll be happy with Hyungwon?”

“Honestly, yeah,” Shownu shrugged. “You liked him enough when you thought he was Kihyun.”

“Don’t remind me,” Wonho said, hiding his face again. “It was different when I thought he was Kihyun.”

“Because he was unavailable then?”

That made Wonho straighten. “What do you mean?”

“You know how you are, Hoseok,” Shownu said with a small smile. “You can actually do something about it this time, so you keep putting it off.”

There it was, that little flash of astuteness Shownu threw at you when you least expected it. “What are you saying?” Wonho asked. “That I only want things I can't have?”

“No, but you hate hurting people, so you keep running from confrontations,” Shownu said. “You want to just drag it out till it somehow fixes itself.”

Wonho didn't know what to say. Somehow Shownu’s words hit at his very core. He'd always known he could be a bit dramatic when it came to relationships, but had he always thought like that? Wonho couldn't remember thinking like that, not through all his many failed relationships, but then why did everything Shownu say feel so true?

Finally Wonho swallowed and said, “You think so?”

Shownu didn't answer that, but instead said, “A person once said to me, if there’s anything that should be said to someone, you have to go and say it. Life is short, you just have to go and be happy.” He paused and then said, “I think he had a hidden agenda when he said that.”

“So that's your advice?” Wonho asked with a small smile. “Just talk to Hyungwon right now, and get together with him?”

“I'm just saying, whatever you do, don't drag it out,” Shownu said simply.

It sounded so simple when Shownu said it, but the twisting in Wonho’s core wound tighter. He knew Shownu was right. Wonho had a tendency to avoid confrontation, especially when there was a chance of someone getting hurt. And he was terrified someone would get hurt.
When he’d confronted Hyungwon outside the hospital, Wonho had already been plenty hurt, and he didn’t care if Hyungwon was. He actually wanted to hurt him, deep inside. But it was different now. Wonho didn’t want to hurt Hyungwon, not anymore.

“You should go to work,” Shownu said, bringing Wonho back to the present. Wonho nodded blankly and stood up. His head felt heavy with thoughts. He was about to leave when he stopped and said, “Thanks. For talking.”

Shownu just smiled in reply.

★

Hyungwon,

What did I tell you about spending my money so carelessly? I bought lunch for Shownu-hyung and I was almost short because someone spent almost everything in my wallet the day before. What the hell did you spend it on anyway?

Regular classes today. Don’t attend the 10am class tomorrow; I said I was sick, so the professor will let me take the quiz the day after, with another section.

Stop spending my money.

Yoo Kihyun

Kihyun,

I spent that money improving your reputation. Wonho and I went to the hospital, and this time I bought the flowers. Wonho was very impressed. It’d be simpler if you just told me where you hide your secret money stash. I know it’s somewhere in this apartment, I’ll find it eventually.

Attended all classes except the 10am one, and acted sick in them. Did alright. Work was the same too.

Tell me where you hide your money.

Chae Hyungwon

★

It wasn’t a formal place at all, just a small, almost messy restaurant, but Hyungwon found himself nervous, almost sweating. He desperately wished he had a mirror, just to make sure he looked perfect. He’d styled his hair up, worn a loose, soft coffee cream sweater with skinny jeans, and a little bit of lip tint too. He had checked every hair was in place before he’d left the apartment, but now he wanted to check again, just to make sure. Everything had to be perfect.
He was at a dinner date. With Wonho.

Hyungwon knew calling it a date might be getting a little too ahead of himself, but it really, really felt like one. It had hit him out of nowhere, too. He had texted Wonho some random line he’d seen in a drama and thought funny, and Wonho had texted back, *Do you wanna grab dinner after work tomorrow night?*

Of course, Hyungwon did.

Now they were sitting together in this tiny restaurant. Hyungwon felt oddly nervous, which was pretty strange, since he knew Wonho well and had spent a lot of time with him alone. He guessed it was the ‘date’ tag he'd added to this meeting. Sure, all the lunches and coffees he'd had with Wonho could count as dates too, but this felt different. Wonho had asked him.

On the other side of the table, Wonho looked a little nervous too, but more than that, he looked distracted. He had ordered ramen (Hyungwon was beginning to think he had Wonho’s culinary tastes figured out) and talked a little about how it was different from other places’, but apart from that he’d been mostly lost in his own thoughts. Hyungwon carried the conversation for awhile, but eventually left Wonho to his thoughts and his food. Finally, he decided to be direct, and asked, “Hey, are you okay?”

Wonho looked up. “Huh?”

“You seem kind of distracted,” Hyungwon said. “Is anything wrong?”


“About something you can share with me?” Hyungwon asked.

Wonho didn't answer that, but instead said, “Oh, you're done with your ramen too? Let's go.”

Hyungwon wanted to sigh, but stopped himself. A waiter cleared the plates, and returned with the bill a minute later. Wonho protested when Hyungwon tried to pay for his meal, which officially reduced the chances of this meeting counting as a date.

The nighttime spring air was cold, but not unbearable. Hyungwon was still glad for his light sweater, and found himself worrying for Wonho, who hadn't worn a jacket. He wasn't shivering, at least, but his cheeks were already ruddy with cold. Hyungwon kind of wanted to hug him warm, but quickly chased the thought away before it sunk in too deep.

“I was pretty disappointed you didn't let me pay for you,” Hyungwon said, trying to get a conversation going. He never had to work like this with Wonho before.

Wonho sneaked a sideways glance, and a smile. “Why?”

“You know why.” Hyungwon gave him a light shove with his shoulder. Wonho looked at him and grinned back, and that smile dissolved away the awkwardness.

They walked like that a while, Hyungwon’s side warm against Wonho’s, when Wonho abruptly stopped walking. “It feels like forever ago,” he said, pensive.

For a moment Hyungwon didn't understand. Then he looked around, and realized where they were.

The intersection near his apartment. The intersection where it had all started. The intersection Hyungwon had been hit by a bus, sending him to meet a pretty blond with a scroll. The same
intersection Hyungwon had met a handsome young man with brown hair, pale skin and pink lips, who told him to be careful on the road.

“Yeah, it does,” Hyungwon agreed. “It feels like more than forever, in a way, but I remember it like it was just a day ago.”

Wonho suddenly stepped away from Hyungwon and turned, so that they were face-to-face. He looked so beautiful, and so serious. It scared Hyungwon. He had a horrible, sinking feeling this would be the last time Wonho would look at him, and he hated it. Hyungwon hated the thought of it, the fact that he himself had made the decisions that led up to this moment. It was his own fault, all of it.

“Hyungwon,” Wonho said, but he wouldn't say anything more. Hyungwon didn't say anything. If this really was the last time Wonho would talk to him, then he wanted this moment to last as long as possible.

“Hyungwon,” Wonho said again. Hyungwon just stood stiffly, unmoving, stomach churning as Wonho looked at him. Wonho stopped, swallowed, and asked, “Hyungwon, you… do you want me?”

The question caught Hyungwon off-guard. “Of course,” he said, too surprised to put the words better. “Of course I want you. I've told you that before.”

Wonho was looking away now, chewing on his lower lip. Finally he looked up, but he still seemed uneasy. “I just— just wanted to make sure.” He swallowed. “That you really meant that.”

That hurt Hyungwon, but more than anything he felt guilty. “I know I hid a lot from you but I was completely honest about that,” he said. Wonho had to know that. If this was the last time they were going to speak he had to make sure Wonho knew that. “I am in love with you.”

Wonho’s bottom lip was red now, close to swollen. He swallowed, took a deep breath. He looked almost nervous, and it was not calming Hyungwon’s heart at all. Hyungwon didn’t say anything more, let Wonho speak when he was ready.

And finally, he was. “I need you to promise me something,” Wonho said, and he looked so grim, so serious.

Hyungwon nodded. His throat felt constricted, like there was a real, solid mass there, blocking the airway. This was it. And it was happening at this cold, empty intersection where he had met Wonho the first time.

“You have to promise me,” Wonho said, after another deep breath, “that you won’t ever possess someone and then pretend to be them.”

That was an… odd request. Still, Hyungwon nodded again. At that moment he would have agreed to anything.

“And also,” Wonho said, still serious, “that you will never ask me to buy you flowers again. I have spent way too much on flowers for you.”

Something about this wasn’t turning out the way Hyungwon had expected. Again he nodded, but this time slower, as his brain tried to figure out exactly what was going on.

“And until it makes up the amount I spent on flowers,” Wonho said, “you will always pay for the food.”
Hyungwon blinked at him. Had he just heard that right? Had his brain really processed Wonho’s words properly, or was this some strange food-poisoning aftereffect?

“Wait a minute,” he said finally. “You’re not telling me to get lost and never talk to you again?”

“Um, no,” Wonho said, and he determinedly fixed his eyes onto something to his left. “I’m, um, kind of telling you the opposite.”

“Oh.” Hyungwon paused. *The opposite. Which means…* He hesitated, and then asked, “So you’re saying it’s… okay?”

“I’m not saying I forgive you,” Wonho said quickly, turning back to Hyungwon. “But I’m giving you a chance to convince me to forgive you.”

Hyungwon could work with that. He could more than work with that. He could let it sit in his brain and his heart and make him really, really happy. He could feel the smile come on his face, unbidden, and he thought he could make out now that the pink in Wonho’s cheeks wasn’t just from the cold.

“Oh,” Hyungwon said, and he really couldn’t stop smiling. It felt like he’d never be able to stop. “I hope one day you’ll forgive me, then. And for this too.”

Before Wonho could react, Hyungwon jerked him forward and put his arms around him, pulling him into a hug. He was warm, just like Hyungwon imagined, and he fit perfectly against his body. Hyungwon held him like that as long as he dared, feeling him breathe against him, and then he finally let him go. He would have been satisfied with that, but as Hyungwon pulled away Wonho grabbed him by the collar, jerked him forward, and pressed their lips together.

It took Hyungwon a moment to get over the shock, and then he was kissing Wonho back. Wonho’s lips were cold from the night air, and Hyungwon kissed them warm, soft and gentle. There was nothing angry or desperate about it, not like the first time, but sweet and tender. Hyungwon held Wonho’s face in his hands, felt the warmth of his cheeks. He could feel Wonho’s hands grip tightly onto his sweater, and they stayed there even after their lips parted.

Wonho looked up at Hyungwon, breathing deep, cheeks redder than ever before. Hyungwon didn’t think he had ever seen a better sight.

“Oh,” Wonho breathed out. “I’ll forgive that.”

Hyungwon’s hands were still on Wonho, and he rubbed a thumb over his bottom lip. “Thank you,” he said, and he wasn’t sure why he said it, but he knew he meant it.

Wonho smiled, and Hyungwon thought he knew Wonho well enough to know that meant he wanted another kiss.

When Wonho closed his eyes and lifted his chin, Hyungwon found he was right.

Chapter End Notes

And we finish the penultimate chapter. The final chapter will be kind of like an epilogue, a collection of short bits and pieces, so this is officially the end of the plot. I want to thank each and every one of you for every read, every heart, every comment. It’s been roughly a year since I started this story, and I never thought it’d get this far. I
don't know what I've done to earn such love, but I want to thank you for it anyway. Along with the final chapter I will also be writing a little post on my blog, with bits of extra information (and lots of sentimental rambling...). I hope to get it out soon, so look forward to it ^^ And again, thank you!
“Minhyuk. Minhyuk! Minhyuk!”

“Geez, I heard you the first time,” Minhyuk grumbled, emerging from the kitchen, bag of chips in hand. “What’s the problem?”

Hyungwon whipped around and pointed at his face. “This.”

Minhyuk snorted. “When have you ever thought your face was a problem?”

“Not my face,” Hyungwon said. “This.”

There, right under Hyungwon’s carefully-lined left eye, was the worst thing he had ever faced in his 22 years of existence. A pimple.

“What, the pimple?” Minhyuk leaned in closer. “It’s not that bad.”

“It’s hideous,” Hyungwon said, turning back to the full-length mirror. “Just look at it. It’s absolutely disgusting. It’s like I’m growing a second head.” He groaned. “And everything was supposed to be perfect.”

“You can barely see it,” Minhyuk said soothingly, opening up the chips. “I didn’t even notice it until you pointed it out.”

Hyungwon turned around hopefully. “Really?”

“No.” Minhyuk dropped the fake encouraging smile. “It’s super gross. You look like an extra from Mad Max.”

Hyungwon groaned again, and turned back to the mirror, peering in closely. No matter how much he glared at it, it just refused to magically shrink. “This sucks,” he said miserably.

“Don’t be so dramatic,” Minhyuk said. “I thought you said one of the reasons you liked Wonho was because he didn’t fall for your looks?”

“But it’s the first official date,” Hyungwon said. “Everything has to be just right.”

He turned back to the mirror and stared at his reflection morosely. Why did this have to happen today? Hyungwon was nervous, much more nervous than he had ever been over a date. Wonho had been through so much to get to this, he just wanted everything to turn out perfectly.

A brain flash suddenly came to Hyungwon. “I know!” he said, turning back to Minhyuk. “We’ll cover it up.”

“I’m pretty sure concealer is not going to cut it,” Minhyuk said casually, as Hyungwon went off into
the kitchen.

It took Hyungwon less than a minute to find what he was looking for, and he returned to the living room, waving it triumphantly. “That’s why we're not using concealer.”

Minhyuk sat up. “Is that a bandaid?”

“Yes,” Hyungwon said. “Now help me put it on.”

“This is crazy,” Minhyuk said, but he got up, wiping his hands on his jeans. “What are you gonna say when Wonho asks why you're wearing a bandaid?”

“I don't know, I'll think of something,” Hyungwon said, handing it over and pushing his fringe away. “Now hurry, I'm already late.”

Minhyuk sighed as he pulled the back off. “Hold still.”

Hyungwon closed his eyes and did just that. He could feel Minhyuk’s hands getting closer and closer to his face, and until one hand was against Hyungwon’s left cheek and then—

The phone rang, Minhyuk jumped, and Hyungwon felt something attach to his face.

Across his eye.

Hyungwon opened his eyes slowly. He could only see properly out of the right one. Minhyuk was giving him the guiltiest look Hyungwon had ever seen on his face, and Hyungwon quickly whipped his head back to the mirror to inspect the damage.

The bandaid was stuck neatly across his left eye. Hyungwon turned back to Minhyuk, gave him the angriest one-eyed glare he could manage, and growled, “What have you done?”

“It was the phone it surprised me,” Minhyuk said quickly, and sure enough the phone was still ringing. Hyungwon ignored it. He had more important things to deal with.

“What am I supposed to do now?” he groaned. “I'm not going to my date as a cyclops.”

“Did it attach to your eyelashes?” Minhyuk asked, moving forward cautiously.

“I don't think so,” Hyungwon said. “I don't feel any pulling when I blink.”

“So we can fix this,” Minhyuk said brightly. “I just need to pull it off.”

“Minhyuk no—”

But it was too late. One painful yank and the bandaid was off. Hyungwon turned to the mirror again, slowly this time, afraid of what he'd see.

Of course. Only half of Hyungwon’s eyebrow was left.

He turned back to Minhyuk, ready to murder him in a million different ways, when Minhyuk yelped, picked up Hyungwon’s phone and pushed it into his hands saying, “Wonho’s calling!”

He was. Hyungwon’s fury dissipated at that, and was replaced by a dread. He had to see Wonho. With half of one eyebrow gone. He swallowed, and then picked up the call. “Hey.”

“Hey, where are you?” Wonho asked. “Don’t tell me you're ditching me.”
“Of course not,” Hyungwon said quickly. “I’ll be there.”

“I was just joking,” Wonho laughed. “But hurry, okay?”

“I’m on my way,” Hyungwon said, as he gave Minhyuk a glare that told him he’d deal with him later. He looked into the mirror one last time as he carefully arranged his bangs to cover his missing eyebrow, and then he grabbed his jacket and left the apartment, hoping his fringe would stay in place.

It was only a few minutes away to the coffee shop they had arranged to meet at, and Hyungwon entered to find Wonho seated at a corner table. They made eye-contact and Hyungwon smiled and forgot all about his stress from just ten minutes ago.

“You’re late,” Wonho commented lightly as Hyungwon sat down. “Trying to look cool again?”

“I don’t know, did it work?” Hyungwon lifted his chin and gave his best alluring look.

Wonho just laughed in reply. They ordered drinks and sandwiches, and ate and talked and Hyungwon enjoyed it. He realized he’d been nervous for nothing. It all felt natural. Around Wonho Hyungwon didn’t need to plan out every word of the conversation, and the boost he got when Wonho laughed that dopey laugh of his was indescribable.

It went better than he could have imagined. As promised, Hyungwon paid for the food, and as they left the coffee shop he asked, “So how much until you start buying your own food again?”

That earned him a light shove from Wonho. “You should be offering to pay for everything,” he said, grinning. He paused a moment and then said, “You mind if I ask you something?”

“Go ahead,” Hyungwon said. The air outside was nice and cool, and he liked the feel of it on his face.

“Why do you only have one and a half eyebrows?”

Hyungwon stopped. He’d forgotten. He’d actually forgotten he’d lost half an eyebrow to Minhyuk and a bandaid. Immediately his hand flew up to his forehead, checking if his fringe was in place.

“It moved a little out of place when you laughed,” Wonho said helpfully. “I was just looking for the right moment to bring it up.”

“There is no right moment to bring it up,” Hyungwon sighed. “Minhyuk. A bandaid. That’s why.”


“It’s a long story,” Hyungwon said. “Now please let me go so I can go home and curl up in a ball and disappear.”

“It’s not that bad,” Wonho said, still laughing. “Come on, let me fix it.”

Before Hyungwon could refuse Wonho grabbed him by the hand and pulled him down the street. There was a pharmacy a few feet away, and Wonho pulled them both in. There was a whole array of cheap cosmetics, which Wonho looked through before he picked up a small eyebrow pencil and took it to the counter.

“You really don’t need to do this,” Hyungwon said, burning with embarrassment.

“It’s fine, you can pay me back later,” Wonho said with a way-too-satisfied grin as he paid. “Now
Hyungwon was dragged out of the pharmacy and into a small gap between buildings. Wonho leaned him against the brick wall, pushed his hair away from his face, and went to work with the eyebrow pencil.

“You know, when I imagined you pushing me against a wall in an alleyway I wasn’t really expecting a make-up fix,” Hyungwon commented.

Wonho’s brow was furrowed in concentration, but he smirked. “Imagine that kind of thing a lot?”

“What, losing half an eyebrow? Totally.”

“Stop talking,” Wonho said, but he smiled as he said it.

Hyungwon obeyed, and closed his eyes too. It felt oddly nice. Wonho was gentle, drawing small, light lines. It was almost enough to make Hyungwon feel a little drowsy. He knew he should’ve slept a few extra hours before heading out.

A minute or two later Hyungwon was aware of Wonho removing his hands from his face. He was about to open his eyes and ask if it was done, when Hyungwon suddenly felt something soft and warm press against his lips for a second before moving away.

He blinked open his eyes and found Wonho looking at him and smiling. “I thought you were falling asleep,” Wonho said.

“I almost was,” Hyungwon answered. He felt slightly dazed.

“Well I prefer you awake,” Wonho said, still smiling. “I’ve had enough of looking at your sleeping face. So let’s go.”

Hyungwon nodded, and let Wonho lead him out of the alleyway. “How does it look?” he asked, shifting a few hairs off his forehead.

Wonho looked at him and smiled brightly. “Perfect.”

“And that is Lady Mary Memorial. That’s where Hyungwon-hyung’s body was kept during the coma.”

Minhyuk looked up and down the huge, imposing building. “Why do humans build their hospitals so scary?” he asked. “It makes you not wanna go in them.”

“You have to stop talking about humans like you’re not one of them, hyung,” Jooheon said. “It sounds suspicious. And weird.”

Minhyuk turned an apologetic smile on him. “Right. Sorry.”

Jooheon couldn’t help but sigh and grin at the same time. Ever since Minhyuk had his job fixed for him, Kihyun had set out a schedule so that he could be shown around Seoul and get to know things about city life. Everyone was supposed to take him around equally, but Jooheon felt like it was him
taking Minhyuk 80% of the time. Wonho and Hyungwon were always out on dates, and Kihyun refused to let Shownu spend time alone with Minhyuk, claiming Minhyuk would ‘get ideas’. But the fact was Minhyuk got more ideas when he was alone with Kihyun, so Kihyun refused to take him out too. And Changkyun conveniently got assignments whenever Minhyuk wanted to go out walking.

So it was left to Jooheon. And he liked Minhyuk, he did, but the guy never ran out of energy. He could walk for hours and still be as chipper as he was when he first started out. Jooheon was a regular guy. One hour of walking and he expected a cold soda and a bucket of fries.

He hoped that when Minhyuk finally started his job he’d be busier. Minhyuk had gotten a job at KBS, where he would be working on drama sets. He was incredibly excited about it. Hopefully it would be a good outlet for his endless energy.

“Hey, Jooheon, let’s go in there.”

Jooheon followed Minhyuk’s outstretched finger to a small flower shop a few feet away. “Okay, sure,” he said, and they started walking towards it. “You… like flowers?”

“They’re okay,” Minhyuk shrugged. “But the shop looks pretty. It’s like it came out straight from a drama.”

Jooheon had to agree on that. It looked… picturesque. It did look kind of like a drama set, like someone had wanted to create the ideal flower shop.

The door opened with the small twinkle of a bell, and the two of them entered. The shop was quiet, free of people but full of flowers. Jooheon walked a little ahead of Minhyuk down the main row, amazed. There was a huge variety of flowers, and he didn’t even know most of their names. He recognized white lilies nearby and went to take a closer look, aware of Minhyuk right behind him. They smelled lovely, light and fresh, and the whole atmosphere of the shop was the same: delicate, calm and heavenly.

“You!”

Jooheon turned his head just in time to see a bouquet of flowers go flying past and hit Minhyuk right in the face. Minhyuk staggered back in a shower of petals, and then shook his head, dazed. Jooheon stood rooted to the spot, too stunned to move.

Before either of them could react, a very furious young man with long hair tied back stomped up to Minhyuk and started yelling in his face.

“You!” he said again. “How dare you come back in here? You think you can dye your hair and I won’t recognize you? The nerve!”

Minhyuk turned to Jooheon, helplessly lost, but Jooheon was just as clueless.

“I should murder you right now,” the unknown attacker said fiercely. “You know, I was actually worried when you disappeared? Worried! Me! I thought you’d gotten yourself in an accident of some kind, or that maybe you were sick. So imagine my surprise when I open my shop one Saturday morning and find a note slipped in under the door, telling me you’d gone somewhere far away and you wouldn’t be back.”

“Uh…” Minhyuk started, but the man was not done yet.

“And then even after that I worried for you!” he yelled. “I thought you got mixed up with the mafia
or something. Because which idiot would ditch me? It took me ages to figure out you were that idiot.”

“Um, excuse me—”

“And then you saunter right in here, trailing after some other guy!” The long-haired man suddenly whipped his head around and fixed Jooheon with a glare. “Who are you?”


“I’m sorry, I’m completely lost.” Minhyuk took the opportunity to step in. “I was in an accident and I lost my memories. Who are you?”

The man turned back to Minhyuk, completely enraged. “You’re trying the fake-amnesia trick? On me? You really think I’m that big of a fool?”

“No, no, it’s true,” Jooheon said quickly. “Minhyuk-hyung doesn’t remember anything from, like, a month back. I’m showing him around Seoul.” Minhyuk nodded along vigorously.

He could see anger subside in the young man’s eyes, replaced by suspicion and maybe a little bit of belief. “Only an idiot would use a stupid excuse like amnesia,” he said eventually. “But then again, you’re not really the smartest tool in the shed…”

“But I know better than to use a dumb plot twist like that,” Minhyuk said, putting on his sunshine smile.

The man looked at that smile, and then looked away and clicked his tongue in annoyance. Jooheon thought he could see a bit of a begrudging smile there. Minhyuk must have noticed it too, and he grinned even wider.

“So, walk me through the whole story,” he said. “Who are you and how do I know you?”

The long-haired man looked at Minhyuk, then Jooheon, and back before saying, “You used to work for me. You were a part-timer here.”

“You seem awfully worked up over a part-timer,” Minhyuk said, looking very pleased.

“Yes, I value my employees,” the man answered, not missing a beat. That seemed to please Minhyuk even more.

Jooheon stood where he was, completely lost. This guy—the florist, apparently—knew Minhyuk. Minhyuk had worked for him. But wasn’t Minhyuk-hyung an angel before all this? So why would he work at a shop…?

Jooheon returned his attention to the two of them in the middle of a silent stare-off, Minhyuk grinning, the florist watching coldly. And he thought maybe he got it.

“You’re hiring?” Minhyuk broke the silence, motioning to the sign nearby.

“Part-time,” the florist replied, still cool.

“Great, I need a job,” Minhyuk said brightly. “When can I start?”

The pretty young man narrowed his eyes, but there was a hint of a smile there. “Who says I’m hiring you? There’s a strict application process.”
There was a short pause in the conversation and Jooheon saw an opportunity to cut in. “I’ve gotta go home right now,” he said. He knew when he wasn't wanted, and he really wasn’t wanted here. “Hyung, you can get home by yourself, right?”

“Oh, course, Jooheonnie,” Minhyuk said, sparing him a glance. “See you.”

Jooheon nodded in farewell to the florist, who actually tilted his head too. And then he waved goodbye to Minhyuk before he left the flower shop.

When Jooheon was outside and by himself, he sighed. Couldn’t at least one of them start a relationship normally?

* *

Kihyun wanted to throw himself out of the window, roll across the street, and then get up and sprint away.

He looked over the café window, wondering if it would shatter if he threw his entire body weight against it. It looked thin. He could probably do it.

He had no idea why he had agreed to this.

Shownu was sitting on Kihyun’s right, a big mass of awkwardness that was not much comfort at all. Opposite Kihyun was Wonho, wearing his favorite rider jacket and fixing the fringe of his newly-dyed blond hair. And by Wonho’s left was Hyungwon, tall and modelesque and way too happy at Kihyun’s discomfort.

Kihyun was on a double date. With the guy who had possessed Kihyun’s body, and a very close friend who had once confessed to him.

Why had he agreed to this in the first place?

Honestly Kihyun had had no idea it was going to be so awkward. He and Wonho had joked many times about Wonho’s misguided feelings for him, and even Shownu had laughed along a couple of times. He thought he’d be okay with this. Until he actually sat down at the table opposite the possessing sort-of ghost and the guy who'd confessed love to him.

Hyungwon and Wonho were past that initial awkward stage in a relationship where both parties were always nervous and over-thinking everything, and were now at that disgusting phase where everything the other did was cute and/or funny. It was sickening. Kihyun was glad he’d never gone through that phase.

They were in the middle of an unspoken conversation made of smirking looks on Hyungwon’s side and giggles on Wonho’s. Kihyun was disappointed to see that Hyungwon’s eyebrow was growing back nicely. He had roared with laughter when he’d first seen it, in Hyungwon’s apartment of course, since careful work with a pencil hid it when Hyungwon went out. Hyungwon had smacked him in the head, but it had been worth it.

Wonho finally broke the silence with an awkward laugh. “Well this is kind of weird,” he said. Shownu didn't say anything, but it was obvious he thought the same.
“I don't think it's weird at all,” Hyungwon said airily.

If that was what he was going for, Kihyun could play that too. “Me neither,” he said. “After all, we're all friends.”

“Oh, I'm glad to hear you're not feeling awkward, Kihyun,” Hyungwon said with a smile. “I thought it might be weird for you, since you made out with both of our dates.”

Kihyun grit his teeth. He wanted nothing more than to climb over the table and break that skinny noodle body in half. Shownu didn't seem particularly bothered by the comment, but that was fine. Kihyun was bothered enough for the both of them.

“I don't really think it counts with Wonho-hyung, does it?” he asked lightly. “That was you, after all, abusing my body.”

“I'm not talking about that,” Hyungwon said. “I mean the time you and Wonho kissed when you were at Blacklight.”

Wonho threw desperate hand signals a moment too late. Shownu sat quiet as always, but now he straightened.

“Wait, hold up,” Kihyun said sharply. “When was this?”

“You didn't know?” Hyungwon was surprised.

In one motion the two of them turned to Wonho, who groaned and hid his face in both hands.

“That night we went out drinking with Jooheon and Changkyun,” Shownu said. “Hoseok got very, very drunk, and he kissed you.”

“And neither of you told me about this?” Now Kihyun was mad. “You didn't think this is something I ought to know?”

“Well you were both really drunk,” Shownu said simply. “I didn't think it mattered.” He looked directly at Kihyun. “Do you think it matters?”

Kihyun saw what he was doing, and he was not falling for it. “They’re my lips, of course it matters,” he said. “And Jooheon and Changkyun, they saw it too, right? And if Jooheon knows then Minhyuk knows and— wait a minute, is this why Minhyuk keeps asking me to go out for drinks with him?”

“Probably,” Wonho said from behind his hands.

Hyungwon rounded on him. “You didn't tell me you didn't tell Kihyun,” he said. “Why didn't you tell Kihyun?”

“I don't know, I thought it'd make things weird,” Wonho mumbled. “Things got super weird the last time I kissed him so I thought—”

“Hold on,” Hyungwon cut in. “The last time you kissed him?”

Wonho yelped and dropped his head. Shownu helpfully explained, “Hoseok gets very… affectionate when he's drunk.”

“He’s a menace,” Kihyun said. He was still not over the recent revelation.

“Okay, wait a sec,” Hyungwon said. “Let me see if I got this straight. Wonho is a pervert drunk—”
“Hey!” Wonho said indignantly, and was cleanly ignored.

“A pervert drunk,” Hyungwon said again, “and he likes going out drinking. With you two.” He paused, and then asked, “Is there anyone at this table he hasn't kissed?”

There was a silence. Kihyun wanted to lie and say yes, but Shownu looked guilty as all hell, so he knew there was no point.

“Well, this has been nice,” Hyungwon said shortly, getting up. “But I have other things to do, like get drunk and kiss all my friends.”

Wonho slid himself out of the booth and got up too. “Babe, wait—”

“Don’t ‘babe’ me,” Hyungwon snapped, and stalked away, muttering to himself, “And he refuses to go for drinks with me…” Wonho followed like a puppy, still trying to explain.

Which left Shownu and Kihyun alone at the table. Shownu automatically closed the space between them, which he always did when they were alone, and settled in comfortably.

“Don’t think I’ve forgiven you,” Kihyun said, giving him a look.

Shownu sat silent for a while, thinking, and then he finally said, “Do you want some ice-cream? I’ll pay.”

Kihyun smiled begrudgingly. “Okay fine,” he said. “But I'm still mad, got it?”

Shownu nodded, and then called the waiter over. Kihyun just smiled to himself and got more comfortable.

It was a nice evening.

Changkyun walked down the street slowly, enjoying the air. He was in no rush. The movie was still half an hour away from starting, so he could afford to dawdle.

Winter was completely gone and the season for long coats was over, which Changkyun thought was a pity. He liked winter. It was the best season for hot drinks, fluffy blankets, and falling asleep at odd times thus having to finish 12-page essays three minutes before the deadline. Yes, winter was Changkyun’s favorite season, and this winter had been one of the most eventful in his life.

He guessed all the stuff he'd seen that year were pretty unbelievable, but only if you stopped to think about them. And Changkyun had learned a long time ago that thinking was overrated.

There were a lot of people on the sidewalk, all busy with their own lives, and Changkyun enjoyed watching them go. The old granny walking side-by-side with a young boy, that fashionable working woman clacking past in heels, the high-schooler returning home from prep classes, and—

That person sitting on a bench, lost in thought and smiling to himself.

Changkyun stopped walking and stared unabashedly. The person was tall, perfectly-proportioned, with long legs he crossed in front of him. He was good-looking too, prettily so, with a small face,
high cheekbones and sharp features. He was dark, more tanned than most Seoulites, and the bangs of his black hair reached his eyebrows. But none of that was what stopped Changkyun in his tracks.

This person, from head to toe, was dressed in pure, untouched white.

Changkyun had heard enough descriptions from both Hyungwon and Kihyun on how Minhyuk had dressed before he became human. And Jooheon’s story of what had happened at the park pretty much confirmed it.

Angels wore white.

But that didn't mean every person who wore white was an angel. That would be ridiculous. But still...

Before Changkyun could convince himself otherwise, he walked up to the bench and asked, “Mind if I sit here?”

The seated man turned his head. “Go right ahead,” he said with a smile.

So Changkyun sat down. He pulled at his collar, drummed his fingers on his knees. What should I say? Should I say anything? This is stupid, what if I'm wrong and he's just a regular dude?

“You're right.”

Changkyun started in surprise. He hadn't said that. Which meant—

“Yes, you're right,” the man said, looking at him and smiling. “I am an angel.”

Changkyun’s eyes almost popped out of his head. “You can read my mind too?”

“No,” the angel said with a light laugh. “But it was obvious what you were thinking.” He looked him up and down. “You’re Im Changkyun, aren’t you? A part of the recent double-soul conundrum.”

So that’s what the angels call it. Sounds about right. “Kind of a part, but not really,” Changkyun said. “So you worked with Minhyuk-hyung?”

“Broadly speaking, yes,” the angel answered, smiling. “But the man you now know as Lee Minhyuk worked in a soul transit team, and I am the head of the liaison department.”

“Wow, so you’re a big shot,” Changkyun said, sitting up excitedly. “What kind of powers do you have? Could you thunderbolt me right now if you wanted to?”

“Not exactly,” the angel said, looking at Changkyun like he was a cute child. “I could list all my… powers right now, but that would take the mystery out of life, wouldn’t it?”

He wasn’t allowed to say. Changkyun nodded, getting it. They sat in silence for a while, and then finally Changkyun said, “You mind if I ask you something?”

“Ask away,” the angel said. “I can’t promise an answer, though.”

“Apparently Minhyuk-hyung didn’t know the answer to this, but I thought you might,” Changkyun said. He paused, and then asked, “Why did it happen? The whole… conundrum?”

“An angel in a soul transit team made an error,” the angel said with a smile. “Rare, but not impossible.”
“No, I mean why did Hyungwon-hyung’s soul go into Kihyun-hyung’s body?” Changkyun asked. “It’s weird, isn’t it? I mean, they didn’t even know each other.”

The angel paused, and then turned to Changkyun. “Do you believe in fate?”

“I guess,” Changkyun shrugged. He hadn’t really thought about it.

“If you did, then you might assume that, occasionally, fate doesn’t come through,” the angel said. “Maybe due to some random chance someone’s fate changes, becomes something it was never meant to be.”

Changkyun leaned forward, listening intently.

“When that happens, a higher power steps in,” the angel continued. “Something we cannot truly grasp, whether we’re human or angel.”

“So it all happened to correct their fate?” Changkyun asked, confused. “Whose fate? What changed?”

The angel shrugged. “Who can say? Perhaps two people who were meant to fall in love needed a push. Or a chance encounter on the road did not become what it was supposed to be.” He looked at Changkyun, a twinkle in his eye.

Changkyun just sat where he was, getting his brain around it. “Thank you,” he said eventually. “I think I got it.”

“No problem,” the angel said lightly. “Now if you’ll excuse me, someone must be missing me by now.”

It sounded like a farewell, but he didn’t make any move to get up. Changkun was confused, until he blinked and found himself sitting alone on the bench.

“So he can teleport too,” he said aloud. “Awesome.”

He would have lingered on the bench awhile, but he knew Minhyuk got loud and Kihyun got cranky when they missed the beginning of a movie, so Changkyun got up. He wasn’t far from the cinema hall anyway. He walked slowly, thinking about the chance encounter he’d just had himself.

“Yah Im Changkyun! You can’t walk any faster than that?”

Changkyun knew that voice. He sighed, and then started jogging.

Standing outside the building in one loose clump of light coats and t-shirts, were six young men, the guys Changkyun now referred to in his head just as his hyungs. Jooheon was juggling three buckets of popcorn and two drinks, while next to him Hyungwon stood completely empty-handed, eating popcorn from the bucket in Wonho’s hands. Kihyun was shaking the tickets at Changkyun as a message to hurry up, Shownu a big, silent presence behind him. Minhyuk was tapping away on his (new) phone, and as Changkyun reached the group, he finally looked up and said, “You’re here?”

“Yeah, I am,” Changkyun said, craning his neck to get a look at Minhyuk’s phone. “What’re you busy with?”

“Nothing,” Minhyuk said, smiling mischievously as he put away his phone. “Let’s go.”

“I can’t believe Minhyuk-hyung is dating too,” Jooheon whined. “He hasn’t even been on Earth
more than two months. And he found someone before I did!”

“It’s okay, there’s Changkyun,” Hyungwon said.

Jooheon made a face, and Changkyun shoved him, almost knocking all the stuff out of his hands. “I’ve seen your legs, they’re gross,” Jooheon said, juggling popcorn and shoving back.

“No, he means no matter how much of a dope you are, you’ll still find someone before Changkyun,” Kihyun explained patiently, while Wonho laughed. “There’s hope.”

“We should go inside,” Shownu said, before Changkyun could retaliate.

That effectively ended it. Jooheon passed the popcorn off to Minhyuk, who immediately started eating despite Jooheon’s protests. Kihyun and Shownu entered after them, sticking close together but not saying anything. And then Hyungwon and Wonho walked in, Hyungwon making fun of Wonho’s laugh, which just made him laugh even more.

Changkyun watched them go. They were all so different, all seven of them, but they somehow fit well together. He thought about how they’d actually all met and become friends, all the things that had to happen, big and small.

And Changkyun thought maybe he did believe in fate after all.

He smiled to himself, and then followed his hyungs in, yelling at them to wait up.

Chapter End Notes

I have a whole blog post on sentimental rambling, random trivia about the fic and other stuff, on my blog [here](#)
If you don’t want to read it (I know... I wrote more than 104 000 words and I *still have more to say*?) then let me just say I love you all, thank you so much for all this unexpected support!
While I'm on hiatus, you can still contact me on [Twitter](#) and [tumblr](#)
I hope to be back soon with even better writing and better sides to show.
Thank you ❤

Works inspired by this one

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!