Forget, Trust, Love

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Summary

Zen discovers [MC] cheating on him and is devastated. Just when he thinks he can never love like he did back then, you come into his life.

"Forget her. Trust me. Love yourself."
Chapter 1

It had been a few months since Zen had established a relationship with the newest member of the RFA. Their relationship may have started off very "suddenly" and progressed "too quickly", but there was no denying that Zen absolutely loved her with all his heart. That woman supported him and helped him in times of need, her kindness making her shine like those stars that the two of them watched together that one time. She was his everything, and Zen truly believed that there could be no better or happier love story than theirs after he openly admitted his feelings towards her to the press at the party.

Zen was walking around the theatre in search for his girlfriend. Since the hacker incident, out of fear for her safety and perhaps with more ulterior motives, Zen asked the party coordinator to live with him, and she had enthusiastically agreed much to his joy, and the two have almost been inseparable. Zen was at work, and being the loving girlfriend that she was, the young woman had decided to accompany the actor, and the two would head back home together, hand in hand without a single care in the world except for each other.

Unfortunately, Zen couldn't seem to find the young woman anywhere. He had finished with work just a few minutes ago, and even though the actor had texted her several times now to meet up, she still hasn't replied. An unsettling feeling rose in Zen's chest as his steps became a tad bit more frantic as he searched for the love of his life.

And that was when he heard it.

A low moan came from behind a large shelf of props in the back room. It was the only place Zen hadn't searched yet, thinking there'd be no reason for his girlfriend to be there, but nevertheless, the young man started to make his way over to check. He wasn't sure what he was expecting, but he sure as hell wasn't expecting to find his girlfriend on her knees with another man's cock deep in her mouth as she sucked and slurped on the hardened flesh like she was having the absolute time of her life.

The actor was stunned silent at the scene before him, and it seemed as though the two haven't realized he was there yet. Zen took a step back as he tried to process just what it was he was looking at. "Wh—" The actor made a strangled noise in his throat which seemed to finally attract the two's attention.

The young woman's eyes widened with pure shock, and she separated herself from the man with an audible pop, cheeks flushed and her chin glistening with drool. Zen shuddered; the sight of her like that always made him react in that fashion whenever they were alone and intimate, but this was different. Far more different. It wasn't Zen she was pleasuring, but with someone else instead, and it made him shudder with disgust instead.

"Zen!" The young woman gasped in surprise, her voice slightly hoarse from the cock she was just deepthroating, and the actor could see the fear of having been caught in her eyes. "I-I swear, this isn't what it looks like!"

Zen wanted to believe those words. Truly, he did, but what else could this scene possibly be besides from her sucking off some other guy even though she and the actor were already in a relationship? Zen felt sick. Repulsed. His stomach turned and twisted, and the actor couldn't bear to look at the
sight any longer. He hastily turned on his heel and left without a word. Everything after that was a
blur. He vaguely recalled shoving people out of the way so he could get home, muttering quick
apologies but everything else was gone from his memory, the only lingering thought being that he
was cheated on by the woman he loved.

It wasn't until Zen shut the door to his apartment that he realized he was already back home. He
glanced around and saw his girlfriend's belongings lying around with his as well, and the young
man remembered the scene he stumbled upon. He understood that lashing out would get him
nowhere, but he did so anyways. He screamed. He threw things. He cursed. He kicked. He paced.

Zen didn't care if he bothered the neighbours; he was too lost in his rage and sorrow to care. His
hands gripped at his hair, and he clawed at his shirt, almost as though he wanted to claw his own
heart out. The actor's vision was blurred as he paced around the room to expend his frustrations, but
he ended up tripping on his own two feet and falling hard onto the floor with a resounding thud. It
was an agonizing and heart-wrenching sight when the young man struggled with getting back up,
desperate sobs leaving him all the while. His arms trembled underneath his weight, and he crashed
down once more.

Zen balled his hands into fists hard enough to have his nails dig into his flesh and repeatedly
slammed the floor with his fists. Just when he thought he had just about let out all of his pain, the
scene would flash in his mind once more, and he became blinded once again. At some point, Zen
managed to make his way over to the bed, crawling pitifully as he couldn't bring himself to stand;
his haphazardly climbed on top of it, burying his face into the pillows. He bit into the fabric, as he
continued to cry and cry and cry.

When the young man's eyelids fluttered open again, he realized that it was morning by now. He
must have fallen asleep, and he slowly sat up on the bed, letting out a low groan. He felt like
complete shit, and he had no doubt that he looked as he felt. His body felt heavy, and his eyes were
red and puffy. The actor looked around the room and found it to be in the same messy state as he
had left it before crying himself to sleep.

Zen's heart sunk at the realization that his girlfriend never came back home, and he reached for his
phone. There wasn't a single missed text or call, so she didn't try contacting him either at any time
since he left her back at the theatre with that other man. Zen buried his face into his hands.
"M-Maybe it's just a misunderstanding..." he tried to reason with himself.

But no matter how hard the young man tried to think of what other reason the party coordinator
could possibly have, he came up empty-handed. She cheated on him. It was just as simple as that,
but even so, Zen wanted to know why. He was willing to listen to her reasons, and if she had a good
reason, then maybe the two of them could overcome this. That's what he truly wanted to believe.

As much as it pained Zen to go back to the place where he found his girlfriend giving head to
someone else, the actor still had work to do. He was currently on break, obviously distracted, when
the actor saw the guy that his girlfriend was with. Unable to contain his emotions, Zen walked up
to him and tried to, as calmly as he possibly could, ask what the fuck yesterday was about.

The male put his hands up in a gesture of mock surrender with a smug grin on his face. "Hey man,
if your girl's disatisfied with you, then that ain't my fault!"

It took every ounce of Zen's entire being to not punch the young man and just quietly stalked away,
seething. The day continued to drag on, and Zen still hasn't had any contact with the RFA member.
He couldn't decide if that was a good or bad thing, but it did give him some time to think about his
situation. More than enough, actually.
The actor was back home, surrounded by the mess he made when he lashed out and never bothered to clean up. He sat upon his couch, leaned back all the way as he stared blankly ahead. His fingers mindlessly tapped upon his thighs and was only brought out of his thoughts when he heard the door open. Immediately, Zen sat up and made eye contact with his girlfriend who looks painfully guilty.

"Zen..." She was the first one to speak and break the silence, and she did so in a quiet voice, afraid of how the actor might lash out at her.

"Was that the first time?" Zen asked, getting straight to the point, and the young woman flinched. She bit her lower lip and averted her gaze which was enough to answer Zen's question, and he exhaled deeply as a wry smile crept up to his lips. "...I guess not. Why?"

"I just... I wanted to try... I mean..." the party coordinator stumbled with her sentences, unable to form a complete one, so Zen decided to ask another question. An easier one, but a serious one all the same and one he needed to know.

"Am I not good enough for you...?" Zen sounded completely broken and defeated. His voice trembled a slight bit, and his eyes became glossy with threatening tears once more. The young woman kept her mouth firmly shut into a thin line, and Zen finally made his decision. "Ah, I get it. I really am good for nothing..."

At that, the young woman snapped her attention towards him. "No! That's not—"

Zen cut her off, unable to believe anything she said at this point. "Please make sure you gather all your belongings by tomorrow morning. I've contacted Seven and told him the situation, so you can stay with him until you find somewhere else to stay. I'm sorry, but I don't want you living here anymore."

The room became tense and silent, and Zen let out another shaky breath as he leaned forward to rest his elbows on his lap, burying his face into his hands. He continued, "You can still take the bed for tonight. I'll sleep on the couch. ...Or maybe I just won't sleep at all. Who knows?" The actor gave a self-deprecating laugh which just made the atmosphere even worse.

"Hyun—"

"Don't!" the actor growled with underlying rage, making the young woman flinch and take a step back. Zen spoke again, but much quieter, "...Don't call me that."

The party coordinator bowed her head, her bangs covering her face. "So...I guess that means we're over."

"Yeah..." Zen choked back a sob as he tried to hide his face even more, confirming the fact. "Yeah, we're over."

Chapter End Notes

There's an alarmingly large amount of cheating Zen fics, but we know (or at least, I would hope so) that Zen would never cheat, so what if he was the one cheated on instead? I'd love to hear your feedback.
Chapter 2

After reluctantly breaking up with the party coordinator, Zen mindlessly threw himself into his work. If he wasn't a workaholic before, he absolutely was one now. Every single second, he spent it doing something related with his work, whether it was rehearsing his lines in the early morning, practicing songs and dance numbers late into the night, or just working out to the point of exhaustion to keep his body in shape for whatever next role might come.

It wasn't healthy, everybody realized. The actor was obviously overworking himself and draining himself out both physically and mentally. He skipped meals and sleep as well so that he could focus on work. The other RFA members tried to talk to and convince him to take a break, expressing their concerns, but he couldn't bring himself to heed their advice. He needed to keep his mind distracted; otherwise, he'd fall back into the same agonizing pain of having been betrayed by the one that he loved. He would much rather expend his energy doing something productive instead of moping around, even if it wasn't good for him.

Was it his fault? Did he not pay enough attention to her? Did he not give her enough love? Was he boring in bed? Was he not good enough? Was he only good for his looks? ...No, even his looks meant nothing if she still cheated on him. Zen had nothing going for him. If he couldn't keep his girlfriend interested in him, then maybe it was for the best. Maybe this was just how things were supposed to be. The actor sighed, running his fingers through his messy hair.

Zen still tried to maintain a proper appearance when going out in public since appearances mattered with his occupation, but in the privacy of his home, he just...left things. Merely left things as they were, not caring. It wasn't like he had anybody to try impressing asides from himself, but even then, what was the point? He even stopped taking so many selfies, reducing them to maybe only just about one per day instead of the usual three-plus. The young man slowly brought his gaze upwards to stare at his reflection in the mirror before him.

Even he admitted to himself how just horrible he looked. Zen was one of those people who thought that how you felt inside reflected your outer appearance, and right now, he was at his lowest. The actor let out a deep groan at how broken he looked, and he forced himself to get up, changing into something more presentable and fixing himself up enough to go outside. Maybe a stroll outside would do him some good.

The actor winced when he stepped outside his apartment. Was the sun always this bright? Zen took a moment to have his eyes adjust to the light before taking slow and dragged out steps to nowhere in particular. Zen had absolutely no idea where he was going or where his legs were taking him, but didn't matter to him. All he knew was that he needed to keep moving forward. Left leg forward. Right leg forward. Left leg forward...

Zen blinked, his vision suddenly going blurry. He was seeing double, and he was starting to feel incredibly dizzy. The actor brought up a hand to his head, hoping to get rid of the throbbing sensation while trying to steady his wavering feet at the same time. He felt so heavy; the young man debated on whether or not he should sit down and rest for a bit.

Suddenly, the ground seemed to be coming right at him, and he fell with a hard thud, eyelids closing themselves shut as a sweet scent filled his nose before completely blacking out.

It's the sound of turning pages that Zen wakes up to. For a moment, it takes him a while to open his eyes, finding them to still feel rather weighted. Eventually, his eyelids flutter open with some
difficulty, and he's greeted by the sight of a familiar-looking white ceiling. Zen had been in the hospital several times before in his life when he was going through that difficult time, so he immediately knows where he is just by the sounds and smell alone. The sound of rustling paper is new though, so the actor turns his head to the side to look at the source.

He's confused at first when his eyes lay upon your form. You're sitting on a chair beside the bed, your attention focused on the novel you were holding as a small smile graces your lips with your eyes scanning through the words on the pages. Somehow, the light falls on you in all the right ways that makes it seem like you're glowing in the most beautiful light. You're not wearing a uniform, so Zen knows you're not part of the hospital staff, so then who are you and why are you there? Zen has absolutely no idea who you are.

Almost as though sensing his gaze, your eyes flicker over to him, and your lips part in surprise. "Oh, you're awake!" You sound excited and relieved, and this just throws the young man into further confusion.

"What...?"

Seeing his lost expression, you mark the page you were on in your novel and set it down before turning your attention back to the male to explain. "You passed out in the middle of the street in front of my shop. Honestly gave me quite the scare there."

"Sorry..." Zen mumbles out, feeling the need to apologize for troubling someone like that.

You gently shake your head and offer him a reassuring smile. "It's okay, please don't worry about it. I'm just glad you're alright. The doctor says that you've just been overworked, and you should be fine. I'll tell them right now that you're awake so they can fill you in on the details and hear for yourself."

"Oh, um... Okay," Zen responds lamely, still trying to process what was going on. You maintain your smile as you get up and leave the room to retrieve one of the staff and inform them about their now woken patient.

Zen's eyes watch your retreating figure, and for a moment, he sees his ex-girlfriend flash into his vision, but it quickly disappears when he blinks. The young man furrows his brows and bites his lower lip as he brings his arms to rest over his eyes. He still isn't over her. No matter how hard he tries, he still can't move on from the fact that they're no longer a couple because she cheated on him, and it's painful. Excruciatingly painful. He gave his heart to her, and she took it and nurtured it before shattering it into a million tiny pieces when she betrayed him.

Eventually, a new man comes into the room, and Zen assumes him to be the doctor. He asks the typical questions of how he feels and explains that the actor was just straining himself. The doctor tells the actor to take better care of himself and recommends some healthy habits for him to do. Just as the doctor is about to leave to tend to the other patients, Zen hesitantly speaks up.

"Um, about the woman who was here..." Zen starts but soon trails off, not knowing just what it was he wanted to ask, but his curiosity was piqued.

"Ah, her? She was worried about you and decided to stay until you woke up. She left just now though, saying that she needed to tend back to her shop since you're awake now."

Zen nods, still uncertain, and the doctor leaves him alone with his thoughts. The young man glances around when his eyes land upon a novel on his bed. It's the novel you were reading just before; you must have momentarily forgotten about it when you left in your haste. Zen picks up the
object, scanning over the title, and his eyes widen the slightest bit. It's a title he's familiar with; he played a role in the musical adaptation of the novel before about a couple of years ago.

If memory served him well, it was a love story between the sun and the moon. The sun was a beautiful and radiant woman while the moon was a silent man who watched over the stars. The moon loved the sun but could never meet with her unless during dawn or dusk. One day, a human fell in love with the sun and kidnapped her, throwing the world into a long-lasting night. The moon wept for his lost love, flooding many lands with his tears. It was a sad story with no real happy ending, but it left quite an impact on the actor.

It was one of his most favourite musicals to have ever had the chance to participate in. The emotions of all the characters and their interactions with each other had him completely captivated. The young man's expression softens when he remembers all the hard work he put into that particular production and how successful it was. Zen's hands trail over the cover before deciding to open the novel to read through some of it for nostalgia's sake when his eyes land upon a personal hand-written message on the first page.

"To my lovely sun, [Name]"

Zen closes the book immediately after, guilt rising in his chest. Even though it wasn't intentional, and he didn't do anything bad, he feels as though he peered into somebody's personal and private life without permission. The actor silently mouths the name that was written inside, finding it to be pleasant to say, and assumes that it belongs to you. Zen continues to stare at the novel before bringing his attention over to the chair where you were sitting when he first woke up.

"I should probably return this..." the young man thinks idly to himself.

Once Zen is finally out of the hospital, his first mission, aside from reassuring his friends and co-workers that he was fine now, is to find you so that he can return your novel. Unfortunately, Zen has no idea about anything about you aside from your name, assuming that the name written inside is even actually yours.

The actor walks around at a slow pace, book in hand as he looks around the streets. He decided to try retracing his steps from before he passed out, hoping it can give him some kind of clue. You told him that he passed out in front of your shop, so he tries to remember just where it was he blacked out. Just then, he passes by a familiar sweet scent, and the young man stops in his tracks to look for the source.

It's a flower shop, Zen realizes. The sweet scent was from the flowers on display. The young man takes a moment to admire the colours and scents of the various plants before opening the door to the shop and stepping inside. It's a small shop, but it has a very comfy and welcoming feel that makes him feel at peace.

"Welcome!" Zen hears a familiar voice greet him, and you come out from behind the counter. When you lock eyes with him, you seem surprised for a moment. "Oh, hello!"

"Hi," Zen offers a small and friendly smile, lifting his free hand to give a short and somewhat awkward wave in greeting.

"How may I help you?" You ask, a warm and vibrant expression on your face as you approach him.

Zen stretches out his hand to give you your book. "Oh, uh, actually, I'm just here to return this."
Your eyes widen, and you quickly take the novel from his hand, hugging the object tightly to your chest. In all honesty, Zen feels like he did a good job when he sees how overjoyed you look. You bring your attention back to the actor and beam at him. "Thank you so much, Zen! I truly appreciate you returning this to me!"

Zen seems taken aback that you know him since he never really introduced himself to you before. When you see his reaction, you can't help but giggle and explain, "I know who you are. I've been to your shows before, and I'm a really big fan. Actually... the musical adaptation of this novel was the first one I saw you perform in, and you completely captivated my heart!" Suddenly, you bring up a hand to your face and blush. "Oh, um, sorry. I'm being weird, aren't I?"

The actor chuckles at you and shakes his head. "Not at all. It's always a pleasure to meet one of my fans."

You nod your head before asking, "Will you be participating in any new musicals soon? I've been dying to see you perform again!"

"Um, yeah," Zen answers, sounding uncertain as he slowly starts to avert his gaze, his hand gingerly rubbing the back of his neck. Truth be told, he hasn't been doing well with his rehearsals ever since his break-up with the newest RFA member. Despite all the time and effort he put into his work, it just wasn't working out which only made him even more upset.

"I look forward to it!" you beam in response, and Zen falters for a second and is stunned silent before his expression softens when he remembers one of the reasons why he chose his job. If he can make his fans such as yourself smile like that, then Zen feels like maybe he can actually be good at something. The young man decides right then and there to put more effort—healthy effort, this time—into his work. If not for himself, then at least to provide entertainment for his fans like you that give him support no matter what he goes through.

"I should get going," Zen says, finding newfound resolve in his work. That's right; who needs love and relationships when you have fans to love and care for like they do for him?

You nod in understanding. "Okay. Thanks for returning my book, and take care this time!"

"Will do. I'll see you later." Zen smiles warmly, completely unaware of the hidden promise in his words when he leaves in a good mood, much to his surprise. Meeting new fans always seems to brighten his day, and meeting you was no different. It reminds him that what he does for a living is not for naught. He provides entertainment and temporary escape for those who watch him, and for now, that is more than enough to help motivate Zen to move forward from his heartache, even if only just a little.
Chapter 3

Much to everybody's relief, as soon as Zen is back up and healthy, he starts to change his previous work habits to how they were prior to his breakup. The actor takes breaks when needed, and he's more or less back to actually eating things. There are still times when the young man lacks the appetite, but he makes sure to always eat at least something small just so that he'll have the energy to get through the day. Even his rehearsals have been going much better since he started to pick himself back up. As much as possible, Zen doesn't want to be an inconvenience to anyone; he feels a need to prove to people that he's fine and capable of getting through this alone.

"You've really improved!" A co-worker of Zen's laughs as he clasps a hand on the young man's shoulder during one of their breaks. "Is it 'cuz you found a new girl?" He continues with a teasing voice.

By now, everybody already knows about Zen's breakup with the party coordinator. Since everybody knew about their relationship when he first announced it to the press at the party, Zen felt the need to announce once more that their relationship was now over. He didn't want any misunderstandings nor to have people bring it up when he so desperately wants to forget. Of course, Zen made sure to keep the reason for their breakup private, just so that the party coordinator wouldn't get attacked by others. Even if she did cheat on him, Zen doesn't think she deserves such ill and petty treatment.

Zen offers a wry smile to his co-worker, uncomfortably shrugging off his hand. It's still a touchy subject to him. "It's not like that."

The other male smiles reassuringly, giving Zen another firm pat. "Well, I'm sure you'll find someone soon."

At that, the actor remains quiet. He highly doubts he would ever find someone again. The newest member of the RFA was special to him and made him feel things he's never felt for a very long time. The intensity and attraction he felt towards the young woman was something beautiful and almost surreal. That, and because Zen was afraid. Even if he does learn to love someone once more, how can he be certain that he won't be cheated on again? How can he be certain that he can trust whoever he gives his heart to next time, if there will be such a chance?

Zen can't fall asleep. Some nights are fine and bearable, but other nights, the actor's reminded of the scene of his ex-girlfriend wrapped around another man, and suddenly, he can't seem to breathe. His chest throbs viciously and stinging tears form in the corner of his eyes. Sometimes, Zen is able to cry himself to sleep, but on most occasions, the truth of betrayal haunts him, leaving the young man to stare at the ceiling with blurred vision for most of the night as he wonders what he did wrong to have his ex-girlfriend do such a thing.

The actor exhales shakily as he sits up from his bed. He rests in that position to gather his thoughts for a moment before swinging his legs over and retrieving his various boxes of fan letters. Zen opens the lights and slowly starts reading through them one by one. It helps him, he thinks. The words of praise and adoration for him from his fans help remind him that his acting evokes emotions from people and that he's good at something. It's a reminder that he needs every now and then.

"Oh..." Zen makes a small sound of surprise when his eyes come across a familiar name in his fan letters.
A smile makes its way onto his lips as he opens the fan letter you sent him once, and his hand shoots up to his mouth to muffle his laugh. Your writing wasn't the neatest he's seen, but it was cute and endearing in its own way and seemed like it fit you well. The young man traces the ink with his fingers, and a pleasant scent comes from the paper. It smells just like fresh flowers, even after being stuffed with all these other letters, or maybe that's just his imagination as he absentmindedly recalls your face.

Zen then realizes that the letter is dated from quite some time ago. Two years, to be exact, and it fills Zen's heart with joy to know that you're still his fan from then up to today. The young man folds up the letter, setting it aside on his desk while he puts everything else back in the box and its proper place. It's awfully late, and he needs to get up early tomorrow morning, so he decides to end off his night after having read your letter, his heart feeling a tad bit lighter.

The next morning, when Zen peeks into his fridge, he sees that he's running low on beer. While he isn't much of a heavy drinker, it's still a comforting beverage for him all the same, and he still rather needs the comfort of its bitter taste on his tongue. So, after his work is done and manages to get some free time in the evening, the young man decides to do some quick shopping. Zen is just about to retrieve a pack of his favourite brand of drinks when he feels something collide with his leg.

"Ah!"

Someone, he corrects himself when he hears the following small exclamation. The actor glances down and sees a little girl sitting on the floor after having bumped into him. Zen is about to kneel down and help her up when the sound of worried footsteps fills his ears.

"Haneul! What did I tell you about running off on your own? Are you okay?" Zen blinks in surprise as you came into his vision and kneel down to help the young girl up. You then turn your attention upwards to apologize on the child's behalf. "Oh gosh, I'm so sorry—...Zen?"

The actor offers you a friendly smile and small wave of his hand in greeting while you straighten yourself up, keeping your hand clasped around the little girl's to avoid accidentally losing her again. While he is surprised to have bumped into like this again, it isn't unpleasant. "Hi," Zen says before turning his attention back to the small child. "Is she your daughter?"

"What? Oh, no!" you answer with a flustered expression, and Zen doesn't realize himself relaxing his shoulders at your response. "I'm just babysitting for a friend," you explain while offering a nervous laugh, scratching at your warmed cheeks.

"Right, of course..." Zen replies lamely as he rubs the back of his neck. He doesn't even know why he asked that question in the first place. In an effort to clear the awkwardness in the air, the young man clears his throat and changes the subject. "Um, so, you know, the tickets for the new musical I'm performing in will be coming out soon..."

Your expression lights up at his words, and you offer a small jump of excitement. "I know! I've been waiting so long for them. I'm super excited to see you perform!"

Zen's expression softens when he sees the gleam in your eyes, ignoring the way his cheeks seem to flush the slightest bit at your eagerness to see him perform specifically. He becomes curious and asks, "Do you like musicals?"

You tilt your head to the side, contemplating the question. "I like dramas in general," you answer him slowly. "Not just musicals. I dunno; I just think it's really cool how people work together to make all stories come to life. ...Though I do admit I'm a bit more biased towards musicals." You
end off your small rambling of an explanation with a soft and shy giggle which prompts Zen's cheeks to unknowingly warm up even more.

The young man opens his lips to respond, but your attention is drawn towards your hand being tugged by the girl you were babysitting. "Auntieeee, let's goooool!" she whines. You laugh at the child, squeezing her hand and flashing her an apologetic smile before turning your attention back towards Zen.

"I'm sorry, but I need to get going."

Zen nods in understanding, but not quite knowing why he feels so disappointed that your time together is cut off short. "Oh, yeah, of course. Sorry for keeping you."

You offer the young man a quick farewell before you resume your shopping with the young girl in tow. Zen catches himself staring at your retreating figure before he goes back to what he was previously doing, tucking away the image of your excited smile into the recesses of his mind.
Chapter 4

Zen takes a few deep breaths, reaching for his phone in his bag and opening it up to that one photograph that V had taken of a flower resting on what seemed to be a cliff. The actor isn't sure why, but he finds the photo to be reassuring, and it always calms his nerves before a performance. It's the first production that Zen will be performing in since his breakup. There were a lot of shaky rehearsals, but the young man managed to get through them okay in the end. He can only hope he'll be able to perform ten times better for the actual thing.

"It's showtime."

The curtains go up, and Zen is no longer Zen; he is the character he was assigned to play. The actor moves around the stage with the appropriate amount of vigor to extract the right emotions from the audience for the scenes. The audience's eyes are all on him, and from the corner of his eyes, Zen sees your familiar face amongst all the other audience members. You made it to his show after all; somewhere in the back of his mind, the young man didn't think you would actually show up, but yet here you were. Watching him. Admiring him and his skills.

It's obvious that you're completely captivated by him and his performance, leaning forward while on the edge of your seat, expression shifting appropriately throughout the tones of the scenes. Seeing that, it fills Zen with a sense of...something. Zen doesn't know what to call it exactly, but it isn't unpleasant. On the contrary, it strengthens his determination to give the best performance ever, and his heart swells along with the audience.

When the performance ends and it's time to bow, the audience's loud cheers ring throughout the theatre. Zen picks out your face once more, and when he sees the look of pure adoration and awe on your face, his lips split into a wide and proud grin. The curtains close once more, and the theatre is filled with excited chatter from everyone as they discuss their thoughts on the show. You decide to stay back in your seat for a bit to avoid the large crowd as they make their exit, and you take that moment to let the performance sink in.

The story was beautiful, the effects were well-done, the music was astounding, and the acting... You placed your hands on your cheeks and gave a small swoon as you recall all of the actors' efforts. The acting was absolutely breathtaking. The way the actors just pulled you into the story and made you so attached to the characters and to see where everything would go left you breathless.

You reach into your pocket to pull out your phone and check through Tripter to see what people were talking about and possibly join in the conversations. As expected of Zen's Tripter bot, it was never a disappointment with the content they posted. Looking up from your phone, you realize that most of the audience has gone by now, and you take that as your cue to leave as well.

You step out of the theatre and glance around, your shoulders sagging when you can't find your friend who offered you a ride, even though you told them what time the show would end. You scroll through your contacts and call your friend to ask where they were.

"I'm sorry! I took a nap and slept past the alarm; I'm leaving the house right now!"

You furrow your brows. If your ride was just leaving the house, then it would take about twenty minutes to get to the theatre, not taking into account the traffic. Well, despite wanting to get home as soon as possible, you decide to just appreciate the night sky above you and the comforting sense it brought. You feel somebody tap your shoulder, and when you turn around, your hand shoots up
to cover your mouth in an attempt to muffle your scream of pleasant surprise.

Zen laughs warmly at your reaction, tilting his head to the side and clasping his hands behind his back. "Hi," he greets you casually with a charming smile.

"Your performance was so good!" you blurt out excitedly before gasping. "Oh, I mean, hi! Sorry, I'm being weird again—"

The actor shakes his head, telling you that it was fine. "I'm glad you liked it," he comments before asking, "Are you waiting for someone?"

You nod, shifting your weight to one foot as you sigh, "Yeah. My friend's running a bit late."

"Allow me to stay with you," Zen offers with another dazzling smile and shoots you a playful wink. "It's dangerous for a pretty lady such as yourself to be alone this late."

You feel your cheeks warm up. The fact that somebody you admired and as good-looking as Zen would call you pretty made your heart flutter. You tuck a lock of hair behind your ear and bring your gaze down bashfully. "Thank you. You're very sweet..."

For a moment, Zen brings his hand to cup your chin so that you would look at him instead of the ground, but he quickly catches himself and retracts his hand before you can realize. Instead, he clears his throat which is more than enough to garner your attention. The actor gives you a friendly smile which you mirror.

"Do you usually go to these performances by yourself?" Zen asks, hoping to get to know a bit more about you.

You hum in response. "None of my friends are quite as invested in musicals and drama as I am."

"You don't bring dates or anything like that?" Zen is curious before he realizes that the question might be too personal. You don't seem to mind it though and answer him truthfully.

"I'm single. I'm not really looking for any dates right now."

Zen nods slowly and quietly in response. He isn't too sure how he feels about that piece of information, and a part of him wants to ask why, but he knows that it isn't quite appropriate, especially since the two of you aren't even friends. You were just people who happened to meet by coincidence. Sure, you were the actor's fan, but that was about it as to how far your relationship with him went. There isn't any closeness or familiarity aside from that, and somehow, that makes the actor feel lonely. Surely, it should be okay for him to be friends with a fan, right?

"What's your name?" Zen suddenly blurts out before he can even think to stop the words. You look up at the actor curiously, and he laughs nervously before explaining, "I mean, I just realized I never asked for your name, even though you helped me out that one time..."

You blink in confusion before making a sound of realization, making both you and Zen jump slightly from surprise. You smile warmly at him and introduce yourself, your name matching the one that was written on the book that the actor returned to you. Zen quietly repeats your name to himself before offering you a wide and toothy grin.

"It's nice to meet you!" Zen extends a hand out to you to make the introduction official.

You hesitate the slightest bit, as though you can't believe you get to shake hands with someone you look up to, but then you remember that Zen is just as human as you. He was being friendly, so it
should only be natural that you be friendly too. You take his hand and note how warm it is. "It's nice to meet you too..."

From the corner of your eyes, you see your friend's car, and you pull away. You gesture towards the vehicle with a simple nod of your head. "There's my ride, so I'll be going now. Goodbye!"

Zen nods reluctantly and offers a quick farewell. "Goodbye, and good night."

You leave the actor with a delighted giggle and walk towards the car with a bounce in your steps. The entire time, the actor keeps his eyes on you until you're gone before he turns on his heel to get ready to leave for his apartment as well. He repeats your name underneath his breath, enjoying the sound of it. It's a nice name, he thinks, and he hopes it's one whose owner he'll be seeing more often.
The clean air feels great as Zen jogs around the neighbourhood. The scenery is a nice change of pace from when he used to stay locked in his apartment poring over scripts, and it just feels good overall to get his blood pumping. Jogging helps clear the actor's mind. He realizes he's been doing it much more often ever since he broke up with his ex-girlfriend, so even though it does help keep troubling thoughts at bay, the young man has to remind himself not to overdo it like last time.

Zen slows down to a stop at a secluded area to take a short breather. The actor places his hands on his knees and pants for breath when he realizes that his shoelaces have come undone. The young man sighs to himself as he bends down on one knee to fix the laces. As soon as he's done, Zen moves to get up when he feels his hair being fiercely pulled back.

The actor cries out from surprise as his hand immediately shoots up to his mouth to hide the delighted moan that comes after it. His cheeks flush heavily at how sensitive he is with his hair before turning around to look at just what or who it is that pulled on his locks. Zen's eyes widen the slightest bit when he sees a familiar childish face peering up at him with big, round eyes. In the little girl's hand is a fistful of the actor's hair.

"Hey there cutie," Zen tries to be friendly with his greeting, making sure to keep on kneeling so that he's eye-level with her. He doesn't want to look intimidating or imposing by standing at full-height and towering over her. Plus it was easier to talk to the little girl this way. "You're...Haneul, right?" Zen vaguely recalls his encounter with you at the store; he's fairly certain that the name you called the girl by was Haneul, if memory serves him well.

The child gives a big nod before pointing at the actor's face, prompting him to blink in surprise and confusion. "You're the guy on Auntie's wall!" Haneul exclaimed.

Zen's expression shifts to one of further confusion before asking for clarification. "By 'Auntie'...do you mean [Name]?

Haneul nods again, enthusiastic. "She has biiiig pictures of you in her room," the little girl explains as she stretches her arms wide as though to emphasize her point. Zen is able to quickly figure out that she must be talking about posters of him, and the fact that you have posters of the actor hanging on your wall makes him feel flattered. Haneul then continued, "Are you famous?"

The actor gives a sheepish smile as he scratches the back of his head. "Hmm...I guess? Kind of...?"

At that, the child gasps dramatically, taking a step back and goes to cover her mouth with both of her little hands. She then starts jumping up and down excitedly, her hair bouncing along her shoulders. "Whooaaa! Auntie knows a famous person!"

Zen laughs at Haneul's reaction, finding it to be rather cute. But then there's something else that bothers him. The young man's expression changes to one of concern, and when Haneul sees this, she stops jumping and instead folds her hands neatly in front of her and bows her head. It seems as though she already knows what the actor is going to ask her. "What are you doing out here? Are your parents or Auntie with you?"

Haneul shakes her head, still keeping her eyes locked on the ground. She remains silent for a moment before answering the young man's question. "...I had a fight with mommy, so I ran away, but..."
"But...?" Zen gently urges the child to continue.

Haneul sniffs, wiping at her eyes with the back of her hand. "But then a dog chased me, and now I don't know how to go back home!"

Zen's expression softens, figuring that Haneul only ran away on impulse and meant to come back home later but ended up getting lost before she could do so. The little girl stubbornly stands her ground and tries to hold back her tears. She must have seen a familiar face (more like hair), and just quickly latched onto that person. Zen is thankful that it was him; had it been someone else, then maybe things would have gone differently.

"Haneul," Zen gently calls her name, prompting the young child to look up at him. "How about I take you to Auntie?" the actor suggests. It probably wasn't the best idea to bring the child to her house directly and instead just go to the police station to let them handle it, but when Zen thinks about it, your flower shop is much closer and along the way to the police station anyways, so he decided to take the child to you.

The little girl nods silently after a moment of thought, and Zen lets out a small sigh of relief. It will be much easier on him if Haneul isn't resisting, after all. The actor stands up and extends a hand for the little girl to take; however, instead of taking his hand, Haneul just stares up at his tall figure in wonder. Zen cocks his head to the side, curious. "What's wrong?"

Haneul reaches out both of her arms towards the actor and stands on her tiptoes. "Piggyback ride! Piggyback ride!"

Zen stares at the child who looks back at him expectantly, still reaching for him. Eventually, he caves in to that innocent and hopeful expression and gives a defeated sigh. "Promise you won't pull on my hair?"

"I promise!" Haneul exclaims.

Slowly, the young man kneels back down in front of the girl. Haneul climbs on top of him, and once she's nestled comfortably, hands holding the actor's shirt by the shoulders, Zen straightens himself up, making sure to support the young child so that she didn't accidentally fall. The actor hears an exhaled breath of wonder. "So high!" Haneul giggles to herself and buries her face in Zen's hair as he starts heading towards your shop and converses with the little girl.

When the actor finally arrives at his destination, you greet him with a worried expression which flickers over to the young girl perched on the actor's back. Instantly, your eyes light up, a gasp leaving your lips as you run towards the pair. "Haneul! Oh thank god, your mother called me, and we were so worried!" It almost looks like you're about to burst into tears. You turn your attention towards Zen. "Thank you for bringing her here; I'm sorry, but could you please continue to watch over her while I call her mother?"

You're already reaching for your cell phone by the time the actor nods, and you quickly excuse yourself to make the call. While Zen waits, he decides to glance through the different flowers while still carrying Haneul. From the corner of his eyes, he sees her point to something, and the young man's eyes follow to where she's pointing. "Those are called roses," the little girl speaks as though she's teaching him something new. "Auntie says they represent love."

Hearing how proud and smug she sounds at knowing something, Zen pretends to be enlightened. "Wow, really? You're so smart!"

A giggle bubbles out of Haneul's chest just as you approach the two, having finished with your
call. "Thank you so much. Haneul, your mother will be here soon."

Zen nods. "Then, if everything's resolved now, I'll get going."

"Yes," you offer a tired sigh, and Zen flashes you a sympathetic smile. "Once again, thank you so much..."

Zen crouches down, and Haneul reluctantly climbs off the actor's broad back; however, just as the young man is about to stand up, the child tugs hard on his hair once more to stop him. This time, Zen isn't fast enough with his response, and a low moan that sounds more pleasured than pained slips past his lips. Immediately, his hand slaps over his mouth as his entire face flushes, and his eyes dart over to your expression, hoping you didn't catch the embarrassing sound he just made.

You heard. Oh, you definitely heard. Your eyes widen by a fraction, and your cheeks are dusted a slight pink. Zen is about to speak to explain himself but is interrupted by a stubborn whine from Haneul. "Noooo!

Seeing the discomfort (and absolute embarrassment) from Zen, you immediately go to the little girl's side. "Haneul! Let go!"

"No, no, no! I wanna stay with big brother Zenny longer!"

At that, you scrunch your face, muttering to yourself. "How come he's 'big brother' while I'm 'Auntie' and not 'big sister' instead...?" Zen finds that small comment of yours amusing and smiles to himself but quickly changes it to one of seriousness when you direct your attention towards him. "I'm so sorry, but..."

"I have time to spare," Zen answers your unspoken request before speaking to the tantrum-throwing girl. "Haneul, I'll stay with you a bit longer, so could you please let go of my hair?" Hearing that, the little girl reluctantly lets go, and Zen breathes out a sigh of relief. He looks at you with an intense blush on his cheeks and hesitantly asks, "Um, about what you, uh...heard..."

You smile sweetly and innocently tilt your head to the side. "Hm? I didn't hear anything?" Zen flashes you an appreciative smile and drops the subject to save himself from any further embarrassment. You then turn to face Haneul. "Sweetie, can you wait here for your mommy?"

"Okay..." the child answers quietly, sulking as she mechanically retrieves a chair in a corner of the shop and sits on it. Zen follows after her, kneeling down to keep her company before you offer him another chair to sit on. He thanks you before you nod, moving to go back to doing your business. The young man can't help but watch for a bit. When he catches himself staring, he decides to look at the little girl in front of him.

"So what did you and your mommy fight about?" The question leaves him before realizing that it might have been too personal to ask. "If you don't mind," he quickly adds.

"Mommy's always busy with work and never pays attention to me," Haneul explains grumpily with pursed lips as she swings her legs. "A lot of times, I have to stay here with Auntie. ...Mommy doesn't love me..."

Hearing the crack in the child's voice, Zen starts to internally panic. He has no idea how to deal with crying children; however, before Haneul can even so much as let out a sob, a sunflower peeks in between the two's vision. Both Zen and Haneul turn to look at you, and you give a gentle smile. "Look Haneul, it's a sunflower, your favourite! It's for you."

"Really...?" Haneul asks as she accepts the single flower, and you nod.
"Mm-hmm! You have to give it a home like how the sky gives the sun a home," you speak softly and carefully, your expression shifting to one of determination to get your message across to the little girl. "Haneul, you are your mother's sky. She works tirelessly so that the both of you can live peacefully and happily."

The wording of your sentence doesn't escape Zen's notice. "Both?" the young man thinks idly to himself. "Is the father not in the picture?"

"Your mother loves you, Haneul. She loves you very, very much. You know that, right?" You continue, wanting to make sure that there are no misunderstandings between Haneul and her mother, both of whom you're quite fond of and even consider family. The little girl nods, and you smile. "How much does your mommy love you? Can you show me and big brother Zenny?"

Zen jumps the slightest bit in his seat when he hears you call him "Zenny", and he bites his cheek. You don't seem to notice this strange behaviour of his though, too distracted with watching Haneul as she stretches her arms wide. "Mommy loves me thiiiiis much," the child answers your question.

Both you and Zen laugh at the same time at her adorable nature, and you wrap the little girl up into a tight hug. "Yes, exactly. She loves you that much and more."

After that, Zen continues to keep Haneul company while you busy yourself with the shop. At some point, Haneul's mother comes in looking frazzled and out of breath before locking eyes with her daughter. The woman thanks both you and the actor repeatedly before taking Haneul by the hands and bringing her home.

Once everything calms down, you let out a sigh of relief before bringing your gaze to Zen. "I know I've said it a lot already, but thank you."

"It was nothing. I'm just glad that everything turned out well," Zen smiles.

"I would love to repay you," you offer, and Zen immediately shakes his head.

"No, it's fine," he answers firmly. It would be a bad idea, the actor thinks, due to how he still hasn't gotten over his ex-girlfriend. He understands that it isn't like you're asking for a date, but the thought of possibly getting close to another woman terrifies him. He's already caught himself staring and reaching for you at times; he really shouldn't.

It's true that Zen was the one that ended the relationship, but he can't deny the strong feelings he felt and still lingered for the young woman. He just doesn't think it would be "right" to either of you. That...and because he's afraid. He's afraid of giving his heart to somebody else once more only to have them break his trust. Zen doesn't think he can handle something like that again. He's already invested too much...

The disappointment is evident on your features, not wanting to insist and perhaps give the young man the space that he possibly needs. As his fan, you're already aware of how he announced the end of his relationship just about a month or so ago. You figure that maybe he's still trying to recover from that, and you don't want to intrude in his life, but even so, you can't stop yourself from feeling like this; whatever 'this' is supposed to be, exactly.

Seeing the troubled expression on your face, the actor reaches out to cup your cheek but quickly changes his mind at the last second and instead clasps his hand on your shoulder. You look up at him, and he flashes you a reassuring smile. "Thank you for the offer, but you don't need to repay me."
Unable to stop yourself, you accidentally blurt out, "Then, would you like to go on a date with me instead?"
Zen stares at you wide-eyed, and he slowly retracts his hand that was on your shoulder. The expression on his face is almost enough to make you want to look away, but you force yourself to keep his gaze, your heart hammering against your chest. You didn't mean to ask that question; it just kind of slipped out by accident. Since it's now out in the open though, you might as well stick with it.

"I thought you said you weren't looking to date anyone," the actor speaks carefully, avoiding on answering your question for the time being.

You nod slowly. "Yes, that's true. Allow me to rephrase my question: would you like to spend some time with me? Just the two of us?"

"That sounds like a date."

"It doesn't have to be," you answer stubbornly. You don't know why you're so adamant about this. "Two people can perfectly spend time alone together with no romantic feelings involved."

Zen sighs quietly, running a hand through his hair before allowing the locks to fall once more and frame his face. He isn't sure if he's ready to spend time with someone alone, whether with romantic feelings attached or not. "Why...did you call it a date the first time?"

"I-I panicked," you stutter out as you start to twiddle your fingers and bring your gaze down. Even you don't know yourself why you initially called it a date. "It's just... I really want to...spend some time with you..."

The actor stares at you, hesitating. He shifts his weight onto one foot before letting out another soft sigh. "I'm not...really sure if I'm ready to go back to dating, but I wouldn't mind getting to know you more as a...friend?" Zen winces slightly at how his confidence wavers near the end, making his words seem more like an uncertain question rather than a statement.

Your head snaps up immediately, your eyes gleaming with joy as you clap your hands together. "Yes! I'm fine with that!"

"Okay..." Zen nods slowly. "Then, when are you free?"

"Hm...I could probably close up shop for a day this Sunday as that's when it's the least busy," you answer after a bit of thought.

With another curt nod and finalizing details of your little "getting-to-know-each-other" meet up, Zen goes on his way. In truth, the actor can't help but feel conflicted and wonder if he made the right choice. There's no denying that you were like a breath of fresh air towards the young man, your kindness and support to him—though technically still just a stranger even though you were his fan—helping gently ease him back to a comfortable lifestyle. It...kind of reminds him of his ex-girlfriend before he discovered her cheating on him.

Zen lets out a frustrated groan and shakes his head. Maybe a distraction would help him. As soon as the actor gets home, he finds himself reading through the various fan letters he received once more, but in the end, yours is the last one he reads for the day, finding it to be the most comforting.

By the time Sunday comes around, Zen is feeling...nervous? Anxious? He has no reason to since
it's just a simple get-together as friends(? Acquaintances?), but still... The actor takes a deep breath to settle his thoughts, his hand running through his hair for the umpteenth time that afternoon. It isn't really his intention, but the young man had ends up dressing up just a bit more than something casual.

He ditches his usual white jacket and black turtleneck, instead opting to wear a nice dress-shirt with an open black blazer in addition to some comfortable dark jeans. The actor neatly combs and ties up his hair, all the while internally debating as to whether or not he should by some roses for you. Zen can't help but laugh at himself. "She owns a flower shop..." He decides against it. Then, almost as though it's more of an afterthought, the young man quickly adds, "Besides, it's not like it's a date."

As promised and planned, the two of you meet up at your shop. It looks like Zen isn't the only one who ended up trying a bit harder than usual to look nice. You decided upon a simple sundress of your favourite colour and accessorizing a bit with some subtle bracelets and necklace. Warmth rises to Zen's cheeks when he realizes that his eyes are scanning over your exposed skin, and he forces himself to look straight-on into your eyes to distract himself, but only finds himself blushing even more.

"So, where are we going?" He asks, hoping to just get things moving already so that his eyes won't wander again.

You smile warmly. "I thought a nice stroll through the park as we talk about ourselves would be nice. What do you think?"

Zen nods in agreement. "Yeah, that sounds good."

The two of you head on your way, awkwardness lingering in the air as the two of you fumble to match each other's pace. You can't remember who exactly started talking first, but eventually, the two of you are able to engage in an idle conversation, offering small pieces of information about yourself like your favourite food, hobbies, and some fond memories you don't mind sharing. Unknowingly, Zen finds himself paying close attention to you, noting small habits. For example, he notices how you would avoid stepping on cracks on the sidewalk but with a spring in your steps like it was a game you set up for yourself. He also notices how you would press the pads of your fingers together whenever you're deep in thought. It never really occurred to the male that he was paying that much attention to you.

At some point, the two of you decide to take a break at a small, secluded bridge. There's a moment of silence between you two before Zen breaks it by asking a question. "Why did you say you weren't looking to date anyone, if you don't mind me asking?"

You press your lips together in a line, hesitating. In truth, you feel like your reason for it is silly, but it doesn't seem like Zen would be one to judge you on it, so you decide to answer him. "Honestly, because I'm scared. Haneul's father left her mother as soon as he found out she was pregnant. It left her devastated, and seeing that...terrified me. Even if it didn't happen to me personally, I've seen it happen to somebody I hold dear. What if I invest so much of my time, effort, and emotions into someone, only to have them leave me in the end?"

"I would never let that happen," Zen answers almost immediately and so strongly that it surprises the both of you. You look at him, curious, and the actor averts his gaze, his hand moving to rub the back of his neck. "I mean, you could always rely on me if...you, um... Never mind. I'm sorry. I don't know where I was going with that."
Even though the words never quite make it out properly, you can still make out the sentiment behind it, and you feel touched. A smile makes its way onto your lips and simple words of gratitude tumble out. "Thank you..." Talking about love though, you're reminded of the actor's own situation, and so you decide to voice your thoughts. "I...I'm sorry to hear about your breakup. The two of you looked really happy together."

Maybe it's due to the overwhelming emotions that the actor's been keeping bottled up since his breakup, but Zen ends up accidentally blurting out, "She cheated on me."

"What?" You're taken aback, your eyes widening from this new and sudden piece of information. When Zen's breakup was announced to the public, he had decided to keep the reason a secret, and you can see now why he chose to do so. You open your mouth, trying to offer words of comfort and reassurance, but you stop yourself just in time. After all, it might end up doing more harm than good.

"Maybe I deserved it..." Zen speaks softly, bowing his head low so that his bangs cover his eyes. You hear him sniffle, his hand travelling up to his face. "I'm sorry," he chokes out while offering a wry laugh. "I must look really uncool right now."

"Not at all!" Your enthusiastic response catches Zen off guard. He slowly lifts his head back up, and you can see the tears and raw emotion in his features. You feel your own eyes start to sting as you continue. "Nobody deserves to be cheated on, especially somebody as loyal and hardworking as you. And you're wrong... You don't look uncool at all. Crying like that just shows you're human too. Not everybody is perfect..."

Zen is quiet for a moment, his eyes widening by a fraction as he allows your words to sink in. It's comforting, and he finds his heart feeling a bit lighter than before, or maybe that's because he finally allowed himself to cry in front of someone else. He's baffled in all honesty, but then a small laugh escapes his lips. "Why are you crying too?"

You shake your head, your hand going to wipe at your tears with the heel of your palm. "I don't know... Just— Seeing you sad makes me sad too..."

The actor laughs again at your response, but it's not to laugh at you. Zen takes a few steps closer to you, and his hands move up to cup your face. You're confused for a moment before he whispers, "Trust me, you look much more beautiful when you smile." Then, almost as though it was completely natural, Zen dips his head down, his lips carefully kissing away your tears. It only takes him a few seconds later to realize what he's doing, and he immediately backs away several steps, the back of his hand covering his mouth as he profusely offers muffled apologies.

"It's, uh... It's okay. Thank you..." you reply awkwardly, not sure how to react in that situation. Before an awkward silence can fully settle in though, you decide to change the subject, much to Zen's relief. "S-So! What was it like working on 'The Jalapeño Topping was Pretty Spicy'?"

"Oh wow, that thing..." Zen laughs softly at the memory. "As embarrassing and strange as the script was, it was an overall fun learning experience. Have you seen it yourself?"

"Of course," you reply proudly, dramatically puffing your chest out. "The promo poster was very misleading."

"I think people just wanted to see my abs," the actor added.

You quickly comment with no hint of shame or embarrassment. "They're very good-looking abs."
"I would hope so. I work out hard to maintain my perfect figure," Zen responds with a toothy grin which makes you offer your own goofy smile in return.

It's amazing how at ease Zen feels around you. There's no need for him to hold back nor be careful of what he says around you. He feels like he can trust you, and he wants to. The actor is then broken out of his thoughts with a question from you. "Have you ever come here at night?" Zen shakes his head, so you continue. "Mm, almost nobody ever does except me, but you should when you have the chance. It's beautiful, trust me."

"I do," Zen answers so quietly that he barely hears the words himself.

The two of you spend some more time together before you realize that it's gotten rather late. Zen had insisted on walking you back to your home, afraid to leave you alone this late, but you told him that there were still some things that you needed to do at the shop, so he settles for dropping you off there for the night. Pleasantries and farewells are exchanged before the actor turns on his heel and heads back home.

Night has fallen by now, but Zen can't seem to fall asleep. His thoughts are too occupied of you and the afternoon he spent with you. It was a really good day and a much welcome change of pace. Seeing as he wasn't going to be sleeping any time soon, the young man decides to take you up on your offer and go to the bridge, making sure to grab a sweater just as he leaves in case it gets chilly.

Zen follows the path the both of you took that day, and he finds himself trying to avoid walking on the cracks like you had before. It's a lot of fun, he admits quietly to himself. Just as he arrives at the bridge, the actor stops dead in his tracks. There you are, admiring the view of the sky above you, too engrossed to notice the actor's presence.

Zen can't help but stare, warmth rising to his cheeks. He can hear his heart hammering loudly against his chest, and he places a hand over it, trying to calm it down, but he can't. The longer the young man stares at you, the more he can't help but find how beautiful you look in this moment. There's a certain warm aura around you, a small smile playing on your lips, and that's when Zen realizes just how hard he's fallen for you, and it terrifies him.

It's still too early to say if it really is love or just an infatuation or him finding comfort from you after his breakup, but there is one thing he does know. Zen can't deny how fast his heart is racing right now, and he wants nothing more than to hold you in his arms. To kiss away all your fears and tears like he did earlier in the day.

Sensing somebody's gaze on you, you turn your head, features changing to one of surprise when you see Zen standing there. His white hair and pale complexion in the night looks like he's glowing, and his eyes are like a gentle flame to light the dark. You find yourself blushing slightly at your cheesy poeticness before gesturing for the young man to come over.

Zen hesitates the slightest bit but then takes tentative steps towards you. He stops a fair distance away before deciding to lessen the space even more so that your shoulders are barely brushing against one another as he joins you in looking at the stars. "...You came tonight." You're the first one to break the silence, and Zen can hear the faint smile in your voice.

"Yeah..." he answers simply. "It really is as beautiful as you said."

"I like to come here often, just to ease my thoughts," you admit, shivering slightly from the breeze that blows by. You didn't think it would get this cold at night since the weather was absolutely perfect that afternoon. Just then, you feel a warmth on your back, and you realize that Zen is draping his sweater over you, his fingers lingering the slightest bit around your shoulders. He
smiles down at you, but there's something different about it. It's in his eyes. There's something there that makes you want to look away but stare at the same time.

"If you're here now, then does that mean something's troubling you? You can tell me. We're..." Zen trails off, the next word caught in his throat. "...We're friends, after all."

You have a vague sense of understanding why you feel disappointed near the end of his statement, but you try to chase the reason away. "It's not that something's troubling me. It's more... It's more like I was just really happy and somehow wound up here before I knew it."

"I...think I understand. It's the same for me." The way the actor said it made your heart race, and you grasp onto the sweater around you and wrap it tighter around you. Zen seems to notice, and he asks, "Are you cold?"

You don't know why, but you decide to lie. "A little."

"Then, c-can I wrap my arms around you?" Zen mentally scolds himself for stuttering at such an opportune time. He then quickly goes to explain, or perhaps it's more to reason with himself. "To share my body warmth, I mean! I-I swear I don't have any ulterior motives! I might be a wolf, but I'm still a gentleman!"

You can't help it, and you snort. "A wolf? What?"

For some reason, the young man becomes defensive. "All men are wolves! You have to be careful with them!"

"Oh, but I'm sure you're a gentle wolf," you reply teasingly, and Zen can feel his face flush and hope that the night will be able to cover it. "...You're very cute when you blush," you comment further, and the actor quickly buries his face in his hands.

Zen whines out a name in protest, and a look of surprise and confusion spreads across your features. You recognize the name belonging to the actor's ex-girlfriend, and you're not too sure how to react. Being met with your silence, Zen lifts his head wondering why, but when he sees your expression, he realizes his mistake and gasps before apologizing.

"I-I'm sorry, I didn't mean..." He trails off, chewing at his bottom lip as he averts his gaze, ashamed.

"You must have really loved her..." You speak softly, trying to break the tense atmosphere between you two. Zen remains quiet, but he offers a small nod of affirmation. "Then you don't need to apologize. You said she cheated on you, right? I'm sure that the betrayal must have hurt and still continues to hurt, but that just proves the depth of your love for her. You don't need to rush to push her memory out of the way or anything like that, and you have many people to support you along the way. It will be okay, I promise."

"It sounds like you speak from experience," Zen comments idly, and your expression twists to one of pain at a memory that the actor doesn't know, but he is aware that he touched upon a nerve and quickly goes to apologize. Zen feels ridiculous, realizing that he's been apologizing quite a lot to you.

"It's okay," you reply but offer no further comment and fall back into silence, fingers playing with the fabric of the actor's sweater, and he offers to walk you home. You quietly accept with a short nod of your head.
Chapter 7

It's been a few months since Zen's breakup. A few months since the actor and the party coordinator talked with each other, a strained tension in their relationship, but Zen decides it's about time to put it all behind them. The two decide to meet in a quaint coffee shop to discuss where their relationship will go from here on out. The atmosphere around them is awkward as neither Zen nor the young woman speak, only taking a few occasional sips from their respective drinks.

"I...would still like for us to be friends," Zen starts, and the party coordinator snaps her attention to him, her eyes slightly hopeful.

"Hyun—"

Zen interrupts her immediately, his voice firm with a hint of bitterness behind it. "I'm sorry, but I would appreciate it if you just called me Zen."

The woman visibly flinches, but she understands the actor's reasoning. It was a name that she was special enough to call him by during intimate moments between the two of them alone. Having broken Zen's trust, the party coordinator can see why he wouldn't want to hear her call him by his real name. With sagged shoulders, she nods, defeated.

"So, we can still continue to be friends?" The woman shakily asks to confirm, her fingers picking at the fabric of her shirt.

Zen cocks his head to the side, contemplative. His eyebrows knit together, and he answers slowly. "I would like for that, but... I can't just give you my trust like that after what you did. If we want our friendship to work, then we'll both need to put in the effort to make it so. You're an important part of the RFA, my family, so I really don't want us to be awkward and tip-toe around each other."

"I agree... I'm sorry..."

The actor smiles wryly. "It's too late for apologies... That's not what I'm looking for anymore, and that's not what's going to fix this. Fix us." Zen bows his head and quietly adds to himself, "Fix me..."

Both Zen and the young woman then continue to spend the rest of their time idly talking about what they've been up to, a much more casual and more or less friendly atmosphere between the two as they come to an agreement on how to settle their broken relationship, and when Zen finally leaves, he feels like his heart is much lighter. More relieved. Somehow, the sky seems much more blue than how he usually saw it.

Zen doesn't know why, but it's late at night, and he finds himself back at the small bridge once more where the young man realized that he might have loved you. Except now, after having some time to think about it since then and since resolving things with his ex-girlfriend, Zen no longer has any doubts. The way his heart would race at the mere thought of you. The way his lips would sometimes say your name when he was alone just because he liked the way it sounded. The way his eyes would constantly read over the fan letters you sent to him before the two of you officially met. The way his nose would pick up the scent of flowers and be instantly reminded of you. There was no room for doubt.

But finally admitting his own feelings to himself, Zen can't help but feel much more apprehensive.
Should he try to confess to you? Would you even accept him? You had said you weren't looking to date anyone, but Zen hopes that you would make an exception for him, believing that there was chemistry and a mutual attraction between you two.

But then another problem lay after that. Even if he did confess, how can he be sure that you would love him as Hyun Ryu and not just as Zen? How can he be sure that you wouldn't cheat on him like how his ex-girlfriend did? ...No, he didn't think you would be one to cheat even though that's what he thought too with his ex-girlfriend, but how can Zen be sure that he wouldn't end up accidentally hurting you with his doubts? His insecurities?

A gentle tap on the actor's shoulder breaks him out of his thoughts, and Zen turns around. His face lights up instantly when he's greeted by you and your smile. Zen opens his arms, an invitation for a greeting hug which you gladly accept with a soft giggle. Zen tries to keep the hug for as long as would be deemed appropriate for just friends before reluctantly pulling away.

"Well, hello stranger. It's been a while," he says with a toothy grin. In truth, it's only been no more than two weeks since your 'not-date', but Zen feels as though it's been eternity since he last saw you.

You offer a light laugh and small apology before explaining, "In addition to the shop, I've been looking after Haneul while her mother works on an important business project."

"Ah, I see... So are you her nanny?"

"Something like that. I do it for free as a friend; nannies, babysitters, and daycares are just too expensive for a single mother," you answer with a shrug of your shoulders, a wry smile playing on your lips before continuing. "Haneul's mother has done a lot for me. She's like an older sister to me, and I want to pay her back somehow."

Zen hums, an adoring smile on his face. "It's nice of you to do that; though, I can't deny that I miss seeing your face."

"Aww, how unfortunate," you reply teasingly, and Zen retaliates by pinching your cheek. You shoo his hand away and laugh. "Maybe if I missed your face, I would ask if we could hang out more."

The actor dramatically places a hand over his chest and gasps, speaking with feigned hurt that may hold some small truth in it. "You don't miss my face?"

"You send me a selfie every day, Zen. Plus there's pictures of you on social media, and I have posters of you in my room. How can I not?" You answer, sounding quite amused.

"Then you should send me your selfies." Zen grins as he places his hands on his hips and daringly leans closer to your face. After Zen had walked you home after your 'not-date', the two of you had exchanged phone numbers and have been texting and calling each other as much as time and work had allowed it. It was something the young man looked forward to, his heart skipping a beat whenever he saw your name pop up on his screen.

You shake your head. "Nah, you don't want to see pictures of me..."

"I do," Zen answers immediately, his voice suddenly serious that it catches you off guard. "I want to see pictures of you every day. I want to see you." The abrupt change in atmosphere has you standing there confused. You laugh, uncertain of how to respond, but then Zen continues. "I want to see you more... Am I being greedy to ask for that?"
You're not too sure how to answer him and the hidden depth of emotions behind his words, and you turn your head away, but Zen cups your cheek to gently guide you to look at him. Warmth pools to your face when you meet the actor's intense gaze. Even in the darkness of the night, you can see the whirlstorm of emotions behind his piercing eyes. Fear. Anxiety. Hope. And more...so much more... So much that you feel as though you can be swallowed whole by them.

Neither of you move, uncertain of just what it is that you want from the other person. Eventually, Zen retracts his hand and takes a step back, and you have to stop yourself from reaching out for his warmth once more. The silence is unbearably awkward and tense.

Zen decides to speak up first, changing the subject. "You're here again. Does that mean something's troubling you?"

You don't know if you feel relieved or not that the conversation shifted to this particular topic, and you shrug your shoulders. "It's...complicated. I happened to bump into someone I really don't like this afternoon, so my mood's been extremely sour since then."

"It's a good thing I came tonight then," Zen chuckles, and you tilt your head in confusion. The actor offers a smug smile before explaining. "My healing face can uplift your mood!"

"Well, I won't deny that just spending time with you has me feeling a little better," you try to reply casually, but Zen can still hear the small smile in your voice.

The young man decides to tease you a bit more, leaning his face extremely close to yours that almost makes you want to back away from the sudden proximity. ...Almost. "Reeeeaaallly? Only a little?"

You roll your eyes, quietly lifting a hand to move behind the young man as you discreetly take some of his hair into your hands, and you give it a gentle but firm tug. Zen instinctively gasps, and his hands immediately fly to grip your shoulders while he bows his head low and groans softly.

It's sort of become a thing between you two. You know how weak he gets whenever his hair was pulled upon, so whenever he would start teasing you, you'd retaliate by giving his locks a tug. Of course, you made sure not to do it in public since his reactions are quite something, and you tried not to do it too often, but Zen didn't seem to mind it. It was a weird kind of "game", you suppose, between the two of you that became a natural occurrence.

"Tease..." Zen whines as soon as he recovers.

"Excuse you? Who's the one that started it?" You quip back with another tug that sends the actor whining again.

"Okay, I give, I give!" Zen admits defeat, realizing that if this kind of teasing continues, it could get rather dangerous for him, for a lack of a better word.

You finally let go of the young man's hair, and the two of you put some distance between each other once more. A relieved sigh slips past your lips as you stretch your arms over your head. "...Thanks. I definitely feel much better now."

Zen's expression softens, and he finds himself melting from your much more cheerful features. "Always happy to help. In any case, I think this gentleman should accompany a lovely lady back to her place now. It's awfully late, wouldn't you agree?"

"Yup. It'd be bad for a lady to walk this late at night all alone. You best get on your way and accompany that lady back home," you grin cheekily. You know full well that the "lovely lady" that
Zen was referring to is you, but you make no move to get going.

The actor laughs, taking your hand in his. "I meant you."

This time, it's your turn to act all dramatic. You offer an exaggerated gasp, placing a hand over your chest. "Me? Why, who would have known? Excuse me, fine sir, but I am not a 'lovely lady'; I am a **princess**."

Zen throws his head back, laughing loudly before a wide grin spreads across his cheeks. Then, without warning, the actor sweeps you off your feet and into a princess carry. Your surprised yelp is drowned out by Zen's laughter as he starts walking back to your apartment. You shriek, "Zen! Put me down!" Thankfully, there's almost nobody on the streets to attract attention from, but you still feel embarrassed.

"Hmm? But if you're a princess, then it's only natural I carry you like this, my dear princess," Zen teases, his flushed cheeks accompanied by a dazzling smile. In truth, the young man believes that he may be going a bit too far with his teasing, but there's no denying that he enjoyed these small moments with you. It was starting to get harder to discern as to whether or not his actions would be deemed appropriate for just friends. Fan, friend, love... The lines distinguishing each other all became a blur at some point.

"Zeeen," you whine out the actor's name, and it almost causes him to falter with his steps. He still hasn't quite gotten over the sensation of your hands around his hair and pulling on the locks from before, so hearing you whine his name like that is **really** testing his self-control. "Let me down. Pleeeeeease?"

A pleasant shiver runs down Zen's spine at your pleading. Maybe it would be a better idea to put you down after all. "I'll pull on your hair," you threaten the young man, completely unaware of his plight. Zen quickly bites on his lower lip to stop the words "do it, please" from accidentally spilling out, but your hand was already threading through his tied up hair, and he immediately admits defeat and puts you down without a word.

"You're such a tease," the actor complains, though there isn't any kind of contempt behind his words.

"But you love me," you answer without missing a beat as you turn around and continue walking the rest of the way, Zen following close behind you.

"I do," Zen quietly mouths the words, wondering if there will ever come a time he'll be able to say them out loud, but for now, this weird sort of friendship is enough. The young man slips his hand into yours, the two of you walking in a comfortable peace.
The moment Zen gets home after dropping you off at your apartment, he shuts the door quickly and slips off his shoes as fast as he can before running to his bedroom and burying his face into his pillows to scream. If he can't get an award for his acting, at the very least, he should get an award for being able to restrain himself around you because god damn—that small exchange with you excited him far more than he would like to admit. The actor had to be extra careful not to get caught with his growing erection then, but now that he was in the privacy of his home, he can finally relieve himself.

Zen knows that he shouldn't touch himself to the thoughts of you, the action leaving him to feel both embarrassed and ashamed as you were too good of a person for such a thing, but the young man hasn't had any action in what seemed like forever since his breakup.

Zen shifts around so that he's on his knees, his face still buried into the pillows as his hand tentatively moves to rub the growing bulge in his jeans. He breathes out a soft sigh of relief before impatiently working on the button and zipper and tugging everything down, allowing his semi-hard cock to spring free from its confines.

Zen's hand immediately goes to eagerly grip his length, carefully stroking himself to full hardness. He sighs once more at the sensation before deciding to slowly increase his pace. The actor's mind wanders to your previous exchange. He vividly remembers the touch of your skin underneath his palm, and a sharp gasp escapes his lips as his pumps grow harsher the more thoughts of you fill his mind. Zen remembers the warmth of your skin, the faint fragrance around you, the way you whined out his name...

"Fuck..." Zen curses into the pillow as he starts to rock his hips, his hands alone not enough to help him find that sweet release.

The actor closes his eyes and unknowingly finds himself imagining that you're lying underneath him. Without meaning to, Zen positions himself almost as though to accommodate you if you were really there. He wonders what kind of expression you would make, squirming underneath him as he pleasures you with his thick cock and fill you up with his love. Would you whine like you did back then, begging for more?

Muffled moans and groans fill the dark room as the actor grips himself harder, pretending to himself that it was your warm walls, clenching around and trying to pull him in. Zen's breathing becomes much more shallow and ragged as strands of his hair stick to frame his sweat-coated face. Oh god, his hair. The young man can still feel the tingles on his scalp when you had tugged on his locks, and the memory sends Zen thrusting into his hands at a much faster pace. If he concentrates hard enough, he can still hear your voice ringing pleasantly in his ears.

Zen...

"Ohhh, fuck...babe..." Zen manages to get the words out amidst his pleasured moans, speaking to his mental image of you. He's paid so much attention to the details of you, he has no difficulty imagining your figure. Snippets of your past conversation flow into the young man's mind.

Pleeeeeease...

Zen laughs at that whine of yours, his lips curving into a smile. "'Please' what babe? Hm? Do you want more? Aghh—Fuck, you're so good, I'll give you more...I'll give you everything you want and
"more." Almost as though complying to a silent wish, Zen bucks his hips much more furiously, his pumps becoming obviously more desperate.

*I'll pull on your hair.*

"Yes—! Please! Do it! Do it, do it, *do it!*" Mindless growls tumble out of the actor's mouth at the thought of you threading your fingers around his hair, the usual teasing but friendly smile on your lips before you would tug. His growls turn to a string of curses as his mind starts to haze, and Zen's focus falters between his imagination of you and the pleasure building up inside of him. Amidst the sound of the unrelenting bed creaks underneath him and his punctuated grunts, the young man remembers one more line from you.

...*you love me.*


Zen's string of confessions is cut short as he comes undone with a muffled scream when he buries his face into the pillows, his hips stuttering before completely stilling as his cock throbs and twitches with his release, staining both his shirt and his sheets. Zen continues to stroke himself through it all, milking himself out as much as possible. A few more lazy strokes later, and the young man finally collapses onto the bed, a few occasional shivers still coursing through him every now and then.

Zen swallows thickly before turning to lie on his back and stare at his ceiling, not bothering to clean up, as his mind starts to clear. Maybe he should just go and admit his feelings to you already, the young man thinks idly to himself. Of course, not just for the possibility of making love to you, but he wants to be able to openly love you. To hold your hand and support you, just like how you supported him as a fan and continue to support him as a friend. Except, he doesn't want to be just a friend. He wants to be something *more*.

For a brief moment, the memory of his previous relationship flashes in Zen's mind, and he grimaces. Would he even be worthy of your love? Would you return to him the love he felt for you, or would you throw it away just like how his ex-girlfriend so easily did? Was he worth the time and effort, or would he just be something for you to pass the time until the next best thing arrived? Surely, there had to be better suited people out there for you than him and only his good looks. Surely, somebody like him didn't deserve somebody as beautiful and kind as you.

Without thinking, Zen reaches for his phone and pulls up your contact information. He wants to ask what you think of him and the like, but the actor hesitates, his finger lingering just above the call button. A part of him is terrified. What if he doesn't like the answer you provide? Would he be able to handle such a truth?

In the end, Zen decides against contacting you. It's late after all, and he doesn't want to disturb you. The young man places an arm over his eyes, exhaling shakily before biting his lower lip as loneliness creeps into his chest.
Chapter 9

Zen has a rare day off which he plans to spend going over ways on how to improve with his acting when his phone rings with the special ring tone he had set for you. The actor immediately picks up, his heart hammering against his chest as he answers with a cheerful voice, "Hello?"

"Hey," your voice greets him, and Zen's face naturally breaks out into a wide smile. "Are you busy?"

"I can always make time for you," Zen answers smoothly, and he can hear your laughter on the other side of the phone. He doesn't think it was possible, but the male's smile widens even more from the sound.

"Ah, so then you are busy," you assume from the young man's response to what was a simple yes or no question.

Zen frantically speaks to change his answer, hoping you wouldn't hang up so quickly. "No, no, wait! I'm not busy. I have a day off and wasn't really doing anything important. I was actually hoping you'd call—I-I-I mean..."

Your laughter rings into his ears once more at his awkward stumbles, and heat immediately rises to the male's cheeks. Thankfully for him, you can't see how flustered Zen looks, and you continue talking. "If you have some free time then, would you like to come over to my place and help me look after Haneul? She misses you and wants to see you again. Oh, and me of course. I want to see you again too."

A small strangled sound of restrained excitement slips through Zen's lips at the idea of you wanting to see him. "Yeah! Sure! I'd like that!" The actor answers perhaps a bit too enthusiastically.

"Okay then, feel free to come whenever. I'll be here, waiting."

As soon as the call disconnects, Zen scrambles to get ready. He almost trips in his excited haste, but he can't help it. It's been a while since the two of you got to spend any time together, and the distance was slowly killing him on the inside. The actor knows why he feels this way, and while it is a bit troubling, it also makes those small moments with you just that much more worthwhile.

It doesn't take long for Zen to reach your apartment, and he fixes himself and his hair up a bit before knocking on your door, wanting to look extra presentable. The young man would be lying if he said he wasn't nervous. He's dropped you off at your apartment before, but this will be his first time actually going inside. Zen's face lights up instantly when you open the door to greet him. The two of you exchange quick smiles before you gesture for him to come inside.

Zen had just slipped off his shoes at the entryway when he hears small padding feet running towards him before Haneul wraps her arms around his leg. "Big brother Zenny!" She exclaims with a giggle as she hugs onto his leg, moving to wrap her own legs around him too. Zen's expression melts into a smile as he pats the young girl's head.

"Hi Haneul," he coos. "It's nice to see you again."

You can't help but laugh at the scene before you, moving to lead Zen to the living room. "Good luck trying to pry her off," you warn him.
Well, it isn't really necessary since Zen does work out, so he's able to more or less walk with Haneul tightly wound around his leg like a koala. You gesture for the actor to sit on the couch, so he does, prompting the little girl to finally let go and crawl up on the couch to sit beside the male.

"Would you like anything to drink?" You offer with a small smile.

"Just water please," Zen replies as Haneul clammers over to sit on his lap, prompting him to direct his attention towards her. You nod your head before heading into the kitchen to fetch a glass. While waiting for you, Haneul stares at Zen with awe and wonder that he can't help but feel flattered and embarrassed at the same time. The young man lightly pokes the little girl's cheeks, and a small giggle bubbles out of her. It's an extremely cute reaction, so Zen does it again, and Haneul giggles once more and moves to poke his cheek too. Soon enough, the two of them have an impromptu "poking-cheek-war" with small laughter and giggles in between.

"Can I join in?" Your voice suddenly fills the actor's ears as a new finger joins in on poking his cheek.

Zen turns his face and chokes at your proximity, too engrossed in playing with Haneul that he didn't realize that you had come back. You quirk an eyebrow and give him the glass of water you had fetched for him, and he accepts it graciously. Warmth pools to Zen's cheeks as he averts his gaze and takes generous gulps of the liquid.

"Th-Thanks," Zen stutters out, placing the glass on the nearby table.

Somehow, there's a slight shift in the atmosphere, and Haneul seems to notice it too. The child quietly climbs off of Zen and onto the floor instead. "I'm gonna get my colouring book," she announces as she bounces out of the room, but your overprotective self towards the little girl has you following after her, just to make sure that she didn't get into any trouble or accidents. You can never be too careful after all, especially with someone as energetic as her.

Zen takes this as his moment to finally glance around your apartment and take in the details. The actor stands up from the couch and walks around, eyes scanning around the different furniture. There's a light and pleasant fragrance in the air, and the colours and lighting makes the apartment seem warm and welcoming. It's a small space, but it feels very homey which makes the corners of the male's lips to curve upwards into a smile. He...wouldn't mind coming over again some time, maybe to even spend the night.

Zen immediately stops with that train of thought, shaking his head. He can't. He shouldn't. As Zen's mind starts to wander, his eyes fall upon your bookshelf, and in an effort to distract himself, he moves over to look through what you have. There's all sorts of books sorted and aligned, titles he's seen before, and there's one book in particular that catches his eye. The spine doesn't have a title and looks slightly worn. Curious, the young man slides it out from the bookshelf and opens the cover, only to be greeted by several pages of pressed flowers.

Just then, both you and Haneul return to the living room, the child holding her colouring book and supplies in her arms, and Zen looks up from the book. Haneul goes to lie comfortably on the floor to colour while both you and Zen lock gazes, and the actor jumps a bit from the sudden eye contact. "Oh, sorry... I didn't mean to pry..." he apologizes, moving to put the book back, but you stop him, placing a gentle hand on his arm which prompts him to blush.

"It's okay." You smile warmly at him. "You can continue looking if you'd like," you reassure Zen as you move to stand closer beside the young man, your shoulder brushing against his arm as you peer over to look at the contents of the book in his hand. A nostalgic sigh slips past you. "I used to press flowers when I was little. This was my collection."
"There's quite a lot in here..." Zen comments idly as he flips through the pages. "What's this one?"

"Oh, that's an edelweiss," you answer. "It's a mountain flower and quite short-lived. According to folk tradition, if you give this flower to a loved one, it's a promise of dedication."

"You must really like flowers," the male comments with a small hum, his expression softening when he sees the gleam in your eyes. It warms his heart to see you so happy and to share your interest with him.

"I do," you admit with no hesitation. "I think they're very beautiful. Don't you?"

A natural smile makes its way to the actor's lips. "Yeah, I think so too. I think my favourite flower would have to be the rose."

You let out a small laugh, amusement dancing behind your eyes as though you expected such a thing. "Ah, because you're such a romantic," you tease, but the young man seems unfazed.

"What's your favourite flower?" Zen questions, wanting to know more about you.

You puff your cheeks and cross your arms over your chest. "That's a mean question, making me choose when there's so many... But if I truly had to choose..." You trail off, and take the flower collection book from Zen's hands and flip through the pages until you find the one you're looking for before handing it back to him. "I would say the forget-me-not. I don't know why it is, but I'm just drawn to them. And did you know? In the language of flowers, they mean true love. I think it's romantic, but their name also has a sense of bittersweetness to them."

Zen stares at your expression as you admire the flower on the page before bringing his attention to it as well. He lightly traces around the shape of the plant with his finger and allows his eyes to flicker back to your face. Sensing his gaze, you look up, and the two of you lock eyes with each other, and somehow, time seems to stop. Your breath hitches as the two of you unknowingly lean closer towards one another, almost as though there was some kind of magnetic pull that you can't quite resist. Unbeknownst to you, Zen feels the exact same way, unable to pull himself away.

Zen softly whispers your name in the small gap between you two, unable to hear it himself over the loud hammering of his heart against his chest. "I..."

The two of you are suddenly pulled out of your trance when you both feel a tug on your legs, and you and Zen look down to see Haneul staring expectantly. You and Zen immediately shuffle away from each other, suddenly self-conscious of the space—or rather lack thereof—between you two. Zen awkwardly clears his throat as he moves to put the book back while you kneel down to Haneul's level, your heart still racing from...whatever that was. "Do you need something sweetie?"

You ask the child who stares at you with huge eyes.

"My ribbon's loose!" Haneul whines as she points to her hair to emphasize her point.

"Oh, let me get that for you then." You move to fix the girl's hair, but she shakes her head which confuses you.

Haneul looks towards Zen, her cheeks red. "I want big brother Zenny to do it!"

You stare at the little girl, wide-eyed, before admitting defeat and standing up with an amused laugh. "Congratulations Zen. You've captured the heart of the most adorable princess ever."

Haneul smiles and giggles bashfully at what you called her, her hands folding together neatly in front of her as she sways side to side in mirth. Zen chuckles, beaming at the little girl as he goes to
pat her head. "I would be honoured to fix the hair of the most adorable princess ever." The actor then straightens himself up and looks directly at you, flashing you a charming smile. "And if she would like to, I'd love to have the most gorgeous princess ever to keep us company."

You pretend to look around before dramatically placing a hand over your chest and speaking in an exaggerated manner. "Who? Me?"

Zen laughs at your antics, his face crinkling with joy, but instead of the usual banter reply, he takes your hand into his and tentatively brushes his lips against your fingers. Apprehensively, Zen looks up at you through his lashes, afraid that he may be going too far with his actions, but he can't help it. His feelings are overflowing out of him through his actions before he can even realize just what he was doing. His lower lip immediately gets caught between his teeth when he sees your extremely flushed expression.

"Cute..." the comment slips past the male's lips before he can stop it, and in just a few seconds after realizing his slip of the tongue, he's just as red as you.

An awkward silence settles in before Haneul stubbornly pulls on Zen's shirt, and the two of them go to sit comfortably on the couch while you excuse yourself to use the washroom. As soon as the door to the washroom closes behind you, you bury your face into your hands and let out a muffled scream. Your hand goes over your racing heart, attempting to calm it down, but you can't. It's been quite some time since you last felt like this. It's a familiar yet new feeling at the same time, and you don't know what to do. Would it be okay...to pursue these feelings of yours with someone like Zen? You heave a sigh, unsure of what to do.

Once you've calmed down, you head towards the living room where Zen and Haneul were on the couch with the actor combing through the little girl's hair with his fingers. You take a deep breath to settle your nerves before walking up towards them. "Mind if I join?" The young man doesn't answer, still embarrassed from the previous events but shuffles over to give you space, and you graciously sit down. You watch Zen's fingers carefully tidy up Haneul's hair before your gaze flickers to his own silvery locks. "Can I play with your hair?" You ask hesitantly.

"As long as you promise not to pull on it," Zen answers with a small smile.

You accept his terms before grabbing hold of his hair tie and carefully sliding it off. The actor's hair spreads out beautifully across his back, and you tentatively run your fingers through the locks, prompting him to let out a peaceful sigh. "It's so soft..." You comment on it as you thread the strands around your fingers. "And so beautiful..."

"You think so? It takes a lot to maintain, and it always seems to attract attention," Zen answers distractedly as he concentrates on helping Haneul with her hair.

You laugh softly to yourself. "Are you sure they're not just looking at your handsome face? Or maybe it's because you're a famous actor?"

"I'm not that famous..." Zen says modestly, feeling his cheeks heat up from your compliments.

"Yet," you corrected him, and the young man immediately falls quiet. "But you'll get there one day. I just know it... Your acting and singing skills are top notch, so you'll definitely become famous one day. People will look up to you, and you'll inspire them in more ways than one. Your acting touches the audience's hearts, and one day, the entire world will be your stage and audience. You already have a lot of fans like me to support you, and you'll definitely get there. ...Oh, I'm sorry, I'm rambling again..."
"No, don't apologize," Zen answers softly, a warm and bubbly feeling his chest as his lips curve into a smile. "I... Thank you..."

Both you and Zen pass the rest of the day in a sort of warm and friendly atmosphere as the two of you play with Haneul. It's late in the evening when you get a call from Haneul's mother, apologizing for how late she was and asking if you could drop her daughter off as the woman was waiting for someone and couldn't leave the house. You didn't mind at all, and when you had explained the situation to Zen, he was quick to offer to accompany you both.

So now here you are, holding one of Haneul's hands as Zen held her other one. The little girl hums a cheerful tune between the both of you, and the two of you can't help but gaze down at her with an adoring smile. "I wanna swing! I wanna swing!" The child chirps, tugging on both Zen's hand and yours. The two of you exchange a quick look before deciding to give in to the little girl's wish, lifting her up from the ground as she swings her legs and laughs with childish glee. People passing by seems to smile or laugh at the three of you, and you suddenly become self-conscious of how you might appear to them.

"Do you think we look like a couple to them?" Zen asks out of the blue, and you momentarily falter with your steps.

"I-I guess..."

The actor remains quiet for a moment before continuing. "Does it...would it...bother you?"

You furrow your brows in confusion at his choice of words, going from "does it" to "would it", and you're not too sure how to respond to that. Thankfully or not, you aren't given a chance to respond as Haneul exclaims how she wants to swing again, effectively chasing away that previous topic of discussion. The little girl starts to sing a familiar children's song which you haven't heard in ages, and you find yourself singing along with her before Zen joins in with his wonderful voice as well.

Zen's free hand goes over to his chest, lightly clutching onto the fabric of his shirt over his heart. He can't remember the last time he felt this happy, and he doesn't know what to do. His cheeks hurt from smiling and laughing so much, but it isn't unwelcome. The actor steals a glance your way, and he feels like some silly highschooler with the way his cheeks warm up and how his heart skips a beat whenever he sees your expression. The young man can't bear it. He... He wants your love. He wants you to smile at him. To laugh with him. To spend your time with him. To cherish him like he cherishes you. To hold his hand while he gazes into your eyes. To embrace him while he whispers sweet words into your ears. To kiss him as he molds his body with yours—

Zen mentally curses to himself. He didn't think he could fall so deep into someone that just the thought of them could make him weak in the knees, but that's what you did. The actor thought he's forgotten all these deep and complicated feelings by now, lost and taken away by his ex-girlfriend when she cheated on him, but you gave them back. ...No, that wasn't it. You gave him something more. It was familiar yet entirely new at the same time, and it makes his heart soar to new heights.

Once both you and Zen drop off Haneul back to her home, you both decide to stop by that bridge in the park where the two of you went for your "not-date" again. Without even knowing it, that place had become a special place to you and Zen, and the two of you stand beside each other in silence, staring at the sky.

A wind passes by that sends your hair into a mess, and you click your tongue in annoyance. Zen's light laughter fills your ears before you feel his fingers carefully brushing the strands away from your face and then allowing his hands to rest on your cheeks. There it is again. The incessant throbbing heartbeats as the two of you lock eyes, and you feel the slightest of trembles of Zen's
hands atop your skin. Slowly, you bring up your own shaky hands and place them on top of the male's, and his eyes seem to widen the slightest bit from your action.

The silence is deafening, and you finally part your lips, speaking to break it. "I think I love you..."
Chapter 10

It feels like the entire world had frozen in time as soon as Zen finishes processing your words—no, your confession. His eyes widen as his lips part to let out a soft exhale of breath that he wasn't even aware he was holding. He knows that he should respond, but his voice fails him, and the actor is unable to find the words. Zen can see the increasing worry and regret in your eyes the longer he stays silent, but he just can't answer due to the overwhelming joy in his heart that you actually reciprocated his feelings.

You slowly take a step back, bowing your head in embarrassment as your lower lip trembles. "I-I'm sorry, you don't have to—"

No, it isn't like that. Zen's silence isn't him denying your feelings or anything like that. Since Zen's voice decided to betray him at this most crucial moment, the actor chooses the next best thing. He clasps his hand around your wrist, a serious and determined expression on his face, and pulls you towards him. A gasp slips past you, your eyes widening from the sudden action. In his excitement, the force in which he pulls you actually has him stumble back a bit as you fly to his chest, and he winds his arms tightly around your frame.

"Z-Zen?" You're completely confused by this turn of events, but you can't find it in yourself to pull away from the young man.

Hearing you say his name, Zen unconsciously pulls you closer towards him, his warmth surrounding you almost completely, and he's eventually able to find his voice again. "I love you," he whispers into your ear, and you don't know how to react, so you stand there, unmoving. Being met with your silence, the young man continues, "I think...I've loved you for a long time now but was always too scared to admit it, but then...hearing you say that you love me, even if you're uncertain about it yourself, made me so happy..."

This time, it's your turn to be at a loss for words. Zen slowly leans back to look at you but still loosely keeping his arms around your body. His cheeks are flushed, and you can see the absolute joy and relief dancing behind his eyes as he gazes down at you. The actor chews on his lower lip, contemplating on his next actions as he lifts up a hand and places it upon your cheek, and it feels like an entirely new experience. His expression melts to one of pure adoration towards you that you don't dare to look away.

"I know you said before that you weren't looking to date anyone, but...do you think you can make an exception and go on a date with me?" Zen asks with hopeful eyes as he strokes your cheek with the pad of his thumb.

There's a sense of uncertain fear in your mind as you think about your answer, and the small trembles of Zen's hand against your skin has you assuming that perhaps he feels the same way. "Yes," you finally answer him, and the actor's shoulders visibly relax.

The two of you decide to go over the details of your date as Zen walks you back home, partly out of chivalry and partly because he wants to spend more time with you. The plans are all finalized by the time you both reach your apartment, and you turn around to thank the young man for everything he did for the day. An awkward silence settles in soon afterwards as Zen stares at your face, and it doesn't take much to figure out that he was internally struggling as he held himself back from kissing you.

A small giggle bubbles out from your lips, catching the male's attention. He watches as you bring
your fingers close to your lips and kiss the pads before lightly placing those very same fingers on the actor's cheek. Fully aware of just how much of a romantic Zen is, you hope that he would be satisfied for now with an indirect kiss to the cheek like that. Zen can barely contain himself, warmth pooling to his cheeks and ears as he unintentionally lets out a strangled sound of restrained joy. After the actor collects himself, he repeats the same actions as you, kissing his fingers before placing them carefully onto your cheek and caressing your skin, and the two of you share a quick and small laugh, not really certain as to why you were laughing.

"Good night, Zen, and sweet dreams," you end your time with Zen for the night with those words. After the events of the day, Zen has no doubts that his dreams will be very sweet indeed.

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A small shudder courses through Zen's body when he feels your hands roam across his exposed skin with feather-light touches. He squirms underneath your fingers and palms, your trails leaving pleasant tingles in their wake. The actor cups your chin, prompting you to pause with your ministrations as you curiously tilt your head to the side, your eyelashes innocently batting together. Zen offers you a dazzling smile before kissing you on the lips, and suddenly, he's hovering over your naked body. He isn't sure when or how the two of you got into that position, but he isn't complaining when your half-lidded eyes stare back into his own.

"Zen..." you softly call his name as you reach a hand up to him.

The young man captures your hand midair and guides it to rest on his cheek, trapping it between his warmth. He leans in closer to your touch as the corners of his lips curve into a small smile. "What is it sweetheart?"

Zen watches as your expression melts to one of pure delight at the term of endearment, and in no time at all, the young man mirrors your expression, his joy matching yours. You open your mouth to speak, "Take me..." Zen's eyes widen at your request, and when he doesn't answer, you continue. "I want you, Zen... Do you want me too?"

"Yes," the actor breathes out with no hesitation this time, unknowingly leaner closer towards you. "I want you so much."

"Then take me," you urge him, arching your back the slightest bit to close the distance between the both of your bodies. "Make me yours."

The young man is unable to refuse such an enticing request, and he dips his head low to capture your lips into a deep and passionate kiss. "With pleasure," he whispers against you as he brings the tip of his hardened cock to your entrance and pushes himself into you, your walls stretching out to accommodate him. Zen groans as he feels your warmth envelop him fully, and he gazes down at your pleased expression.

Zen gives an experimental deep thrust within you, and he drawls out a moan at the way you clench around him. It feels great, and it seems like you're enjoying yourself too with the way grip onto the bed sheets, so Zen does it again, and this time, he's rewarded with an audible delighted gasp from you. Zen tries to draw out as many sounds as he possibly can from your lips, thrusting in and out of you in a teasingly slow rhythm.

"Zen..." you whine needily, and the actor's thrusts falter for a moment as a shudder runs down his spine. "I want more," you beg with hopeful eyes that he will comply to your wish. "Give me more, please!"

Your desperate pleads go straight to his crotch, and Zen could have sworn he actually got bigger
just from your voice alone. The actor laughs breathlessly, leaning down to kiss you once more. "Anything for you, princess. I'll give you everything I possibly can."

He's more than happy to oblige to your request, his thrusts become sharper which has you moaning out Zen's name in a broken chant in no time. Zen grunts, wanting to make you feel as good as he was, and you start to lift your hips to meet with the actor's thrusts. The young man smiles down at you amidst his blissful sighs and moans, sweat trailing down his body as he wraps his arms around you to close as much distance between the two of you as possible.

Zen buries his face in the crook of your neck, moaning against your ear as he pulls your body flush against his, and the skin-on-skin contact is almost dizzying. He offers shallow thrusts, almost as though reluctant to leave your warmth, but he fills you up completely and rubs against all the right places. You clench around him, and he can barely make sense of anything, his mind hazy from the pleasure of your connected bodies.

The actor exhales shakily as he takes your ear lobe between his teeth and nibbles on it. "Take it... Take my cock, babe. Take it—!" His words slowly melt into a low growl near the end as his thrusts become more frantic, desperate to chase release.

You throw your head back into the pillows, your arms wrapping around his back and clawing at his skin. He hisses in delight at the sensation as you squirm and writhe underneath him. "Yes, yes! Oh god, Zen, yes! Ohhh, fuck me... Fuck me harder, Zen! I can take it!"

The actor curses underneath his breath when he feels how close you are, and helping you find release is all he can think about as he increases the speed of his hips, slowly losing his rhythm. "I know you can, babe," he answers you with a small chuckle. "You're taking me and my cock so well...so good... Fuck, babe, you feel so good around me. You're so tight and warm, f-fuck—!!"

Zen doesn't think he can hold out for much longer, but he does so just enough to bring you over the edge first. You clench tightly around him, your body convulsing against him as your jaw falls slack, and you scream in delight as your orgasm rips through you. Zen follows soon after you, his eyes clenching shut as white fills his vision, his cock throbbing with his release inside your warmth and squeezing your body against his as he bites into your shoulder to muffle his own pleased scream.

Zen's eyes slowly flutter open, finding himself to be lying comfortably on his back, and he looks around the bed for you, but you're not there. For a second, confusion crawls its way onto his features and into his mind as he tries to recall last night. He had dropped you off at your apartment before heading back home himself with a bounce in his steps, and it clicks into Zen's mind that he just had a very sexual dream of you.

The young man buries his face into his hands and lets out a muffled groan of embarrassment. He can't believe he dreamt so vividly about making love to you—no, with you. Zen grows increasingly flustered as he lingers on the realization that you're even starting to appear to him in his dreams, when and where he's the most vulnerable.

It was a very good dream though, Zen thinks idly to himself as he recalls every detail, and the warmth in his body increases. He's so engrossed in trying to recall all the sights, sounds, and sensations of you in his dream that it barely registers in the actor's mind when his hands travel down along his body to help his cock spring free from its confines.

Zen inhales sharply, finally realizing just how hard he is when his hand tentatively wraps around his length. He swallows thickly as he starts to pump himself, his mind still lingering on that dream of his. Just then, his phone chimes with your special ringtone, breaking the young man out of his thoughts. The actor bites his lower lip, internally debating on what he should do. On one hand, he's
apprehensive of possibly getting caught by you and scaring you away. On the other hand, he
doesn't want to stop now that he's started, and the actor wants to start his day off listening to your
voice.

"...Damn it," Zen mutters to himself as he comes to a decision, picking his phone up with his free
hand and answering but not relenting with his strokes along his cock in the slightest. "Hello?"

"Hi," you greet him, a hint of nervousness in your voice after your confession last night. "I,
uh...don't really have any reason for calling. I just wanted to hear your voice is all—...oh, but I
probably called at a bad time. Are you working out right now?" You question the male when you
can hear his quiet pants on the other side of the call.

"Yeah," Zen lies with a nervous laugh. Well, it wasn't technically a lie. "It's just some new cardio
exercise I wanted to try. Stay on the line, please? I...want to hear your voice too while I work out."

"Okay," you answer, and Zen can hear the smile in your voice when you do. "I should note,
however, that right now you sound a bit...sexual."

It's a relief to the both of you that there isn't any awkward changes in your behaviours after your
respective confessions, still being able to joke around and banter with each other. Of course, there
was the feeling of lingering embarrassment, but it wasn't like there was some kind of new awkward
distance between the both of you. Zen laughs breathlessly at your comment. "It's only sexual if you
think of it as sexual. I didn't know you were so dirty-minded, princess." ...Says the one who was
currently jerking himself off while on the phone of the one he was thinking of jerking off to, and
Zen quietly chides his own hypocrisy.

"There's a lot of things you don't know about me," you answer teasingly, and Zen inhales sharply
when he ends up tightening the grip on his cock from your words. If that was true, then he would
love to discover them little by little by spending more time with you. "Anyways," you decide to
move the conversation along, pausing for a moment to think of what to talk about. "Did you have a
good sleep last night?"

Zen could have sworn his heart stopped for a moment, thinking that he got caught about his dream
before realizing that there was no way you could possibly know. "Yeah," Zen answers slowly as he
tries to control his breathing, his pumps becoming much faster as his mind wanders back to that
dream of his, his eyes fluttering close. "I had a really gooood dream last night..." The actor
mentally curses at his accidental drawl, hoping that it wasn't obvious.

"Oh? There's a curious lilt in your voice, your pitch rising just the slightest bit, and Zen has to bite
his lip to stop himself from moaning out loud. "What was it about?"

"It had you in it," Zen accidentally confesses as his hips start to buck to meet with his hand. This
was a dangerous line of conversation, and Zen quickly adds, "We were...dancing together."

"That...sounds like a nice dream," you hum bashfully, and Zen finds himself smiling amidst his
shallow breathing. "Maybe we can make that dream of yours a reality one day?" You ask timidly,
and Zen almost chokes as he for a moment assumes you're talking about his actual dream and not
the one he lied about.

"Oh god, yes..." Zen breathes out, his concentration faltering as the pleasure builds up more within
him, his strokes along his length becoming much harsher the longer he stays on the line with you,
your voice filling his ears. "I would love that... What about—Haaah... S-Sorry, this new 'workout'
I'm doing is a bit more i-intense than I thought—What about you? Did you sleep well last night?"
There's a small pause before you answer, "I did, actually. And *maaaybe* you were in my dream too?"

"Oh? And what was I doing in your dream?" Zen asks, suddenly very interested, his grip on the phone wavering as the grip on his cock increases. The fact that you dreamt about him makes his heart race even faster and makes his head spin.

"That's a secret," you reply in a teasing sing-song voice, though there's the slightest hint of strain to it.

A whine slips past Zen's parted lips as he frantically lifts his hips off the bed, thrusting into his hand to chase his release. He quickly adds to disguise his needy-sounding whine, "Tell me, *please*?"

The actor could have sworn he heard you mutter out a curse underneath your breath along with some shuffling before you speak again, "S-Sorry, there's something important I need to do. I'll talk to you later."

"Mmm..." Zen hums in delight before melting it into a small and strained "mkay". He lets out a few more gasps of air and then says, "I'll be waiting for you."

"Yeah," you answer rather impatiently, and you pause before quickly adding, "I love you" and then disconnecting the call immediately afterwards before you could give the actor a chance to respond.

Zen curses to himself, allowing the phone to fall on the bed so that his hand could fly to his cock and pump it desperately. He lets out a low growl at the built up pleasure that he's no longer able to contain, and Zen buries his heels into the mattress as he lifts himself off the bed. His hands are frantic as they run along his throbbing cock, the pearly white substance of his release shooting out in generous amounts while Zen screams and growls your name in delirious pleasure.

Zen exhales shakily as he slowly brings himself back down onto the bed, his chest rising and falling in tandem with his heaving breaths. As soon as he manages to catch his breath, the young man glances down to inspect his dirtied state, and he lets out a frustrated groan. He just did the laundry yesterday.

The actor decides to take a quick shower to freshen himself up, muttering to himself that he'll do the laundry some other time. As he does so, he can't help but go over his conversation with you. You had dreamt of him, and the young man finds himself smiling like a complete idiot at that fact. Zen buries his face into his hands and lets out a muffled scream of joy as he repeats your confession over and over in his mind.

As soon as Zen's done in the shower, he picks up his phone and takes a selfie of himself kissing his fingers like how he had last night and sends it to you. He hums a cheerful melody to himself as he gets ready to start the day when his phone chimes with a new text message from you. You had sent a selfie of yourself doing the same thing, and Zen's eyes light up instantly.

"So cute," the actor whispers to himself as he stares at the screen. He brings his phone close to his lips and kisses your photo without a single hint of embarrassment behind his actions. Zen clutches his phone close to his chest, a small thought in his mind that today might be a good day to look forward to.
Chapter 11

The first thing that registers to Zen's mind is how cold it is. He then hears your laughter ringing out in the next room, so he goes over to where you are, hoping that you'd be willing to let him hold you in his arms to warm himself up. The moment he enters, however, he sees you sitting comfortably on some other man's lap, smiling and laughing with him like how you usually did with the actor.

Zen's heart clenches inside his chest while his steps become more heavy as he slowly approaches you, and he tentatively calls out your name, catching your attention. The way you look at Zen nearly breaks him, the usual light in your eyes replaced with nothing but pure disgust. The actor tries to speak, but he's interrupted by the clicking of heels which belongs to none other than his ex-girlfriend.

Both you and the other woman exchange a knowing smile with each other and laugh together that sounded as though you were mocking the male. The party co-ordinator shoots Zen a look of pity, and the actor doesn't know how he feels about that. You then walk towards Zen and grab hold of his hand, but it feels cold to the touch. "I'm sorry, Zen," you smile apologetically, but you don't sound sincere in the slightest. "You just aren't good enough. I found someone much better."

The young man opens his mouth to speak but finds that he has no voice. The words he wants to say get lodged in his throat as he feels his heart shatter and fall apart piece by piece. Why again? What is he doing wrong? Why can't he keep the ones he love by his side?

Zen gasps, his eyes shooting open, only to be greeted by the sight of his ceiling. The actor takes deep and shaky breaths, his chest rising and falling in tandem as he slowly starts to get his bearings. A dream. It was just a dream. Zen swallows thickly, the corners of his eyes pricking with tears as strands of his hair stick on his face, having worked up quite a sweat.

What if that dream was a prophetic one?

As soon as the thought crosses his mind, Zen sits up on the bed and bites his lower lip in a poor attempt to stop its trembling, and he starts to get dizzy as he struggles with trying to convince himself that it was just a dream—no, a nightmare—and that he has nothing to worry about. You wouldn't leave him like that. You had told him you loved him.

...But what if?

Before he knows it, Zen is already reaching for his phone and pulling up your contact information. The device shakes in his hand as he runs his other hand through his hair, and the actor hesitates. It's already this late in the night; surely, you must be asleep by now, and he doesn't want to bother you with something he thought to be so trivial.

The actor takes a sharp inhale of breath as he decides against texting or calling you and places his phone back to its proper spot. The young man shakes his head and lies back down, instead on his stomach so that he can bury his face into the pillows. He clutches onto the bedsheets so tightly that his knuckles turn white.

Zen's heart aches, and he feels like he's being swallowed whole. He remembers this feeling well. It's the same one as when he first discovered his ex-girlfriend cheating on him. It never occurred to the actor that he would end up feeling this way again.
Zen bites down onto the pillow to muffle his pitiful sobs as the sheet becomes stained with his tears. He wants to scream, but it gets stuck in his throat, and all that comes out is a rough and strangled sound of anguish. The actor tries desperately to convince himself that the feelings you said you have for him are true.

You told him you loved him.

*What if that was a lie?*

No, you aren't that kind of person.

*But how can he know that for sure?*

You're always smiling around him and would sometimes blush from his words or actions. Surely that's proof enough.

*But then what if you decide that he isn't worth your time?*

*What if you leave him for someone better?*

*What if you cheat on him too?*

*What if? What if? What if?*
Chapter 12

When morning comes, the first thing Zen does is call you, the uneasiness in his heart still present from last night. "Good morning!" He greets you with as cheerful of a voice as he can muster.

"Is something wrong?" You ask immediately, and Zen falters for a second. How did you know?

You then continue, offering a small laugh. "You haven't sent me your daily morning selfie."

"O-Oh, right..." the actor replies lamely. In truth, he hasn't sent you one yet because he still felt horrible from that horrible dream, and he doesn't want you to see him in such a pitiful state, but that small falter of his is enough to tell you that Zen isn't his usual self.

"Is something wrong?" You repeat your question, sounding much more serious and concerned this time.

Zen swallows back the "yes" that threatens to spill out and instead answers, "Not at all! I just miss your face is all."

"Oh, is that so? Hm... Are you still at your apartment?"

"Yeah," the actor responds, not quite sure as to why you suddenly changed the topic. "Rehearsal for today starts in the afternoon."

You hum thoughtfully before speaking again. "Okay, I'll be right there!"

Zen is completely baffled when a couple of minutes later, there's a knock on his door, and you're standing there panting for breath as though you had ran a marathon but with a wide grin plastered on your face. "Ta-da!" You exclaim as soon as you've regained your breathing. "Look, now you don't have to miss my face."

The young man stands there in complete bewilderment. "Wait, how did you know where I live?"

"Your address is on your fan site," you reply matter-of-factly. "I've sent you fan letters before. Anyways, that isn't why I came here." You timidly reach a hand out to gently touch Zen's cheek, and there is a warmth behind your eyes as your expression softens. "You...sounded really upset on the phone, and I wanted to check if you were alright."

"So you came running all the way over here...?" The actor asks to clarify, unable to believe the whole situation right now.

"Mm-hmm," you reply cheerfully before adding, "that, and because I wanted to see you again."

You're just absolutely full of surprises, and before you know it, Zen is tugging at your wrist and pulling you into an appreciative embrace. The young man buries his face in the crook of your neck to hide the large grin on his face. "Do you want to come inside for a bit and maybe have a drink before you leave?" He asks, knowing you still have work to go to and that this was just supposed to be a quick visit.

You tilt your head to the side, relieved that Zen seemed to be feeling a bit better. "Sure."

It's kind of strange. The first time Zen's ex-girlfriend came over to his apartment when he had broken his ankle, he felt extremely nervous and excited at the same time, but with you... It felt like you just naturally belonged there. Even when you were glancing around his apartment with
curiosity and wonder, to Zen, it felt like you were always somehow a part of his life already that it didn't seem strange to see you in his otherwise lonely apartment.

Zen hands you a glass of water, and you graciously accept it. "Thank you."

The actor can't help but stare at you as you drink from your glass while your eyes continue to look around his apartment. If Zen drank from the same glass afterwards, wouldn't that be like an indirect kiss? The young man shakes the thought away from his head, chiding himself for such a childish thought before bringing his attention back to you. He really was happy though to have you over, and his heart swells at the fact that you came running to him just because he sounded upset.

As soon as you set the glass down, Zen immediately pulls you towards him once more and wraps his arms around you. "...You know, I think I'm actually a really selfish person," he comments quietly, allowing his fingers to thread through your hair. "I don't ever want to let you go." A comfortable silence settles in before the actor sighs in defeat. "Sorry, you need to head back to your shop, right?"

There's reluctance in Zen's voice, so you try to reassure him, "I'm really looking forward to our first official date tomorrow."

The young man's eyes light up instantly, and a smile forms on his lips. "So am I."

It really isn't the first time that you and Zen spent time alone together, but that was when you were still friends, slowly discovering more about each other and essentially about yourselves. It was a bit different now, a sense of anticipatory intimacy lingering in the air. A feeling of mutual trust and want of revealing much of your hearts and secrets to each other that you wouldn't show anyone else.

Zen wanted to go all out. He was always the romantic; he couldn't resist, but being friends with you for quite some time now, the actor wasn't too sure on what to do that would be able to surprise you. He knew that you liked flowers, but you worked at a flower shop and was surrounded by them every day, so the young man wasn't sure if he should go that route.

Zen sighs heavily to himself, unable to find any good ideas on the Internet. The actor feels upset, and in an effort to distract himself, folds a scrap piece of paper into an airplane and lets it glide through the room. His eyes watch the paper airplane, an idea slowly forming into his mind, and a wide grin spreads across his face.

You stare at yourself in the mirror, hoping you look good enough for your date. You don't want to look too overbearing, but you don't want to look too casual either. You hear a knock, and you immediately go to answer the door, almost tripping on your own two feet in your excited haste.

Zen's eyes widen when you open the door to greet him, a small blush crawling up to his cheeks as his lips part to let out a breath of admiration. "You look gorgeous..." The compliment slips out of him with ease, and your expression softens at his words as a bashful word of thanks tumbles out of your lips. "I have something for you," Zen continues, and you cock your head to the side, curious.

The actor slowly brings his hands that he was holding behind his back out in front of him, a timid smile on his features as he offers you a small bouquet of simple origami flowers. Your eyes light up instantly, and you graciously accept the gift, your fingers brushing against the male's. Zen feels a sense of pride and accomplishment swell within his chest when he sees how absolutely taken you are with the small craft, and he goes to rub the back of his neck.
"I know how much you love flowers, so I thought about doing something different and making these instead. I wanted to try the more complex ones, but I just couldn't get them right and kept on getting papercuts."

"Oh no," you giggle to yourself as you reach out to take Zen's hand, bringing it to your lips and kissing his fingers. "There, I kissed them better." Incoherent stutters fall out of Zen's gaping mouth, and you continue, "Let me just put these away inside. I wouldn't want them to get ruined any time during our date."

As you put the small gift of origami flowers away, you can't help but note how while they weren't perfect and were clumsily done, it was obvious that a lot of time and effort was put into it. Your heart flutters as you leave them for the meantime to admire later, allowing Zen to lead you to the place of your date together.

Zen had decided to take you to see a new musical, a common interest between the two of you. You both take your seats, chatting animatedly about what kind of things you were hoping to see and stuff like that. There's a sparkle in both of your eyes as the two of you talk with each other about your shared passion, and you don't know why, but you just can't tear your eyes away from Zen when you see how excited he is. Whether or not that excitement was from talking about the drama or from being on a date with you, you weren't sure, but no matter what the reason, he looked positively radiant.

"What is it?" Zen asks, snapping you out of your thoughts.

"Hm?"

A small laugh escapes the actor's lips as he tilts his head to the side. "You've been staring at me really intensely for a while now."

"Oh, that... I couldn't help but admire how handsome you look being so happy," you confess without a single hint of embarrassment, and Zen blushes in response, a stupid grin making its way onto his face.

"I could say the same to you. You look positively radiant."

A few awkward and timid touches are exchanged. A brush of skin. Fingers intertwining. None of them are unwelcome though. Soon enough, the show starts, and both you and Zen momentarily get lost into the performance, leaning against one another.

Once the show ends, both you and Zen excitedly chat about your thoughts on the show, offering your own opinions on the music, story, dance numbers, and everything else while the actor walks you back to your apartment. While walking, Zen's hand brushes against yours, unable to decide if he should hold it or not. When you openly brush your hand against his, however, it's more than enough to convince him to just go for it, and the young man takes hold of your hand, pressing his palm flat against yours. He spares you a glance and sees the smile on your lips as you instinctively take a step closer to him.

The actor smiles softly to himself and brings his attention back to in front of him, his heart sinking the slightest bit when he sees a familiar face: the man that the actor's ex-girlfriend cheated with. Zen doesn't think he could ever forget that face, and irritation slowly rises inside of him. He feels you squeeze his hand, catching his attention and sees how your eyes have narrowed.

Both you and Zen try to ignore the male as you two pass by him, but he speaks up, addressing the both of you. "What? You two dating?" He sounds shocked and in disbelief.
Zen opens his mouth to answer, but you cut him off and snap first. "None of your business."

There's contempt laced in your voice that it catches the actor off guard. He looks at you, but the other male continues, this time talking to Zen directly and jeering. "You'll dump her soon enough. After all, she's a cheater."

The accusation makes Zen bristle, and he squares his shoulders. "Who are you to say—"

"Zen," you call the young man's name, effectively interrupting him, and he turns to look at you as you stare back with pleading eyes and weakly tug on his arm. "Let's just go...please...?"

Needless to say, Zen is confused. He wants to ask questions, but he swallows them back when he feels you trembling and squeezing his hand. The young man nods his head, protectively wrapping his arm around your shoulders and guides you away, ignoring the other male who only scoffs at your exit. As soon as the two of you are alone, Zen goes to cup your face. You can't discern what kind of expression he's wearing as the young man stares into your eyes as though searching for something. "Did you know him? W-What did he mean when he called you a cheater?"

"He was...a friend of a guy I used to date," you answer carefully, and Zen silently urges you to continue. You sigh in reluctant defeat. "He didn't like me, I didn't like him. He was a _dick_ who somehow convinced my dumbass ex that I was cheating on him even though I wasn't, then my ex dumped me."

Zen's eyebrows knit together, and you can see the guilt pool into his eyes from having made you bring up such an unpleasant memory as well as for doubting you. "Why would your ex—"

"It's fine," you reply firmly, making a dismissive motion with your hands. "If he was that easily swayed by his friend and untrusting of me, then he just wasn't worth it. The arguments we had with me trying to convince him were a waste of my time..."

"I...don't believe you to be one to ever cheat..." Zen comments quietly to himself as he recalls all of his past interactions with you.

Your expression softens at the young man's words, relief tugging at your mind that he believes you. "I would never...especially with somebody as precious like you."

The corners of Zen's lips tug upwards into a smile, and he leans forward to rest his forehead against yours. "Can I take you to one more place? I don't want to end our date with something like this."

"I don't think I want this date to end at all," you murmur softly, and Zen takes that as an invitation to take your hand once more and guide you to the destination he has in mind.

Zen brings you to what looks like a small theatre, but it looks like it's closed which piques your curiosity. The two of you sneak around, and it doesn't take a long time for you to figure out just what the actor was planning with a bounce in his steps. Zen shifts some sturdy boxes around to stand on and fiddles around with a window before opening it. He then lifts you up and places you onto the window sill, and you glance inside the abandoned theatre. The actor joins you on the window sill soon afterwards before jumping down to the floor inside the theatre, turning around to face you and stretching his arms out, silently telling you to jump.

"Oh my god, Zen, what if we get caught?" You ask softly, hesitating on the window.

"Then I'll protect you like a knight in shining armour," Zen winks at you, and you roll your eyes.

"That isn't—oh jeez..." you sigh exasperated, admitting defeat.
The young man chuckles at your defeat before speaking again. "Jump. I'll catch you, trust me."

There's no reason for you to doubt his words, so you let go of the window sill and jump down into Zen's arms. He catches you with ease as promised and encases you in his warmth. You can hear his heart racing against his chest before the actor pulls away to check that you're alright. When he sees that you're perfectly fine, he pulls you back in for an embrace and buries his face into your hair, breathing in your scent.

"Care to explain to me what we're doing here?" You finally ask, uncertainty still laced in your voice.

Zen laughs to himself, pulling away from the embrace so that his hand can slide down and take yours, gently guiding you along. "I used to work here and would sometimes sneak in after hours to practice more with my acting." The actor's eyes glance around the theatre in search for something that you're not too sure of. "It should be around here somewhere... Ah."

The young man makes a small sound of exclamation when he finds what he's looking for and excitedly pulls you along. Your eyes follow his gaze, and they land upon a grand piano. It looks slightly worn but still usable, and after pressing a few keys to check the sound, Zen nods in satisfaction. The actor pulls out the stool, and with a flourish, gestures for you to sit. You roll your eyes at his gusto, but the amused smile stays ever present on your features as you make yourself comfortable.

Zen follows soon after you, flashing you a quick smile before directing his attention back to the piano and allowing his fingers to rest on the keys. He takes a deep breath to calm his nerves before he starts playing a familiar melody. Your face lights up instantly when you recognize the song as being one of the pieces in one of the plays that you saw Zen perform in, and you decide to start humming along, your head swaying side to side in rhythm.

Zen doesn't bother to stop the grin that creeps up onto his features when he hears your cheerful voice beside him as he continues playing the piano. The song ends on a light note, and it's immediately followed by a small giggle from you which melts Zen's heart. He twists himself enough on the stool to face you, and you do the same. Silence settles into the space between you two, but it's neither awkward or uncomfortable.

Zen lifts up a hand and rests it upon your cheek, prompting you to lean in closer to his touch. The actor slowly dips his head down, unable to resist the pull that you have on him, and he brings his face closer to yours. He keeps his eyes locked on yours when a flash of doubt crosses in his mind, causing the male to stop in his motions before changing direction and instead leans his head on your shoulder.

"Agh, I can't— I'm sorry—" There's frustration and guilt laced in his apology, as well as something else that you can't quite determine. Self-doubt, perhaps? Not knowing what to do, you tentatively reach a hand up to stroke the young man's head as you murmur his name, and Zen lets out an aggravated sigh. "Ah, what am I doing? I'm on a date with the most beautiful and kindest woman ever, and yet all I can think about is..."

When Zen trails off, you try to finish his sentence for him. "Are you...thinking about your ex-girlfriend?"

"No!" The actor exclaims immediately, snapping his head back up so that you can see the truth in his glossy eyes. "No, no, it's not like that! I just can't help but wonder if I'm good enough for you. What if you leave me? I know I said I don't think you'd be one to cheat, but... but what if? What if you leave me too? What if I give you everything that I have only to have you leave me too? And
then I feel so guilty because I really don't think you're that kind of person, and then I'll probably end up hurting you by pushing you away or something when I don't mean to, and—"

Zen cuts his own rambling off with a shuddering gasp and bowing his head, his lower lip trembling as tears start to form in the corners of his eyes. It breaks your heart to see him look so vulnerable and defeated, and Zen grips onto your arms almost as though to anchor himself as he tries to calm down. You carefully wipe away his tears with your fingers, prompting the young man to slowly bring his gaze back to you.

"It's okay, I understand..." You whisper softly, afraid of speaking any louder in case it'll further upset the male. The gentle care in your voice helps soothe Zen, and you continue. "You don't have to push yourself so hard. We can go at whatever pace you're comfortable with, and I promise you, I won't ever leave you no matter what."

"I love you..." Zen breathes out after a pause, a certain desperation in his voice to make sure that you understand the depth of his feelings for you. "I really do. I really, really love you."

"I know..." Your smile is unwavering as you reciprocate Zen's feelings and wrap your arms around his trembling form. "I love you too."

Relief washes over Zen as he graciously returns your embrace, burying his face in the crook of your neck while you lightly run your fingers through his hair, and Zen wants nothing more than to stay like this forever. To have the two of you wrapped around each other and appreciating the other's company. You feel a warm breath against your ears, and you think the actor whispered something to you, but it was so quiet you didn't get to hear it. Perhaps even Zen himself didn't hear his own words.

After the both of you have calmed down, the two of you sneak back out of the theatre in comfortable silence, and Zen brings you back home. You both reluctantly exchange farewells, but neither of you move afterwards, your hands slowly pulling away but still keeping your fingers linked. Zen stares at your face when a feeling of boldness washes over him. Mustering up as much courage as he possibly can, he leans down and quickly kisses your cheek. Your eyes widen in surprise before a smile splits onto your lips, so Zen decides to kiss your other cheek. When he sees how happy you look, Zen can't help but want to shower your face with kisses to see more of your reactions, but this was enough for now.

You go to enter your apartment but pause for a moment, turning around to address the actor who's still standing there. "Oh yeah, Zen? I have a question about that workout you were doing that one time we talked on the phone."

Zen chokes for a split second as he knows immediately what you're talking about, and evident warmth pools to his cheeks and ears. "Y-Yeah? What is it?"

His reaction is more than enough to confirm your highly sneaking suspicions. "Oh my god, you really were..."

"W-Were what?" Zen acts innocent, a complete contrast from the internal screaming in his mind.

You narrow your eyes, unconvinced but oddly teasing. "Don't play dumb. Don't think that I don't know what you were doing with those hands of yours while we were on the phone."

The actor immediately raises both of his hands in complete surrender. "I-I can explain!"

You in turn raise up your own hand to stop him. "Zen, no. If you do, you're only going to make
things worse for yourself. I understand. You're a perfectly healthy male that has needs." Zen isn't too sure how he feels about that, but at the very least, he's relieved that you aren't repulsed or creeped out by him or anything. Seeing his shoulders relax, you then quickly add, "Just like how I'm a perfectly healthy female that has needs too."

At that, Zen immediately snaps his attention to you, not sure how he's supposed to interpret that or what to do with that information. "Wait, what—"

"Good night, Zen," You choose to ignore his question and say your farewell for the night, a teasing lilt in your voice as you laugh to yourself and close your door, leaving behind a very flustered actor.
That comment you had left Zen with at the end of your date with stuck with him for quite a while. He mulled over it for maybe a bit longer than necessary, uncertain as to how exactly he was supposed to interpret your words and what to do with them. Was it your way of telling him that you were fine with a bit more physical intimacy with the young man, or was it a confession that perhaps you weren't as innocent as Zen had made you out to be?

Zen was practicing his lines, comfortably situated on his bed late into the night when his phone rang, and he excitedly picks it up, eager to talk with you before going to sleep. "Hello beautiful," he chirps in greeting, but you don't reply back. Curious, Zen momentarily pulls the phone away to check if he accidentally ended the call or something, but he sees that it's still connected. The actor tentatively says your name, but there's still no response from you; though, he can hear rustling and some movement from the other side.

Thinking that you perhaps might have accidentally called him, Zen goes to disheartenedly end the call but stops the moment he hears a faint moan on your side of the call. Zen could have sworn his heart stopped beating for a second. Your voice sounds faint, like your phone isn't directly on your person but still close enough to catch your voice.

"Babe?" Zen asks when he hears more shuffling from the call. "Are you there?"

A few seconds of silence pass, and the actor's heart is hammering against his chest as he waits for a response, and his patience is rewarded with your voice softly moaning out his name. Zen's eyes widen, and his cheeks flush. The way you uttered the actor's name goes straight to his crotch as he slowly starts to realize just what you were doing. This is probably what you meant when you told him that you were a perfectly healthy female with needs.

It starts to dawn on Zen that you were currently touching yourself to him, and he can't help but feel kind of happy and flattered at that. Another faint moan from you sounds in the actor's ear, and Zen understands that he should be considerate towards you and hang up the phone to give you your privacy, but then he hears you saying his name once more, and suddenly Zen's struggling to free his cock from its confines with just one hand while he presses the phone closer against his ear. Zen has to strain his ears to hear your voice, but it's definitely worth it, the small and desperate whines exciting him. The actor strokes himself to match your moans, and it isn't long before he too is quietly moaning out your name in tandem. His lips part as his breathing grows more shallow and his strokes increase in pace. The actor curses underneath his breath, feeling how close he already was as his muscles tensed and relaxed.

He never found release this quickly before, but your voice does absolute wonders to him, and Zen hears a strangled gasp followed by a curse from you which sends him over the edge. The actor accidentally drops his phone amidst his orgasm, his eyes clenched shut as he screams your name over and over like a broken chant. The bed creaks loudly and relentlessly underneath him as he thrusts erratically into his pumping hands before stilling entirely, his cock twitching against him as thick ropes of cum spurt out.

Zen gasps for air as he lazily picks up his phone again but sees that the call was already disconnected. The young man has no idea as to whether it was him accidentally ending the call or
That reaction Zen had to your comment about your own needs was absolutely priceless. Sure, you were teasing, but there is a certain truth to it. Zen is sweet and caring which made your heart soar, but you can't deny that he also has a body and face that never fails to make your body temperature heat up.

It was a long and tiring day; you needed to unwind, and you usually did that by listening to Zen's soothing voice, but it was already late and you didn't want to keep him up. You were going through all your call logs with the actor, laughing and smiling at each silly conversation you've had with him when you eventually reach that one call when he was "working out". You snort, unable to wrap your head around on how Zen could actually think you wouldn't know. His moaning and panting weren't that hard to distinguish between an actual work out and from sexual activities. Well, Zen probably doesn't even realize how good (or bad, depending on how you looked at it) his phone is on picking up background noises, and you heard each and every single rustle of sheets and slapping of skin.

You bring the phone closer to your ear and make yourself much more comfortable on the bed. You tune out the mundane conversations and instead focus on the heavy breaths Zen had at the time. His restrained moans and gasps for air send heat to your core, and you slide your free hand down, slipping it underneath the band of your shorts and panties before you start stroking yourself. A small sigh of relief slips past your lips as you think about how you're touching yourself to a time when Zen was jerking himself off, and you pretend to yourself that the two of you were trying to find pleasure together at the same time. You slide a finger inside your folds and start to pump yourself as your mind starts to wander. What was Zen thinking about when he was pumping himself? You could only assume that he was thinking of you, and your lips tug upwards into a smile of satisfaction.

You slowly get more and more lost in the building pleasure inside you, and you put your phone down on your pillow for now so that you can rest your arm and relax yourself, completely oblivious to the fact that you accidentally pressed the "call back" button. Quiet moans slip past your lips as you imagine that it was Zen touching you. That it were his fingers sliding in and out of you, and soon enough, you slip in a second and third finger to your unbearable heat. Your eyes flutter close as you imagine the actor hovering over you, his hair draping over both of you as he gazes down at you with those smoldering eyes. Your lips part to moan out Zen's name, a bit louder than usual, but you don't care. Your mental image of Zen smiles down at you as you start to increase the pumps of your fingers, your thumb now moving to lazily circle your clit. You repeat Zen's name over and over again, and you can feel yourself getting close. You want to listen to Zen's voice, so you pick up your phone to listen to that "work out" call when you finally realize that you accidentally called Zen. Your eyes widen in flustered panic, a strangled gasp and curse leaving you as you go bring your phone up to your ear as your mind races to find an excuse for the phone call. You really don't need to find an excuse though because all you're met with is Zen's voice repeatedly screaming your name somewhat distantly from his phone, the device picking up on the background noise of his creaking bed and slapping skin. In an attempt to reposition your phone, your finger accidentally ends the call, and you curse once more, but that's fine. Zen's broken screams of your name are still ringing loudly in your mind and you pump yourself furiously, rubbing harshly against your clit, bringing you to release. A thrilled cry of Zen's name leaves your lips as...
you come undone, your body writhing and convulsing as pure delight surges through your body.

Once you start to come down from your high, you can't help but laugh in disbelief. "I can't believe that just happened," you mutter quietly to yourself.

When you act like that call never happened, too embarrassed to admit it, Zen follows after you and keeps quiet about it as well. You were helping a customer choose which flowers to buy to give to their date when Zen walks into your store. The two of you lock gazes for a moment and exchange a smile before you direct your attention back to your customer. The actor walks around, glancing through the assortment of flowers on display as he listens to your voice in the background.

"If you don't want to go with the usual rose for your date, you can always go with tulips. They convey love as well, and their colours and simple beauty can suit any date spot, whether extremely romantic or more casual," you explain, and Zen can't help but smile at your cheerful voice, evident that you were enjoying your job.

The customer makes their choice, and you ring them up before they leave, now leaving you and Zen all alone in the shop. He's still looking through the different flowers when he feels you wrap your arms around his torso from behind, and he chuckles. You offer a small laugh as you speak dramatically, "Wow, I'm so lucky to have such a famous actor in my shop!"

Zen turns himself around to face you, and he loosely wraps his arms around your waist. "And I'm so lucky to have such a wonderful lady as my girlfriend," he hums in a sing-song voice as he kisses the side of your mouth. The young man's grown a bit bolder than before, slowly becoming comfortable with where your relationship currently is, but a part of him still hesitated on kissing you directly on the lips.

You scrunch your face up. "Cringe."

"Hmm, but you love it, don't you?" Zen teases as he taps the tip of your nose with a finger.

"I love you," you correct the young man as you place a quick kiss on his cheek which makes him smile wide like a complete idiot. "There's a difference. So? What brings you here?"

"What? I can't visit my girlfriend while she's working just to see her?" The actor speaks with feigned hurt before laughing at himself along with the roll of your eyes and continuing. "Actually, I wanted to tell you that I was casted sort of last minute as a side character for this one small production, and I thought you might be interested in watching."

"Absolutely!" You beam without hesitation.

When the day of the performance came, as promised, you were there. Since it was so last minute, you were barely able to purchase a ticket, but even if Zen was just casted as a side character, you still wanted to watch. It wasn't like it was out of obligation now that you were his girlfriend; it really wasn't any different than those other times when you were still nothing more than just a fan to him, except now there was something a bit more to look forward to.

As soon as the show ends, Zen quickly gathers his belongings and bids his farewells to his coworkers so that he can meet up with you as soon as possible. The actor takes out his phone to text you, but it isn't necessary because you're already calling his name and running towards him. "Your performance was amazing as always!" You exclaim enthusiastically, and Zen grins wide at your reaction.

You then take out a bouquet of roses that you were hiding behind your back and offer it to the
actor who seems very surprised at the sight. A cheerful laugh escapes your lips. "It's for you."

Zen eventually recovers from his surprise and graciously accepts the roses. He stares at them with awe and wonder before pulling you towards him and rubs his nose against yours, the two of you exchanging a quick laugh at the show of affection. "You are absolutely precious! Thank you, sweetheart."

The moment is interrupted by one of Zen's coworkers who was just leaving as well. "Oh, Zen! Good work today!"

"Thanks, you too," the actor returns.

His coworker then sees you, and he shoots you a warm and welcoming smile. "And who's this cutie? Your new girlfriend?"

You choose to remain quiet, uncertain as to what kind of response Zen would appreciate. While the two of you have been going out for a while now, the actor still never publicly announced it. It wasn't like he was hiding it, unashamed to show public displays of affection whenever you two went out together, but he didn't go out of his way to announce it to the whole world either. You were fine with it, trusting Zen's judgement, but being in the industry that he was, you didn't know what kind of consequences whatever reply you come up with will have to the actor's career.

"Yeah," Zen admits with a toothy grin, pulling you closer to him. "So hands off." The young man laughs in a friendly manner, but there was no denying the hint of seriousness laced within his voice.

Zen's coworker raises his hands in mock surrender and grins. "I would never. Besides, seeing you two like this, it's obvious you're both smitten with each other. Just remember to practice safe sex!"

Both you and Zen flush at the same time, and the actor sputters. "Y-You—!"

The other man just laughs in response and waves his hand in a dismissive manner before leaving you two alone. As soon as both you and Zen get over that small comment, the ever gentleman Zen is, he offers to walk you back home, and you accept. The two of you link hands with each other as a comfortable silence envelops you both, lost in your own respective thoughts. Despite walking at a much slower pace than usual to prolong this moment, you arrive at your apartment far too soon.

Being careful not to crush the bouquet of roses in his hand, Zen dips his head down and places a quick kiss on your cheek. His face hovers in front of yours for a while before he tentatively asks, "Can I...kiss you?"

You know full well that he means to kiss you on the lips, and you offer a small nod. "Yes...please do."

Zen smiles appreciatively and leans closer towards you. The two of you tilt your heads to the side as to not bump your noses with each other, and your eyelids slowly start to fall shut the closer Zen's lips approach yours, slowly but surely. The actor pauses for a moment, his own lips just barely brushing against yours, and your warm breath mixes together with Zen's in the small gap between you two. You and Zen take a moment to stare at each other's lidded eyes, a silent exchange of unsaid words and emotions.

Zen closes the gap between you two, shakily pressing his lips against yours. Both of your eyes flutter close now that the anticipation had dissipated. The kiss is a bit awkward but still sweet, almost as though testing the waters before Zen shortly pulls away. He exhales shakily, a whole
current of emotions surging through him before another question is whispered past his lips. "Can I kiss you again?"

"Yes," you answer simply and with encouragement, closing your eyes before Zen can even bring his lips close to yours once more, having complete trust in him.

You feel the actor stroke your cheek with his free hand before kissing you once more, but this time a bit more firmly and with newfound confidence. It isn't any more intense than last time, still just a simple and sweet kiss, but Zen's confidence somehow makes it seem a bit more different. Zen slowly pulls away, and you slightly part your lips to breathe. Just as you start to open your eyes once more, Zen is kissing you again, this time without permission, but you don't mind in the slightest.

Zen keeps on breaking the kiss apart only to capture your lips again and again, almost as though he can't get enough of you. He knows that he should stop, but he can't. Each gentle press of lips leaves him with pleasant tingles that has him wanting more. You clutch onto the actor's shirt as you lean in more towards him to return each kiss.

In his indecisiveness as to whether to stop and pull away or continue and lean forward, Zen stumbles back a bit, and his heel catches onto a small crack in the ground which sends both you and him falling to the ground with a gasp and yelp. Surprisingly and impressively, Zen is able to cushion your fall with his body while still being able to keep the bouquet of roses he was still holding aloft.

"You okay?" Zen asks, to which you answer with a bark of laughter and burying your face into the young man's chest. "...Babe, I can't help but feel like you're laughing at me."

"That's because I am," you respond amidst your laughter. "I swear, you are so...amazing. Absolutely amazing."

The actor's eyes widen, having not expected that kind of response, but his expression softens soon afterwards as your laughter continues to fill his ears. Once you've calmed down from your laughing fit, you get off of the male before helping him up from the ground. "Call me later?"

Zen hums cheerfully in response, giving you one last kiss for the night. "You know I will."

As soon as Zen returns home, he places the bouquet of roses he received from you into a makeshift vase and sets it on his table. The actor pulls out a chair for him to sit, and he props his elbows onto the tabletop, resting his chin on his palms as he stares at the roses in silence. A smile creeps up onto his features as he reaches a hand out to carefully stroke the petals, finding them to be soft to the touch.

Zen's mind then wanders to the multiple kisses he shared with you. Your lips felt so soft and warm, and it left the young man craving for more which you were more than willing to provide. He remembers the way your eyelashes brushed against your skin each time they fluttered close with each kiss. He remembers the feel of your skin underneath his palm as he stroked your cheek. He remembers the way your hands clutched onto his shirt as though never wanting to let him go.

The actor's expression melts into a lovestruck smile before allowing his head to rest on the table, pressing his cheek flat against the smooth surface as he continues to stare at the roses before him. He traces the petals with his fingers before burying his face into his arms to muffle himself as he laughs at how so deeply in love he was with you.
Chapter End Notes

The complete sexual tension these two have, I swear--
Just how many times will Zen's subconscious hurt him like this? The scene before the young man makes him sick, but his body is frozen in place which prevents him from walking or turning away. He at least tries to shut his eyes, but his body refuses to listen to him, and Zen has no choice but to watch as some man he doesn't know fucks himself into you.

Zen is vaguely aware that this is just a dream, but he can't wake up from it, and it breaks his heart apart with each delighted moan you give that isn't for him but for someone else. His heart shatters with each forceful thrust you willingly and enthusiastically accept from the man that isn't him. It isn't his hair you're running your fingers through. It isn't his cheek you're stroking. It isn't him you're smiling at. It isn't him you direct the words "I lov—"

Zen yells at the top of his lungs to block out the end of that sentence. He doesn't want to hear it. He doesn't want to hear you say those words to anyone else but him. At least not those three special words. Broken sobs fall out of the actor's lips as your laughter echoes and rings in his ears, mocking him.

Just then, slender arms snake around the young man's torso and waist as somebody new presses their body against his back. Even without looking, Zen knows that it's the memory of his ex-girlfriend that he can't quite shake away. The woman brings her lips close to the actor's ear and sighs. She whispers simple words and phrases into his ear, planting small seeds of doubt within him.

"She doesn't actually love you. She loves someone else instead. Who would love someone like you? You have nothing, Zen. You have no one. You can't even satisfy the girl that you love. You can't even touch her intimately. You've only gone so far as a kiss with her and nothing more? How pathetic. I mean, how can you make love to her when you know that she'll leave you once she's had her fill? You know she's only staying with you for now because you still haven't fucked her, right? She'll leave you for another man's cock once she's satisfied with yours, just like how I did."

"She isn't that kind of person," Zen mutters out weakly. It was hard to tell if he was trying to convince his ex-girlfriend or himself.

The party coordinator laughs. "Is that so? Then prove it. Fuck her right now and see if she stays. Or leave her starved of that intimacy and watch her leave anyways."

Zen's eyes slowly flutter open, finding his cheeks to already be wet with his tears. The actor turns to his side, frustrated to have yet another unpleasant dream as gutteral sobs slip past his quivering lips. It's getting difficult for him to breathe, like a weight is pressing down against him, and the young man struggles to force himself to sit up.

He's trembling like a child as the dream he had lingers in his mind, and the actor clutches his hands tightly around his covers. Zen looks to the side, and his eyes fall upon his phone. He shakily reaches for it, and he ends up accidentally dropping the phone on the bed from his weak grip. The young man curses internally before picking the device back up again and pulling up your number. He can't do this. He needs—
"Hello?" Your voice sounds groggy when you pick up the phone, no doubt having just been woken up, and guilt pools inside Zen's chest for disturbing you.

"S-Sorry," the young man stutters as he tries to get his breathing back to normal. "I...I had a bad dream, and the first thing I thought of was to call you. I-I'm sorry, I woke you up, didn't I?"

A faint yawn comes from your side of the call before you ask, "It's fine. Do you want me to come over?"

"What?" Zen sounds surprised by your suggestion, and he can hear some shuffling from the other side of the phone. He continues, "It's late though. I don't want you walking all by yourself in the middle of the night just to come here... It could be dangerous."

"Then, do you want to come over to my place instead? I know how terrifying it could be being alone after having a bad dream, and I think it's better being with someone in person rather than just talking on the phone."

Zen chews on his bottom lip as he contemplates his answer. "Then, can I come over?"

"Of course," you answer without a hint of reluctance or hesitation, wanting to assure Zen that he was welcome at any time.

So, the actor graciously takes you up on your offer. He slips on a random shirt and sweatpants before leaving his apartment and jogging his way over to your place. His heart beats erratically against his chest, a whole storm of emotions whirling inside him as he approaches your apartment. He hesitates the slightest bit before knocking on the door, and it doesn't take you long to answer it, a gentle smile on your face to greet him.

You wordlessly take one of Zen's trembling hand into your own and guide him inside. You shut the door behind him before moving to comfortingly wrap your arms around his figure. Zen threads his fingers through your hair, finding a certain kind of peace in the action before a soft apology tumbles out of his lips for disturbing you this late in the night.

"You don't have to apologize," you reassure him as you soothingly run your hand along his broad back. "You did nothing wrong."

"...Um, b-babe?" Zen asks hesitatingly, his voice wavering with nervousness, and you offer a small questioning hum. The actor swallows the lump in his throat before asking, "Can I...sleep with you tonight?" You immediately tense up, and Zen hurriedly adds, "I-I mean just sleeping! Nothing else!"

You slowly pull away from the young man, an uncertain expression plastered on your features. You slowly start to speak, "I don't mind, but my room is..." Zen can't help but assume the worst, thinking that there might be another man in your bed, and when you see the hurt and panic behind his eyes, you rush to explain. "It's nothing bad! Just...embarrassing. Y-You have to promise me you won't laugh or anything when you see it..."

"I won't," Zen answers, still unable to shake the unpleasant feelings away.

You nod in acceptance before guiding the actor to your room. Sure, Zen's visited your place before, but he's never been in your room before, so he doesn't know what to expect. What greeted the male was a complete surprise. Plastered on the walls are various posters of him from his musicals, and a special corner which seems to be reserved for some of his daily selfies he sent you that you printed out. Upon the sight, relief washes over Zen, and he can't help but laugh at how worried he was,
thinking that you were with someone else when that wasn't the case at all.

"Zen!" You whine out, puffing your cheeks into a pout. "You said you wouldn't laugh!"

The actor doesn't say anything, far too overwhelmed for words and instead crashes his lips against yours. There's a certain desperation behind it, but he's smiling against you, his shoulders relax as he pulls your body closer to him by your waist. When Zen pulls away from the kiss, his eyes are shining as he whispers against you, "I love you... I love you so much."

You're surprised by the sudden reaffirmation of his feelings for you, and it takes you a moment to regain yourself before you can return it, mirroring his smile towards you. Zen breathes out a sigh of relief as he tucks a lock of your hair behind your ear and moves to place several light kisses upon your cheeks, each one tickling you.

"C'mon," you gently urge him, carefully pulling away. "Let's go to sleep. Unless you want something to eat or drink first or prefer to stay up?"

The actor shakes his head, the exhaustion catching up with him now that he was peacefully alone with you with a reaffirmation that you love him. "No, you're right. Let's sleep."

Both you and Zen make yourself comfortable on the bed, nervousness and awkwardness hanging in the air as you two settle to lie on your sides, facing each other. Zen tentatively tucks one arm underneath you and loosely drapes the other over your waist before tangling your legs together. He sighs softly before placing his lips on the crown of your head. "What did I ever do to deserve someone like you?"

"Oh, I think I know the answer to that." You grin at the young man, piquing his curiosity. "You were just being you. I fell in love with you for a reason, you know."

"And what's that?" Zen asks as his heart swells from your words.

You laugh softly before answering with a question of your own. "Where should I start? There's so many..."

"How about starting with how attractive I am?" The actor can't stop the joy that rises within him, and he unknowingly pulls you closer towards his body.

You lift up a hand and lightly stroke the young man's cheek, your expression softening. "Oh, but there are other better things to start with. Like how kind and sweet you are, how hardworking you are, how talented you are, how funny you are..." Zen's breath hitches in his throat when you lean closer towards him, and you steal his breath away when you give him a small and sweet kiss on his lips.

The actor's cheeks flush several shades of red, and he struggles to find the words. All he can manage out right now is a quiet whisper of your name, his eyes glistening before you give him one last kiss for the night. "You don't have to tell me about that bad dream you had if you don't want to, but if there's anything that you want to make you feel better, just tell me, and I'll see what I can do."

Zen seems to think about his answer for a moment. "My hair... Can you stroke my hair?"

"Of course. Gladly."

Zen smiles appreciatively at you before burying his face in the crook of your neck so that his locks are easier for you to reach. He breathes in your scent as your fingers carefully run along his hair in a slow and steady rhythm. The actor sighs at the sensation which tickles your neck before you feel
something wet on your skin. It doesn't take you long to realize that they were tears, the young man trembling against your body.

The actor can't help it. He feels so relieved and at peace in your arms like this that his overwhelming emotions spill out in the form of tears. There's so much fear and insecurity in him that he doesn't know what to do. Guilt tugs at his mind, feeling as though all he's ever done since getting together with you was take from you. He feels as though he just takes your kindness and patience without ever giving back.

Zen pulls back from you a bit, and you pause in your motions as he stares into your eyes. The actor's cheeks are tear-stained, and it absolutely breaks your heart. The betrayal of his ex-girlfriend must have affected him greatly, but you understand that it must have been proof of how deeply he loved her. It's proof of how much he's given to her that he was struggling right now to give to you.

You can't help but feel bitter towards Zen's ex-girlfriend, not because she used to be on the receiving end of Zen's love, but because she hurt somebody as precious as him so deeply. It doesn't make sense to you as to how somebody could ever take the man before you for granted and to betray him like that. In all your time of being together with Zen, you've seen just how loyal he is. To betray that kind of loyalty just seems so cruel and unfathomable.

You lift up a hand to stroke Zen's cheek, but he captures your wrist instead. He brings your hand to his lips and kisses your fingers, his gaze never leaving yours. "Just what... What is it that I can do for you?" You aren't sure what he means by that, so you tilt your head in confusion. Zen closes his eyes and furrows his brows, thinking carefully about what to say next. "You've given me so much, yet I've never given you anything in return."

"But you have," you interrupt the male, prompting him to open his eyes to look at you once more. "You brighten up my days and make me laugh. You listen to my worries and cheer me up. You encourage me. You do so much for me already, each and every single day. What I give to you, you've given to me."

"But...do you ever want...more?"

You stitch your eyebrows together in confusion. "I'm...not sure I understand."

You can see that Zen is thinking about how to respond, or if he should even respond. In the end, Zen just shakes his head, smiling sadly. "It's nothing. Never mind. Goodnight..."

Chapter End Notes

The next chapter will be posted within the same day, probably later at night, so look forward to it. ('∶
Much to your surprise, you're the first one to wake up rather than Zen. You had assumed that he would be the first one up as he was someone who kept to a proper workout schedule to maintain his figure, but glancing at him with you still in his arms, he looks to be quite content and at peace right now. You internally debate as to whether or not you should get up and make breakfast, afraid of leaving the young man after seeing how worn down he looked last night. You really don't want him to wake up alone with you gone since it seemed he needed to be with somebody at the moment, so you decide to stay in bed a bit longer until Zen woke up himself.

Unable to fall back asleep, however, you merely allow yourself to just stare at his features and admire how gorgeous he looks. You tentatively reach a hand up to trace his jawline, and you smile to yourself. You're not too sure just how long you've been staring at the male before you, but at some point, his breathing started to become much more ragged, and you knit your eyebrows together in worry. The first thing you assume is that he's having a nightmare, but then you feel something hard poking at your thigh, and your eyes widen in realization.

Almost as though right on cue with your realization, Zen slowly starts to rock his hips, the bulge in his sweatpants rubbing against you, and all you can do is scream in your mind that this is really happening right now. The rational part of you is telling you to wake Zen up, but the other part is enjoying the feel of the actor's clothed sex against you way too much. Still, you understand that Zen was still asleep, and you didn't want to take advantage of that nor disturb his slumber, so you carefully try to separate yourself.

A soft whine of protest slips past the young man from the sudden disappearance of warmth, and he pulls you towards him again and holds you much closer and tighter against his body. Even when asleep, he's still rather strong. The actor's lips naturally curve into a small smile of satisfaction after having you in his arms again as he continues with the lazy roll of his hips.

"Zen, I swear you must be the most talented person on the planet for being able to kill someone while you're still asleep..." you mutter softly underneath your breath, feeling like your entire being may very well explode soon.

You have no choice but to admit defeat and stay there, so you try to distract yourself and focus on something else. For example, you can focus on the small morning light peeking through the curtains of your windows, or the way the bed dipped underneath the two of you, or the feel of Zen's toned body against you, or Zen's rather prominent bulge grinding against your body, or even the small shudders that course through you as Zen softly pants and moans in your ears.

Warmth pools to your cheeks and other parts of your body, uncertain as to how much more you can take of this, but then Zen's grip on you tightens the slightest bit, and he quietly moans out your name against your ear. A squeak manages to slip past your throat as you attempt to stop yourself from screaming, having confirmed that whatever Zen is dreaming about involves you. Still asleep and completely oblivious however, Zen continues to moan your name again and again, unknowingly burying his face in the crook of your neck as the rocking of his hips become a bit faster and more desperate. Whatever he's dreaming about must be really good, you think idly to yourself.

You curse underneath your breath as you shake the actor's shoulder and call his name, trying to get
him to wake up as you use up all your willpower to not start grinding back against him from how good this all feels. Zen's eyes flutter open as his grinding slows down but doesn't quite stop entirely, and you can see that he's still half-asleep with his lidded eyes as he flashes you a languid smile before sleepily kissing you on the lips and surprising you.

"Babe..." he whispers against you as he slowly pulls away from your lips and allows his eyes to close once more and draws out a blissful sigh. "Mmm...sooo good...you make me feel so good..."

"Zen, wake up." Your voice sounds strained and frantic which is enough to slowly pull the young man back to consciousness.

"Hm...?" Zen hums in happy curiosity as he blinks, his bearings starting to come back to him, and it slowly starts to dawn on him as he remembers the events of last night. The realization comes to him piece by piece. He was on your bed. He was holding you in his arms. He was grinding against you—Zen's eyes widen, his lips parting. He was grinding against you.

Zen lets out a gasp which sounds more like a strangled scream as he immediately stops with his actions and pulls away from you, and he turns around so that his back is now facing you instead. The actor buries his face into his hands as muffled curses and repeated apologies tumble out of his lips. "Oh god, I'm sorry! I'm so sorry! I-I didn't mean to— I-I thought— Oh god..."

"It's okay," you reassure the young man, and a part of you considers teasing him about it to lighten the awkwardness, but you think that it would only end up doing more damage than good. Instead, you gently place your hand on the actor's shoulder and decide to change the subject. "Is there anything you want for breakfast?"

There's a small pause before Zen answers. "...D-Do you think you can make some pancakes?" After that really embarrassing wake-up call, the actor was craving for something a bit more sweet to hopefully get his mind off of it.

"Sure thing." Zen feels the bed shift around before your weight leaves it as you head to the washroom to freshen yourself up a bit before getting ready to start on breakfast. "You can use the washroom if you'd like," you call out to him as your footsteps disappear into the kitchen.

The actor stays lying on your bed, a heavy blush on his face as guilt and shame grows inside him. He was having a really good dream, and somewhere in the cusp of consciousness and sleep, he felt himself holding onto something, and he just assumed that it was one of his pillows that he grabbed hold onto and could imagine to be you. It completely slipped his mind that he fell asleep with you in his arms last night, and what he thought to be just a pillow actually ended up being you instead.

Zen feels so guilty, grinding himself against you like that. Sure, he was asleep and had no idea what his body was doing, but it still feels wrong to him. He feels as though he ended up taking advantage of your kindness and consideration towards him. What if you were actually really uncomfortable but didn't want to wake him? The actor furrows his brows and groans in frustration towards himself.

He's still hard, Zen eventually realizes. The dream he had of the two of you making passionate love together is still playing in his mind, and the pleasure that his body felt when he was unconsciously grinding against you is still lingering within his veins. It doesn't help that Zen's surrounded by your scent, and his hand is already reaching down to relieve his aching cock. It'll be quick, he thinks idly to himself. After all, Zen doesn't want to be left with an awkward boner while eating breakfast with you since he couldn't will it away no matter how hard he tried.

The actor knows that he really shouldn't touch himself in your own home, especially on your bed,
but the scent of your bed is so comforting to him that he doesn't want to move. This is where you sleep, and if that one accidental phone call you made to him that one time was what Zen thought it was, it was also where you touched yourself while moaning out his name. The idea of masturbating on the same bed as you makes Zen much more excited than he would like to admit.

Zen eagerly starts to stroke himself at a quick pace, heavy breaths falling out from his lips. In no time at all, his hips start rocking to the rhythm of his hand, and the young man buries his face into the pillow to muffle his moans. He breathes in your scent that lingers there, and he sighs in satisfaction. He moves around on the bed, his hands momentarily leaving his cock to grip onto the bedsheets underneath him instead as he positions himself on his knees.

Zen then starts to rock his hips and slides the underside of his cock along the sheets, dragging his balls along the bed too. The actor's jaw falls slack as he starts moaning much more frequently against your pillow, and he drags his cock along your bed again and again. The warmth of your lingering presence in your bedroom feels like it's enveloping and swallowing the actor whole, and he can't take it any longer.

Both of Zen's hands fly to furiously pump his throbbing cock, his knees digging into the mattress as he lifts his ass up in the air a bit more. The young man buries his face further into your pillow as the moans, groans, and grunts continue to fall out of him with a flourish. "Fuck, I'm so sorry babe; I'm gonna c-cu—" Zen doesn't get a chance to finish his sentence, a muffled scream leaving him as he spills his essence all over your sheets and staining them.

Zen gives a shuddering gasp, his chest heaving as he tries to catch his breath. He looks down at the mess he made and gasps in horror as soon as he comes back to his senses. The actor curses underneath his breath as he grabs a couple of tissues and tries to wipe the sheets. He hurriedly goes to clean and freshen himself up before heading to the kitchen where you were just finishing up making breakfast.

"H-Hey, babe?" Zen starts, rubbing the back of his neck as he averts his gaze.

"Hm?" You ask as you start to set the table up for the both of you.

Zen bites his lower lip as he struggles with his words, fumbling for an excuse. "Um, I-I feel bad for coming over and sleeping here so suddenly last night, so uh... h-how about I wash your sheets for you?"

"There's no need since I already washed them recently. I was the one that invited you over anyways, so it's o—o-oh," you stutter at the end when you finally direct your gaze towards the actor and see that his face is extremely flushed, embarrassment and shame evident on his features, and your eyes widen in realization as to why he would make such a strange offer. "Oh my god, did you—"

Zen turns his head to the side and covers his mouth with the back of his hand, a muffled and clumsy apology tumbling out which confirms your unfinished question. You stand there in stunned silence for a moment before snapping yourself out of your thoughts. You really don't want to make Zen feel any more awkward than this, so you respond, "I, uh, well, um...i-if you insist, go ahead. Th-The laundry's over there... Um, i-if you uh, need help with it, just... Um, tell me, I-I guess?"

Zen nods mechanically, deciding to fix the sheets now before eating breakfast, and he goes to retrieve the stained sheets to put them in the laundry machine. He comes back as soon as he's done, and the two of you eat in an awkward silence, lost in your own respective thoughts. The uncomfortableness hangs in the air even after breakfast and clearing the table, but you're still worried for the actor after last night, so you decide to help get his mind off of things by playing
some video games. To your relief, it definitely helps.

"Huh, he looks kinda cute... What kind of animal is he?" Zen asks as he holds you comfortably in his arms with your figure in between his legs while you play through the small platform puzzles of the game.

"A cat-bird-thing, maybe? Kinda reminds me of a cat," you reply before you're met with a loud sneeze from the male which causes you to jump in surprise and make your player fall off the platform to their doom. Zen sniffs from behind you and apologizes. You decide to leave the game for now and instead turn around to face the male. "I knew you were allergic to them, but is it that bad that just the word alone is enough for a reaction?"

"Kind of," Zen answers with a light shrug of his shoulders.

A small laugh slips past you before you place a quick kiss on the actor's lips. "Aww, my poor lovely Zen," you say teasingly, and the actor retaliates by pinching your cheek, so you move to tug on his hair. Zen offers a small moan, and you arch an eyebrow. "Oh, right... It's been a while since I last pulled on your hair, so I almost forgot... You like that, don't you?"

"Babe, please don't tease me..." Zen whines softly, and you can't help but laugh, deciding to give in to the actor just this once and letting go of his locks. The moment you do, the actor punishes you for your teasing by tickling your sides. You laugh loudly, trying to pry yourself off, but Zen keeps his hold on you firm as you squirm in protest. You bury your face into his chest, begging him to stop already, and he finally relents.

Zen whispers your name as you try to catch your breath, and you tilt your head up, locking your gaze with the young man. Silence settles in the space between you two; however, unlike the previous one during breakfast, this one isn't awkward but somehow more profound in a way.

Zen winds his arms around your form before dipping his head down to kiss you, and you're more than happy to return it. It starts of simple enough, but the doubts that Zen feels slowly start to melt into the kiss too, and it gradually becomes more intense. Desperate. The actor unwinds his arms from you and instead rests his hands on your hips, his fingers playing with the hem of your shirt. He pulls away from the kiss, and the two of you remain there unmoving, almost as though waiting for the other to make the move first. And you would have, had it not been for the hesitation and fear in Zen's eyes.

"You know, I—"

both you and Zen speak up at the same time, only to stop at the same time, quietly urging for the other to continue. The actor offers you to go first, and you clear your throat.

"I'm not asking this to pressure you or anything, but how do you feel about...having sex?" You ask straight to the point as warmth pools to your cheeks, hoping to finally start this topic of conversation that's been nagging at your mind for a while now. Both you and Zen have been dating for a while now, and while you don't only care about sex, you do wish for that kind of physical intimacy.

"Is...that what you want?" Zen answers your question with one of his own, uncertainty laced in his voice, and you shake your head.

"I don't want my answer to influence your answer, so I'll give my response after I know what you think."

The actor remains quiet for a moment and drops his gaze. "I think...sex isn't just something physical. I think it's an expression of what we feel, and I do want to express how I feel towards..."
When Zen trails off, you gently take his hands in yours and give them a reassuring squeeze. "But...?"

"But I guess I'm scared," Zen finishes, his voice wavering as he squeezes your hands back. "It...It was painful. There, I finally said it. It was painful seeing my ex give her love that she told me was mine to keep to someone else. It hurt that what we built up in that time we got to know each other—what I thought was something special between the two of us—could be broken down and given away so easily to her, and I... I don't want to feel that ever again. I really don't want to feel that same pain again, but at the same time—"

Zen takes a shuddering gasp as he tries to collect himself once more. The actor lifts his gaze to yours, and he presses his palm to your cheek, his hand trembling against you. "But at the same time, I want to show you just how much I love you. I want you to feel me and the depth of what I feel for you while I feel you and the depth of what you feel for me. I want you, body, heart, and soul, but I want to be selfish and keep them all to myself. I love you, and you mean everything to me, and I want to express that with my entire being, but there's a part of me that's scared of getting hurt again..."

You're stunned silent as you process Zen's words and feelings. He looks at you with so much intensity behind his eyes that you can't help but feel your face flush, but you can't bear to look away. You don't dare. Not when Zen is finally lying all of his feelings and doubts down to you, and you decide to acknowledge and accept all of them straightforwardly.

Your hands reach up to cup the actor's face. "I know that words will never be enough, but I love you more than you can ever imagine. You fill my thoughts and my dreams every day and night, Zen. I will never leave you nor betray you and your love like your ex did. Be selfish of me, I don't mind; only if you'll let me be selfish of you. I want you too. More than anything in the world because you are my entire world."

There's a silence in the air, but it's not uncomfortable nor overbearing. It's just mere simple silence as both you and Zen allow all of the words said to settle in. The actor's heart hammers against his chest, and before he knows it, he's kissing you intensely on your lips, drinking in the surprised gasp you let out as he pulls your body flush against his.

Zen feels so confused. He feels so happy, but he's crying at the same time. His heart hurts and feels like it's about to burst, but it feels nice at the same time which doesn't make sense to him. The actor breaks the kiss apart for air before he starts laughing, resting his forehead against yours, not once letting up on his grip around you.

"Z-Zen?" You're confused to the young man's behaviour, but seeing his relaxed shoulders shaking so freely and hearing his laughter, you can't help but smile too.

As soon as Zen is able to calm down with his laughter, he speaks. "And you say that I'm a cringeworthy romantic."

You exhale a laugh while lightly smacking his arm. "You are! You're just rubbing off on me."

The actor only smiles in response before kissing you once more, this time much more soft and gentle. He eases up on his grip around you, but you choose to keep your body flush against his before breaking the kiss apart. Zen sighs dreamily, relief washing over him now that everything was out in the open, and he lazily runs his fingers through your hair. "Do you have any idea...just how deeply in love I am with you?"
"I can only imagine, but that's why you'll show me yourself one day, right?" There's a teasing lilt in your voice, but the seriousness in the hidden meaning behind your words don't go unnoticed.

The actor nods his head, and his hands go to squeeze your own while he kisses your cheek. "Yeah, I will."

Chapter End Notes

This and the previous chapter were the hardest to write thus far as I wanted the two to finally get all of their feelings laid out to each other in words but wanted their discussion to seem like a natural thing to build up to. Feedback would most definitely be appreciated!
Chapter 16

It's early morning, and you're just about to enter your shop and prepare things for the day when your vision is suddenly obstructed by somebody's hands from behind. You can feel the person's warmth emanating to your back, and a familiar voice whispers playfully in your ears. "Guess who~"

A soft giggle slips past you before thoughtfully humming. "Hm, I hope it's that super cute actor I keep thinking about."

The person behind you chuckles, the sweet and light sound pulling a smile from your features. "I keep thinking about you too, princess. Every single second of every single day."

The hands in front of your eyes slide down to your shoulders to turn you around, and you're greeted by none other than your boyfriend, Zen. He smiles down at you before placing a kiss on both of your cheeks and then one last one to your lips. "Good morning to you too, Zen," you greet the actor as your eyes scan his appearance. "Out for a morning run?"

"Yeah," the actor nods cheerfully. "I changed my morning run time and route, so you can expect this—" Zen plants a deep and long kiss to your lips which catches you off guard "—to be a daily occurrence from now on. There's nothing better to start my day than seeing my lovely girlfriend after all."

"I must have blanked out. What is it exactly that I can expect to be a daily occurrence?"

Zen only laughs in response at your cheekiness before dipping his head down again and capturing your lips. The abrupt force causes you to stumble back a bit, but the actor is quick to steady you, holding you by the waist before sliding his hands down to rest on your hips and tracing small circles with his thumbs. When the actor finally breaks the kiss apart, you hum softly. "Oh, I can definitely get used to that."

"I'm glad, princess," Zen beams as he rubs the tips of your noses together.

"Dork," you call him out on his endearing cheesiness.

"Sweetheart," Zen retorts with a smile.

Well, if he's going to be like that, then you have no choice but to respond to that, and suddenly, it becomes a rapid-fire back-and-forth exchange of all sorts of ridiculous pet names, all the while continuing to rub your noses together and scrunching your faces the more cringe-worthy the names got.

"Darling."

"Angel."

"Sugarplum."

"Cupcake."
"Cutie-patootie."

"Precious."


"I— Th-That— Y-y-you— B-Babe! That's not fair!" Zen stutters out before his phone chimes, breaking the two of you out of your personal bubble of being lovey-dovey with each other. The actor quickly takes out his phone and looks at the text message. He flashes you an apologetic smile afterwards, and you understand right away that he needs to get going. You nod in understanding, and he gives you one last quick kiss and wishing you to have a good day before jogging away.

You watch the young man's retreating figure before calling out, "I'll see you later, Zenny-bunny!"

Zen stumbles with his steps, almost tripping and crashing to the ground, just barely catching himself, and he can hear your bark of laughter at his reaction from behind him. He wants to feel angry at you for almost making him fall like that, but all he can do is laugh freely instead, a wide and toothy grin plastered on his face as his heart beats much faster than before.

The actor can't help but feel proud of himself after he finally relieved himself of all of his thoughts and emotions to you at that time. You were extremely patient with him, accepting whatever small display of affection he gave you and understanding what kind of boundaries he was comfortable with at the moment.

It was perhaps because of that that Zen was able to naturally go from just short and sweet kisses to more deep and passionate ones with roaming hands without a sense of rushed urgency, making each small step of closing the distance all the more rewarding. Sometimes, Zen was honestly convinced that you were an angel sent from heaven. If God made a mistake with his good looks, then maybe He sent you to him to make up for it.

It was early evening, and Zen had just finished up with his job for the day. He came over to your apartment to surprise you, and you were absolutely delighted. The two of you decided to pass some time with your karaoke machine you bought some years ago but never got around to using for some time now.

It was a lot of fun at first, singing all sorts of upbeat songs and just screaming into the mic for laughs, but eventually the chosen songs started to transition to slower and more romantic ones. You and Zen make yourselves comfortable on the couch now that the energy started to die down a bit, and you settle yourself in between his legs. The two of you decide to switch to just using one mic now instead of two, so you hold the mic in a way that it can catch both of your voices with your head slightly turned and Zen resting his chin on your shoulder.

Zen's arms wrap around your waist, and he pulls you back closer towards his body. His breath tickles your ears as he sings along from behind you, and while your eyes are looking at the words on the screen to sing along, you can feel the actor's intense gaze on you the entire time. The song eventually ends, and neither of you make a move to choose a new one, opting to admire the comfortable silence for now.

You feel Zen unwind his arms from your waist as you put the mic down on the low table in front of you, and his hands slowly stroke your thighs as you lean back into him. "You know..." Zen starts, his hands now moving back up your sides and then resting on your shoulders. "You have a really nice voice."
It's a simple compliment, but the shifted atmosphere in the room causes warmth pool to your cheeks. A small and nervous laugh tumbles out of you as you turn your head around to face the actor. "Shall I let you listen to it more?"

"I'd like that." Zen smiles softly at you before cupping your chin and capturing your lips without warning. The actor slowly pulls away, his lidded eyes staring at your flushed expression, and he's unable to resist and kisses you once more. You turn your whole body around so that you're much more comfortable as you return Zen's gentle kiss, your hands moving to rest upon his shoulders.

The actor breaks the kiss apart and just stares at you in silence. His gaze never leaves yours, and he allows his fingers to thread through your hair, admiring how soft it feels. The silence is almost too much for you to bear, and you softly whisper Zen's name. The corners of his lips tug upwards into an adoring smile before he dips his head down to kiss your lips again, unable to get enough.

"You're so beautiful," the actor whispers against you when he pulls away and allows his lips to trail over to your cheek, his hands continuing to carefully comb through your locks. "I love you..."

You offer him a low delighted hum at how warm and soft his lips are on your cheek as you reply, running a hand down his back. "I love you too."

You can feel Zen smiling against your skin as he trails lazy kisses along your jawline, starting from one side of your face and continuing all the way to the other side as your eyelids flutter close. He places a soft kiss on your ear and breathes out with a low and smooth voice, "I want you..."

Zen's fingers leave your hair and instead go to cup your cheeks. His thumbs gently stroke the expanse of skin as he brings his head back up to mold his lips with yours once more. His tongue pokes out, slowly tracing the shape of your lips, and you part them to let him in. Zen hums appreciatively as he deepens the kiss and slides his tongue inside your warm mouth, allowing the wet muscle to run along every inch of your cavern as you lean yourself closer to him.

Zen strokes the roof of your mouth with his tongue as his hands that were cupping your cheeks slide down to your neck, his fingers teasingly brushing your skin before continuing their trail to your shoulders. You can feel the slightest hint of hesitation from the actor as he strokes your shoulders. Zen retracts his tongue from your mouth and pulls away from your lips, much to your dismay, but then he's kissing and licking the side of your neck before you can whine in protest.

"Is this okay?" Zen asks lowly, running his tongue down along the column of your neck before gliding his mouth across your collarbones. "Can I...touch you like this?" As though to further explain his point, the actor's hands start to trail down along your arms before placing his palms on the sides of your body. He leaves them there, tracing lazy circles with his thumbs as he waits for your answer.

"Yes," you breathe out, encouragement laced in your voice. "It's more than okay..."

Hearing that, Zen tentatively slides his hands underneath the hem of your shirt and allows his palms to lie flat on your skin, and you bite your lip from how warm his hands feel on you. Zen's hands roam across your body, starting from your sides and then across your stomach, all the while...
gently guiding you back to rest on the couch. He loves the feel of your skin underneath his palms, and his touch slowly becomes more confident. "You have no idea how much I want you, babe."

"I can imagine." You smile with a soft giggle. "...I want you too."

The actor tilts his head to the side and mirrors your expression, soft and serene, before dipping his head down to lick and nibble along the skin of your neck. "You're so good to me," Zen sighs happily. "So kind and sweet... Oh, babe, I love you so much..." Zen's voice is strained, the depth of his love and desire for you practically dripping from it as he firmly tightens his hold against your body.

You shift around a bit, allowing Zen to rest comfortably between your legs before wrapping one of your legs behind him and pulling him closer towards you, giving one determined roll of your hips. Zen bites his lower lip, taking your actions as an invitation to slowly start grinding against you. Your breathing starts to become more shallow as the prominent bulge in Zen's jeans rubs against your clothed sex and stimulates your clit.

You're not too sure where to put your other leg that's just awkwardly there, so the actor's hands leave your torso to hold onto your leg at a more comfortable position while his other hand goes to stroke your hair. Small moans start to fall out from Zen's lips as he continues grinding against you while gazing down at your pleased expressions.

A low chuckle slips past the young man as his fingers move to trace your parted lips, warming up his digits with your moans and pants for breath. "Gorgeous..." Zen comments with complete sincerity. "Absolutely gorgeous."

Zen cups your chin before leaning down to offer you a searing kiss which you return with vigor as you start to roll your hips in tandem with his. The actor moans against your mouth, the sound of your rustling clothes as he enthusiastically rubs his crotch against yours filling his ears. Your hands travel underneath the hem of Zen's shirt before allowing your palms to glide around his skin and admiring the way his muscles feel underneath your touch. You then arch your back, wanting to close as much distance as possible between the both of you.

You pull away from the kiss with a shuddering gasp, your eyes fluttering close once more as the pleasure builds up inside you from all the stimulation. You repeatedly moan out Zen's name, and he in turn moans out your own as he showers your face, neck, and shoulders with multiple kisses. Short grunts tumble out of the actor's mouth as he starts to press himself more against you and grind himself against your body much faster. Sharper.

The actor lets out a long and shaky exhale of breath, his arousal straining against his clothes. "You feel so good, babe—so good against me like this. You look so beautiful enjoying yourself like this." Zen's eyebrows furrow together, deep in concentration as he tries to bring you to release with your clothes still on, and he pulls you back in for a desperate kiss while pushing his body closer against you, wanting to close even more distance between the pair of you.

The moment is momentarily interrupted by a knock on your door, and Zen breaks the kiss apart with a sharp and frustrated gasp, his gaze flickering over to the entryway before back to you. He whines softly, his grinding unrelenting, and you know full well what he's thinking. "It's fine, leave them," you manage to get those words out amidst your moans, and Zen nods in understanding and relief as he goes back to getting lost in the pleasure.

The knocking comes again and again, however, and you feel Zen reluctantly start to slow down so that you can go answer the door. You immediately shake your head and try to hold him close to
you. "No, Zen, please... Please don't stop! I'm so close... I'm so, so close, please!"

It's the first time Zen's ever heard you ask something from him so desperately, and there's no way he can possibly refuse when you've given him so much before already. With a resolute nod, the actor increases his pace once more, stimulating your clit with so much vigor, and he's rewarded with a delighted and satisfied moan deep within your throat. You enthusiastically grind yourself against the young man, wanting to chase that sweet release as his name falls from your mouth with a flourish and sends him shuddering against you.

The tightening coil in your stomach snaps, and you become unraveled underneath the male. White fills your vision as you let out a loud and broken moan of Zen's name. Zen falters for a moment, unable to take his eyes away from you as you writhe and squirm underneath him, your back arched as you claw desperately at his back.

When you get your bearings again, your eyes fluttering open, you're greeted by the actor's features gazing down at you with pure admiration that you can't help but feel your face flush. He moves to softly stroke your cheek, and you lean in closer to his touch. Your gaze flickers down to the prominent tent in Zen's jeans. It almost looks painful, and your hands go to work at his belt, but the young man catches your wrist.

"Y-You don't have to—"

"I want to," you answer him, looking straight into his eyes. "Unless you don't want to?" Your voice doesn't sound disappointed or anything like that at all. It's gentle, patient, and understanding, and it makes Zen smile and his heart soar.

The actor shakes his head, unable to find the words and unbuckles his belt himself. He fumbles a bit with the button and zipper of his jeans, his fingers trembling slightly from nervousness of revealing himself to you, but the excitement that tugs at his mind overpowers it. You carefully place your own shaky hand on Zen's cheek, prompting him to look at you, and you flash him an encouraging look.

Zen's face flushes several shades deep when he hears your sharp inhale of breath and admiration when he finally frees his hardened cock. You and Zen shift around a bit to a more comfortable position with the actor sitting up and leaning against the back of the couch and with you straddling him. You tentatively wrap a hand around the base of Zen's heated length, eliciting a small gasp from him. You then bring your other hand to fully cover his girth, and Zen bites his lip from your encasing warmth.

The two of you lock gazes before you slowly start to pump the actor, and he lets out a long sigh of bliss. Zen's hands move to stroke your legs as you continue to pump him, his lidded gaze on your face as your attention alternates between his pleased expression and the throbbing flesh in your hands.

"B-Babe, what is it? It looks like you have something to say..." Zen asks when he sees the way you're chewing on your lower lip. He slides his hands underneath your shirt and drags his hands along the sides of your body in tandem with your pumps.

"I-It's nothing, really," you answer slowly. "I just...can't help but admire you. You're so perfect and big—"

You're interrupted by Zen's loud groan as he tightens his grip on your body, his cock twitching between the two of you from your words. "Oh god, babe, pl-please... If you say things like tha—aaaahn..." Zen starts to lift his hips off the couch to meet with your pumps, and you move to
bury your knees onto the couch, lifting yourself up a bit from Zen's lap, afraid of him bucking you off. "Fa—haaaaah—faster, please..."

You quietly nod your head and do as Zen asked, and he dips his head back to rest on the back of the couch, letting out a drawled moan. "Yesss... Just like that. Just...like that... F-Fuck, that feels so good... You're so good, princess. So good..." The actor's hands roam around your skin underneath your shirt, squeezing you every now and then for purchase as he feels the pleasure well up inside him. He brings his lidded gaze to you once more, and he whines, "Closer...Come closer, babe. I —nngh—I want to kiss you..."

You're more than happy to oblige to his desperate wish, leaning yourself forward, not letting up with the rhythm of your pumps. Zen captures your lips, the kiss fierce and intense as his cock throbs beneath your palms. His hands squeeze you anywhere he allows them to roam to ground himself as he feels himself get close to his own release, but he stubbornly refuses to separate from your lips and continues moaning and groaning against you, frantically bucking his hips into your hands.

You tighten your grip and flick the head of his cock without warning, and Zen has no choice to break apart from the kiss to throw his head back, growling and screaming your name in delirious pleasure as he spills all over your hands. You can understand why he looked at you the way he did after your own release; Zen looks exquisite with his eyes shut and jaw slack, small beads of sweat framing his face as his chest rises and falls with his gasps for air.

You retract your hands from Zen's softening cock now that he was all spent, and he almost whines in protest from the sudden lack of warmth. You reach over for some tissues to clean both of yourselves up as the actor slowly starts to come back from his high. Zen smiles languidly, pure joy dancing behind his eyes as he removes his hands from underneath your shirt and tucks a lock of your hair behind your ear, and you laugh.

"What is it?" Zen asks as you bury your face into his chest to muffle your laughter.

"You're so loud," you explain.

"Is that a bad thing?" The actor further questions, and there's not a single hint of shame in his voice. In fact, he almost sounds smug about it instead.

You shake your head. "No, but what if the neighbours start to ask questions or avoid me? God, now they'll know me as that flower girl who had really loud sex."

"Had or has?" You bring your gaze upwards at his question, and Zen looks down at you with a hopeful expression. He continues, warmth rising to his cheeks and ears. "That was...fun and...nice."

"How eloquent," you tease the actor for his lack of words, and Zen purses his lips into a pout which you kiss. "But you're right. 'Has' would be the better word to use."

The two of you separate from each other after a small moment of quiet peace, fixing yourselves up as you stand up from the couch. Zen directs his attention to the door and wonders out loud, "I wonder if that person is still there."

"Probably not," you reply with a light shrug of your shoulders. "You probably scared them away with how loud you were." You then feel a firm and resolute poke to your side, and you shriek in surprise.

"I think you're much louder," Zen comments with a laugh and easily takes a step back when he
sees you lunge at him to return the favour but effectively missing him. A challenging smirk grows on the actor's lips. "You're gonna have to try harder than that to catch me babe!"

The young man runs around your small apartment as you try to chase after him, your combined laughter filling the entire space. Just when you think you're close to catching him by his hair, Zen suddenly turns around, and you crash into his chest with a small yelp. The actor tightly winds his arms around your figure and affectionately rubs his cheek against yours, prompting small giggles to bubble out of your lips.

Zen lets out a sigh of admiration. "I swear, I have the best and cutest girlfriend ever."

"So lame." Your words don't sound sincere in the slightest, and you can hear Zen laugh before dipping his head low and kissing you on the neck. You hum in satisfaction, and when the actor starts sucking on the skin with so much passion, you understand what his intention is and can't help but moan. You silently encourage him by tilting your head to give him more space to work with, your eyes slowly closing while he pulls you closer against his frame.

Zen separates his lips from you with an audible pop before bringing his gaze back to you. His eyes are lidded, and a smirk plays on his lips as his fingers lightly brush over the mark he gave you. No, it isn't just any mark. It's his. You can't help but shiver slightly from his expression. It's one you've never seen before, and your heart leaps with each new thing you discover about him and each new experience with him.

Chapter End Notes

Finally relieved some of that sexual tension. There'll definitely be an increase in smut scenes from now on, ahah. Also, I've decided on an ending for this fic, though I can't say how many chapters it'll take for me to reach it, but I am pretty satisfied with what I have in mind. Thank you to everyone who's supported me thus far! I hope that you will continue to support me for the future chapters!
You really have to admire Zen's self-restraint. Ever since that evening, the actor's grown much more bold and comfortable with you. His touches were more intimate, stroking your thighs or placing deep kisses on your neck. He would visit more frequently and even stay longer, though he never did stay the night nor did the two of you really go any further than what you did last time, still trying to get used to the whole idea of being intimate with someone again considering your own circumstances with both of your previous relationships.

Still, just because Zen's been more bold and daring didn't mean he was any less sweet than before, always giving you a soft kiss to your cheek or lacing his fingers with yours. He always greeted you in the morning, and you were always the last person he would talk to before going to sleep. Sometimes, he would even spring surprises on you which never failed to make you smile and laugh. This time, you decide it's your turn to surprise him by visiting his apartment.

Asides from that one time you came over to cheer up Zen, you've never actually visited his apartment or stayed over. It was usually the actor going over to your place, and while it was nice, you also wanted to see how he was like in the comfort of his own home. They say that people act differently at home, and you can't deny that being true for yourself, but what about Zen? Was he just as much of a dork and sweetheart at home? You want to know. You want to see all the more different sides to him.

You can't stop the way your heart skips a beat when Zen's entire face lights up instantly when he sees you standing there in front of his door. His eyebrows arch, eyes widen, and the corners of his lips tug upwards into a wide grin. The way he looks at you was almost as though he was visited by the most divine being in the universe, and you can't help but blush and feel flattered.

"I hope you weren't busy and that I'm not intruding," you say timidly, pressing the pads of your fingers together.

Zen enthusiastically shakes his head, the large grin on his face still present as he wraps an arm around your waist and pulls your body flush with his. "Not at all." The actor showers your face with light kisses as he pulls you inside his apartment and shuts the door behind the two of you with his foot since his hands were busy holding you by the waist and running through your hair. "So, what brings the most beautiful princess in the whole wide world here?"

"What? I can't visit my boyfriend just because I want to see him?" You quip, speaking with feigned hurt and pursing your lips.

"You should be careful to visit a man's home this late at night," Zen replies with a low voice, his hands trailing down to trace the curve of your spine. "All men are wolves, you know. Your loving boyfriend included."

"But I know my loving boyfriend would never hurt me." You flash the male a smile which he mirrors before he guides you to the living room.

"Sorry for the mess. If I knew you were going to come over, I would have cleaned up. Is there anything you want to do? I don't really have much here, but maybe we can figure something out," Zen speaks quickly and with a bounce in his steps. His excitement in having you over shows in his
energy, and you end up laughing once more.

"How about a quick tour of your place?" You suggest. "I want to see what your natural habitat is like."

The actor is more than excited to take you up on your suggestion and show you around. It's true that there isn't much, but each small thing shows you a bit more of his character. Like the scripts that were lying around the place. Or the small memorabilia he kept from previous musicals he worked in. Or even the bouquet of roses you once gave him standing beautifully on display.

"There's one more place I really want to show you," Zen tells you as he squeezes your hand and guides you to a door. He opens it and you step through it, only to be greeted by the night sky and air.

You breathe out a sigh of admiration. "Wow..."

"It's a nice sight, isn't it?" Zen asks as he walks up from behind you, carefully wrapping his arms around your waist and burying his face into your hair. "I...used to gaze at the stars here with my ex-girlfriend all the time. It was a very special time and place for me..."

You fall quiet at the actor's mention of his ex with the nostalgia and melancholy laced in his voice, and he gives you a reassuring squeeze before continuing. "But when we broke up after I found out she cheated on me, I couldn't bring myself to come here again. The stars suddenly looked so dull and mocking, like they were laughing at me, almost as though they knew what my ex was doing while I stayed oblivious to everything."

With each word Zen utters, you can't stop the way your heart grows increasingly heavy. You're not too sure where exactly the actor is going with this, but to speak so fondly of his ex conflicted you. Zen seems to notice this from you, and he presses his body closer against your back, almost as though to reaffirm his feelings for you, silently telling you that there's more to say and you have nothing to worry about.

"When I found her sucking off some coworker of mine, I felt like my whole world shattered right then and there. It felt like I was given something to care for and nurture, only to have it snatched away from me once I grew attached. And I didn't know what to do after that. I had nothing... Everything seemed so lacklustre."

You remain quiet, uncertain of how to respond when Zen whispers your name to get your full attention. Suddenly, you're spun around and Zen's lips are already on yours before you can even register what's going on. Zen kisses you with so much ferocity, you feel the need to clutch onto his shirt for support. He pulls away with a gasp for air. "But then you—" The actor doesn't finish his sentence, kissing you once more with just as much intensity as before that you stumble back a bit before he breaks the kiss again.

"—You came into my life," Zen continues, his voice strained, struggling to find the words but desperate to voice them no matter what. He wants you to know. He wants you to hear it from himself. "And somehow, everything seemed so much brighter than before. You helped me out when I was just a stranger to you. You encouraged me. You supported me. You made me smile,
laugh, and cry. Say, tell me...do you remember? The first time we hung out together? To get to know each other?"

"Y-Yes," you answer breathlessly, your mind still trying to process everything at once, and Zen responds with another searing kiss before pulling away to continue.

"Do you remember how you started crying too when I did? I honestly thought you were strange, but then you told me that you felt sad when you saw me sad, and you... You shared my pain. You took my pain as your own even though we still didn't know much about each other. And since then, you continued sharing with me. Anything and everything, you gave to me—" Zen pauses to kiss you once more, so desperate while his expression shifts through all sorts of emotions, almost as though he can't decide on what to feel.

"And then remember how we coincidentally saw each other on that bridge that same night? I think...that was the first time I realized that I might have loved you," Zen confesses. "The stars looked so beautiful that time, I wanted to see them again, so I went out here to the roof for the first time in a long while since my breakup afterwards, and it somehow wasn't the same. It wasn't the same without you, and I thought—I selfishly wished that one day I'll be able to stand here and share this night sky with you."

The actor ends his ramblings with another kiss. And another. And another. Each kiss growing longer and deeper than the last. The actor barely gives you time to breathe before his lips are on yours again, desperate and intense as all the other words he wants to say become lost in them. Zen presses his body flush against yours, afraid that this was all a dream and he needed proof of your existence. Your warmth. This moment.

He wanted to engrave this moment in his memory. Every single gasp you give. Every single shiver of your body against his. The taste of your mouth. The lingering scent of flowers on you. He wanted to commit each and every single detail about you in this moment to memory so that it would never die.

Zen pulls away from the kiss with a shuddering gasp before burying his face in the crook of your neck and squeezing your body so tightly against his that you almost can't breathe. The two of you stand there in silence, arms wrapped around each other while panting softly to catch your breaths after that intense shower of kisses. Slowly, the two of you go sit on your knees, unable to fully support your own weights, and you soothingly run a hand along the actor's back.

As soon as he regains his breath, Zen leans back a bit to look at you, a somewhat tired but serene look on his face. He lightly traces his fingers along your kiss-swollen lips. "I...won't apologize for that small outburst of mine. I won't apologize for loving you."

"I would never ask you to," you breathe out, leaning forward to rest your head upon the male's chest.

Zen smiles appreciatively as he gazes down at you with overflowing admiration in his eyes. His hands gently run along your back, and you hum in satisfaction. "Well, maybe I did go a bit overboard," the actor admits sheepishly, and you laugh in agreement.

You lift your head up and shift around so that you're now sitting beside the young man. You rest your head on his shoulder, and he in turn rests his head on yours. Both of you bring your attention to the night sky above, and even without looking, the two of you reach for each other's hand at the same time and lace your fingers together.

"You know..." you start speaking softly, deciding that you should share your story too since Zen
shared his. "I first met my ex about two years ago. We actually met after one of your performances. I got separated from my friend whom I was with, and he accompanied me. We talked, and we just, I guess, clicked. He loved drama just as much as I did, and I was hopelessly in love with him."

Zen squeezes your hand, and you squeeze back. You close your eyes and continue. "But his friend and I just didn't see eye to eye. I tried to be civil, but he must have really hated my guts or something because he lied to my ex, saying I was cheating on him with someone else. They've been friends since childhood, so my ex had no reason to doubt him, and... It was painful. To be accused of something I wasn't. To be made out as a villain when I did nothing wrong. I didn't think it could be so painful."

You take a moment to breathe, and Zen waits patiently for you to continue. "Your acting got me through it. It...It wasn't healthy, really. It was escapism, but it was something. Your acting helped distract me. You pulled me into stories and made me feel all sorts of emotions. And then...you just so happened to pass out in front of my shop."

You can't help but laugh at the memory, and Zen does too. He never expected that the first meeting for the person who would teach him how to love all over again would be because of him falling unconscious. "I was so in awe of you because of your acting, but then I saw all these different sides to you that I've never seen before, and I... I was just so in awe of you as a person."

You fall quiet afterwards, slight embarrassment filling you after revealing just a bit more about yourself to the actor. You feel Zen lift his head from yours and call your name, but you stubbornly keep your gaze away from him, still too embarrassed. Zen unlinks his hand from yours to cup your chin and gently guide you to look at him. His expression softens when he sees the heavy blush on your face, and he leans down to rest his forehead on yours.

"There's something I want to show you," he tells you.

"What is it?"

Zen flashes you a smile. "You'll see." The young man then lifts you up and starts to carry you back inside his apartment.

"Z-Zen, I can walk perfectly fine you know!" You squeak, unable to decide as to whether you should struggle against him or just stay put. In the end, you decided to trust him for now.

"I know, but I want to be selfish and carry you like this." Zen offers you a dazzling smile that you suspect is completely intentional since he knows how you can never say no to him with that expression.

You sigh in defeat. "...I spoil you too much, don't I?"

You feel Zen's chest rumble against you as he lets out a laugh before shooting you a wink. You shake your head in exasperation and shift around in Zen's arms so that you can wrap your arms around his neck. The young man's breath hitches when he feels you kiss his neck, and you smile against his skin before the two of you enter back his apartment.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter was rather unintentional; it was only supposed to be a short scene, but
then it grew into a full-blown (dialogue-heavy) chapter. I'm glad I did this though.
For a moment, you can't help but feel slightly apprehensive when Zen brings you to his bedroom, but when the actor opens the lights, you understand right away just what it is that he wanted to show you. The moment the lights flicker on, your attention is brought to a certain spot on the wall near his bed. All the other walls are bare, but that one particular spot has a whole collection of papers and photos tacked onto it.

Zen sets you down on the floor, and you make your way over to look at what the papers and such are exactly. To your surprise, you find that the actor had printed selfies that the two of you took together as well as your own selfies you sent to his phone and put them up on his wall. Glancing behind you, you can tell that they were deliberately placed in this spot so that whoever was on the bed can see it if they turned to their side.

You bring your attention back to the wall to look at what the sheets of paper are, and your eyes widen in realization when you see your familiar handwriting. "You kept my letters?" You ask in disbelief.

"I keep all of my fan mail," Zen answers as he now slowly starts to make his way over to join you. "They mean a lot to me. Of course, you mean a lot more to me, so I wanted to put your letters up as a reminder for myself whenever I need it."

Your eyes scan over the contents of the two-year-old letter, and you blush in embarrassment. "Oh my god, I can't believe I actually wrote this. I'm so lame..."

"Is it? I quite like it," Zen responds as he untacks one of the letters and clears his throat. "Zen, no. Don't you dare," you warn the male, but he only flashes you a mischievous smile before he starts reading the letter out loud, and you cringe at your past self.

"I wanted to let you know how much I adore your acting. It's so moving, and I think you're really talented. I've only just recently started being a fan, but I don't think the depth of my admiration for you and your acting is any less than those who have followed you since the very beginning."

"No, Zeeen," you whine as you chase the actor around the bedroom, trying to get him to stop reading. "It's embarrassing! Stoop!"

Zen only laughs in merriment as he continues to read your words out loud while trying to keep the paper out of your reach and keeping you at bay. Somehow, you're able to successfully retrieve the letter and snatch it away from his hands, but Zen continues speaking.

"Your acting just pulls me in. It's magnetic, and you've completely captivated my heart—"

"You memorized it?" You shriek in disbelief, but considering Zen's career, it really shouldn't have surprised you. Feeling far too embarrassed, you go dive onto his bed and bury your head underneath his pillow to hide yourself and groan, and Zen finally relents with a long and loud laugh.

You feel the bed dip beside you as the young man goes to sit down, and you feel his hand on your shoulder. "You've completely captivated my heart too," he speaks, and you can hear the smile in his voice.

"Oh my god, Zen—"
"I'm serious," Zen interrupts you, his tone shifting to match his words. Hearing that, you bring your head out from underneath the young man's pillow and turn to look at him. The hand that was on your shoulder slides to stroke your cheek as Zen keeps his unwavering gaze. "You've completely taken me. Every day, I think of you. Every night, I dream of you. Seeing you and seeing your name pop up on my phone is the highlight of my day. I'm...completely tangled up in you."

The actor's expression then shifts to something akin to that of guilt and pain, and you bring yourself to ask, "What's wrong?"

The young man retracts his hand from your face. "You've been supporting me for at least two years before we even met, and you still continue to do so even now. Honestly, I'm a bit frustrated with myself," Zen smiles wryly, and when he sees the confusion on your face, he continues. "I'm frustrated that I wasn't there to personally support you back then and that you were left in pain for so long."

"You were an actor, and I was a fan. You couldn't have known that we would have ended up like this one day..."

Zen shakes his head. His hand moves to trail along the side of your body, his eyes following it to avoid your gaze. "I know, but still... I can't help but wonder, if I met you back then, how different would my life have been? Would I have been as happy as I am now? Maybe even happier? Having you by my side like this, I can't help but think that I would have fallen in love with you back then too."

You knit your eyebrows together and purse your lips, a disatisfied expression on your face. "...I don't like it," you admit.

"What is it?" Zen asks as his eyes flicker over to yours, a certain sense of apprehension on his features.

"What happened back then—or rather, didn't happen—doesn't matter. What matters is that we're together now, so we can just make up for that lost time."

The actor's eyes widen slightly in surprise before admitting defeat at your words, his voice dropping several octaves. "You're right... What matters is us right now and us in the future..."

Your heart hammers loudly against your chest, and you find yourself holding your breath as Zen slowly leans down to kiss you. Your eyelids flutter close as you enjoy the slow and careful kiss, a stark contrast from the kisses before on the rooftop. Zen pulls away but allows his lips to hover over yours, debating on what to do next. He whispers something, his lips barely brushing against yours, but you can't hear it over the loud beating of your heart ringing in your ears. You're not given a chance to ask what he said before Zen's kissing you again.

While still keeping your lips locked, Zen shifts the two of you around to a more comfortable position with him on top of you and you properly lying down on your back. Zen's hands press against the mattress to support his weight, trying to be considerate so as to not crush you. Your hands trail over the length of his arms, starting from his wrist and all the way up to his shoulders, leaving pleasant tingles in their wake that makes the male shudder.

Zen breaks the kiss apart and stares down at you. Neither of you say a word, afraid to break the comfortable silence that has settled in. But with the way you look underneath Zen like this, and with the way Zen looks hovering over you like this, it sparks a certain kind of reaction from the both of you. A mutual desire of wanting, and one gaze is all it took to tell each other that.
The actor dips his head down and captures your lips for the umpteenth time that night. He boldly nibbles on your lower lip, and you allow him to slide his tongue inside your mouth. He explores your inside slowly and carefully, stroking whatever he can reach with his tongue, and you moan softly against him as his hands move to hold the sides of your body. The actor simply holds you, only squeezing your body every now and then.

While Zen is stroking the roof of your mouth with his tongue, you flick your own to stroke the underside of his wet muscle, silently asking for your own turn to taste him, and he's more than happy to oblige. The actor retracts his tongue back to his mouth while your own tongue follows after him. Zen sighs at the feel of you exploring the inside of his mouth, and his hands slowly start to slide down to the hem of your shirt.

You both momentarily break the kiss apart while the two of you move to sit up so that Zen can have an easier time dragging your shirt up your body and over your head. Zen drops the shirt somewhere, not really paying attention to where as he's too focused on the way your fingers brush against his skin as you go to lift his own shirt off. Perhaps out of embarrassment, Zen pulls you in for an embrace, his arms wrapping around you and resting his chin atop your shoulder so that you can't see his face.

"You're trembling..." Zen notes quietly near your ear.

You offer a shaky laugh as you wind your own arms around the actor's body to steady yourself, and you lie your palms flat against his broad back for support. "So are you," you comment back.

"I can't help it," Zen sighs as his fingers dance across the skin of your back and sides. "This is more nerve-wrecking than when I go up on stage."

"Do you want to look at that one picture of that flower you once told me about?" You ask lightly with a small laugh, hoping to alleviate some of the nervous tension.

Zen smiles to himself that you even remember that, and he replies, "No, it's fine. Not when there's already a beautiful flower in my arms."

The cheesiness of the actor's response is familiar and provides you comfort. You visibly relax as an amused laugh leaves you. Zen pulls away slightly from the embrace to kiss you, and you easily accept it while his hands move to unclasp your bra. It takes him a few attempts, and you can't help but giggle softly into the kiss when he's unsuccessful the third time. Zen pulls away from the kiss, a pout on his lips as he goes to playfully pinch your cheek for laughing at him.

"Don't be mean babe," Zen chides you, but there's not a single hint of disdain in his voice. "It's...been a while..."

Despite his words, you still end up laughing, but it's not mocking or anything like that. Actually, you're not even sure as to why you're laughing. You're just so overjoyed that it somehow slips out without reason. You cup the actor's face and give him a quick kiss on the cheek which makes him smile adoringly. "Take your time, my lovely Zen. There's no rush, right?"

You lean forward and rest your forehead atop the actor's shoulder while he goes back to working on the clasp of your bra. You allow your hand to trail down along his body, admiring the way his muscles feel underneath your touch while tracing the shape of his abs, and you can feel him shudder slightly. Zen successfully unclasps your bra, and his fingers slowly slide the straps off your shoulders, fingers lightly brushing against your skin before completely removing the article of clothing.
Zen gently guides you to lean back away from him so he can look at you, and your eyes close shut out of self-consciousness while your hands clutch onto the bedsheets to will yourself to not hide your body away. You feel Zen's fingers lightly trail along your arm, his warm breath suddenly near your lips. "Please open your eyes. I want to see them."

It takes a while, but you take a deep breath and slowly bring yourself to open your eyes, surprised to find Zen to be so close. Satisfaction and appreciation plays on his features when the two of you lock lidded gazes. "Beautiful..." he murmurs before kissing you again. You feel his hands move to your back to give you a loose embrace as his lips leave yours and instead start trailing them down your neck. He places light kisses on your collarbones before moving even further down to the valley between your breasts.

The anticipation wells up inside you before Zen takes one of your nipples into his mouth, and you let out a shaky exhale. The actor moves one of his hands to pinch at the other pert bud while his other hand stays on your back. Zen gently sucks on your breast, his tongue twirling around your nipple in a slow manner while his fingers tweak the other.

Your breathing becomes more ragged, and you start to arch your back while Zen's finger traces the curve of your spine which sends shivers to course through you. Your hand travels upwards to place on the back of the actor's head, and you slowly pull off his hair tie before running your fingers through his hair to smoothen it out. Zen hums in satisfaction against you, and you moan out his name as he continues with his ministrations. The young man gives your nipples a sharp flick which makes you jump a bit before he switches sides with an amused chuckle and lavishes the other sensitive bud just as much love and attention.

The longer Zen continues with his actions, the more you can feel your arousal pool between your legs, and you rub your thighs together for some friction. The actor seems to notice this, and he decides to leave your breasts alone for now. His fingers work on the button and zipper of your jeans before stroking your thighs, silently telling you to move around a bit so that he can slide the material off. As soon as the article of clothing is gone, Zen guides you to comfortably lie down on your back before tentatively running his fingers along the fabric of your panties, and he bites his lip at how wet it was.

There's a slight sense of hesitation from Zen, wondering if all of this is really alright. He wanted your first time together to be special, like perhaps after a really nice date with the room set up with maybe candles and some rose petals. ...No, Zen shakes that kind of thinking away. Just this alone is already special. No matter how much careful planning he would have or have not put into prior preparation, that special feeling will always remain the same. Just having you by his side like this, accepting and trusting, is more than special already.

As though suddenly becoming aware of just how tight his pants are, Zen eagerly works on removing his bottoms to free and relieve himself. A visible shiver courses through him when he catches you licking your lips as you eye his thick cock. The actor then goes to removing your panties as well, and you lift your hips to make things easier. Zen discards the last article of clothing to lie along with the rest of your abandoned clothes, and he breathes out a sigh of admiration when he brings his attention back to you.

His eyes rake over your body, tilting his head to the side with pure admiration playing on his features. Zen moves to hover over you, using one hand to support his weight as the other lightly runs along your skin. His touch is soft and careful, almost as though he was dealing with delicate glass, and you can't help but smile at him at how it's so typically him as he continues to admire your body.
"You are so..." Zen trails off, unable to find a word fitting enough to describe just how amazing you look to him.

You offer a bashful laugh at his lack of words before you start to run your hands along his body too, and Zen leans himself closer to you so that you can have an easier reach. The actor leans forward even more to rest his forehead against yours before both of his hands are running along your body. He trails his hands and fingers along your arms, chest, waist, hips, thighs... Anywhere and everywhere he can possibly reach. Zen tries to commit each and every single dip and curve of your body to memory, his tentative touches slowly becoming more confident—no, desperate. He presses his palms much more firmly against you, sometimes squeezing at your flesh, and the tingles his touch leaves you with become more like a flame instead as his warm breath mixes with yours in the small space between you two.

Amidst all the roaming hands, Zen blurts out, "Thank you."

You pause in your actions, the sudden words of gratitude catching you by surprise, and it seems that it surprised Zen too. Embarrassment shows on his features as he can't quite explain what exactly he was thanking you for, but you somehow understand the sentiment behind it. You offer him a smile in return before he smothers your lips with his own, the kiss passionate and intense. Zen pulls away with a small gasp for air before latching his mouth onto your neck. He bites into the skin as well as runs his tongue along it, humming in satisfaction at the deep sigh you let out. The actor starts to suck on the expanse of skin, wanting to leave you with another one of his marks as his hand cups your sex, causing you to gasp in delight. His lips never leaving you, Zen slides a finger inside your core, and you let out a low groan at the intrusion.

Zen leaves your neck alone for now, wanting to see just what kind of expression you're wearing as he pleasures you. The young man strokes your cheek with his free hand as he slowly starts to pump his finger inside you. Zen bites at the corner of his bottom lip when he feels the way your walls clench around his digit, and he leans his head down to capture your lips again, unable to stay away from them for too long. The actor drinks in every moan that spills out of your lips as he continues with his ministrations. Zen breaks the kiss apart, and you give a shuddering sigh as you slowly start to buck your hips for more friction.

"So wet and warm..." Zen murmurs softly to himself as he slips in another finger and significantly increases his pace without warning.

You gasp at the sudden but not unwelcome change, and your hands go to clutch at the bedsheets underneath you as Zen makes scissoring motions with his fingers, effectively stretching you out while you moan out his name and pleading for more. The actor curses underneath his breath, and his voice comes out husky and strained. "I can't—I want—Fuck, wait here for a second babe."

A whine of protest slips past your parted lips when Zen's fingers leave you, and he places a quick kiss on the crown of your head before he goes to rummage through his bedside drawer. From the corner of your eyes, you see him take out a packet, and both excitement and nervousness immediately courses through you.

Zen makes his way back to you and kisses your lips while he pumps himself to full hardness. He pulls away to make sure the condom is good to use before tearing open the packet and rolling the condom onto his length. The actor positions himself between your legs, and without even being told, you spread your legs a bit more for him. Zen appreciatively strokes your inner thighs, quickly leaning down to plant his lips on them before positioning his aching cock at your entrance. His gaze moves over to yours, and the two of you lock eyes with each other.
"I love you," Zen breathes out, wanting to voice out his feelings once more and perhaps to reassure you.

"I love you too," you reply immediately and confidently.

The two of you exchange a smile and reach for each other's hand to squeeze at the same time before Zen starts to push himself inside you. You groan at the intrusion, and though Zen wants to keep his gaze on your expression for any hint of pain or discomfort, he can't help but stare at how his cock disappears into your warmth, the two of you finally connected in more ways than one.

"Are you okay?" Zen asks as soon as he's buried up to the hilt, his hand moving to stroke your cheek.

You nod your head, flashing him a small smile. "Yeah, just...g-give me a moment."

Zen gives you a reassuring smile and kiss before burying his face in the crook of your neck to give you a chance to adjust to his length. He lets out a shaky exhale as his hands go back to slowly roving your body while placing butterfly kisses along your shoulder. "This might be bad... You feel so good, I don't know if I can hold out long..."

You can't help but laugh at his honesty, the sound infectious that Zen starts laughing too against your skin. "I love you..." he whispers into your ear, never getting tired of saying those words. A content hum leaves you as you reciprocate his words and feelings, shifting your hips to tell Zen to start moving.

The actor places his hands on either side of your head on the mattress to hover over you and slowly pulls out to halfway of his length before slowly pushing himself back in, his lips parting to let out a drawled moan at the way your walls accommodate him. He does it again, his fingers curling to grip onto the bedsheet as he continues to thrust into you in a slow and steady rhythm, soft grunts leaving his mouth.

Zen gazes down at you, your eyes closed and lips parted. He watches the way your chest rises and falls with each moan and sigh that leaves you before his eyes flicker to your pleased expression. As though sensing his gaze, you bring yourself to open your eyes, and your breath catches in your throat when you see the depth of emotions in Zen's eyes. They're gentle yet smoldering at the same time, and looking into them somehow seems to amplify the pleasurable sensations that run through you.

Your own expression softens as you stare back at him, and you lift up a hand to cup his cheek. Zen leans closer towards your warmth, the pacing of his thrusts steadily growing as it's no longer enough to satisfy him. More. He wants more. He pulls his cock out slowly before pushing himself back in much faster, almost as though he doesn't want to leave your warmth for too long. The young man makes sure to pay careful attention to how you and your body reacts, wanting to make sure that you feel just as good as him.

The volume of Zen's voice grows louder and louder, moans and grunts tumbling out of his lips as the sound of skin against skin fills the otherwise quiet room. His scent and yours mix together along with the smell of sex in the air which is almost enough to make him dizzy as the actor starts to increase his thrusts even more.

Your gaze flickers down to where the two of you are connected, the sight of Zen's cock leaving and disappearing into your warmth sending heat all across your body. You cover your mouth with the back of your hand to muffle your moans, but the actor captures your wrist and gently but firmly pries it away. He reaches for your other hand too, and he laces his fingers with yours, pressing your
palms flat against each other as he anchors your connected hands on either side of your head on the mattress.

"Don't—*ngh*—don't hide your voice," Zen tells you as he leans down to give you a deep kiss before breaking away with a shaky moan. "Don't hold back... E-Everything... I want *everything*—" The actor pauses momentarily, a loud groan leaving him as he feels your walls clench around him even more from his words. He bows his head and furrows his eyebrows, his hair falling off his shoulders in a way that seems to perfectly curtain around the two of you, and he takes a sharp inhale of breath. "*Oh fuck,* babe, I want—I *want your everything*—!!"

As though to emphasize his point, Zen gives a particular sharp thrust which has you crying out loud as his cock brushes against that delicate spot inside you, and you needily whine out the actor's name. Zen understands right away, his pace faltering for a moment as he struggles to find that spot again and knows he's successful when you let slip a loud and satisfied moan.

Zen adjusts his angle so that his cock can rub against that spot again and again, your name spilling out of his lips with a flourish as your walls pull him in, and it isn't long before the coil in your stomach tightens at an alarming rate. Your head dips back into the pillow as you lift your hips off the bed to meet with Zen's thrusts, your toes curling and back arching as the pleasure builds within you more and more. You squeeze his hand, and Zen squeezes back with just as much strength, if not more.

The young man admires the way your body responds to him, and his eyes follow the beads of sweat that trails down along your body. His thrusts start to lose their rhythm, and his force starts to increase. His cock throbs against your walls as they try to suck him in, and the bed creaks in protest from all the movement as he grows more frantic and desperate to have the two of you reach that peak together.

"*Yesss,*" Zen moans out. "*O-Ohh fuck,* you feel so good babe. *So tight*..." The actor dips his head down to your neck and starts sucking on the skin. He leaves marks anywhere he possibly can before lifting his head to properly look at you. "Just -*ngh*—Just like that, sweetheart. Don't h-hold yourself back..."

You're moaning without restraint and breathing heavily, and you can feel Zen's gaze on your face once more, so you bring yourself to look at him. His expression—the flush on his cheeks, the beads of sweat on his forehead, his gentle smile with a bite of lips, his lidded eyes full of nothing but pure unadulterated love as he stares at you—is what helps sends you over the edge.

You throw your head back and scream, your body convulsing underneath him as white fills your vision. Zen lets go of your hands, and you immediately go to pull him down closer towards you, clawing at his back. Zen gasps and hisses in response, his thrusts erratic as your clenched walls around his throbbing cock help bring him to release not too long after you.

Zen grunts and growls ferociously, his hands wrapping around your body and squeezing you close to his own sweat-coated one as he screams out your name again and again against your skin. Broken moans, incoherent curses, and repeated words of "*I love you*" fall out of his parted lips and slackened jaw as Zen can't think of anything else except for the feel of how his cock and your walls pulsate against one another in tandem, your bodies flush together.

The actor pulls out of you with a low groan and goes to properly discard the condom before lying back down beside you on the bed, winding his arms around you as the two of you try to catch your breaths. You hum contently as you bury yourself into Zen's chest while he runs his fingers through your hair languidly as he hums softly and quite cheerfully himself.
Zen's hand leaves your hair and instead gently strokes your body, tracing lazy heart shapes every now and then as he smiles down at you, your face still buried in his chest. The actor softly calls your name, prompting you to look up at him, and he looks absolutely radiant. His fingers move to lightly trace your jawline, and you offer him a lazy smile.

"Stay the night with me?" He whispers his question, hopeful.

"Honestly Zen, I would be pretty upset if you tried to bring me home after all that," you answer as though that was the most obvious response, and he chuckles. You let out a blissful sigh and change the topic of conversation. "You know, for somebody who claims to be a beast, you're very gentle."

The young man isn't too sure how to respond to that, but he understands that you enjoyed yourself just as much as he did, so he instead chooses to kiss you on the crown of your head and gazes down at you in that way that sends your heart fluttering. You bury your reddened face into the pillows and whine. "I swear, the way you look at me..."

"What do you mean, babe?" Zen asks as he runs his fingers through your hair, trying to coax you to look at him, but you stubbornly stay in place.

"It's like... You look at me like...like I'm the most precious thing in the world. It's... Ugh, I don't know how to explain it!"

The actor's eyes widen for a moment before a large grin forms on his lips. "That's because you are! You look at me the same way too, you know. That look of yours always does things to my heart."

You offer a muffled laugh into the pillows before you're suddenly flipped around to once again lie down on your back with Zen hovering over you. Without even giving you a chance to speak, Zen starts to shower your face with all sorts of ticklish kisses, making your shoulders shake from laughter. The young man starts to grow bolder, placing much more deeper kisses and trailing his lips down to your neck, going over the marks he left you with.

"Z-Zen..." you softly call out to the actor, finding that the atmosphere's started to shift back to how it was before, but you aren't complaining.

Zen sighs blissfully against your skin, one of his hands gliding down across your skin before reaching your sex. His fingers lightly stroke along your entrance, hesitant but wanting. "I can't get enough of you," the actor breathes out. "Can we...go for another round? If you're too tired or don't want to, then we don't have to—"

"I don't want to sleep yet," you reply, bringing your hand down to where Zen's own hand is and helping him guide one of his fingers inside you. A low moan slips past your lips just as Zen starts to pump his finger, much more confident than from before.

"Then I guess I have to be a good host and keep you entertained for the night."
Zen is the first one to wake up of the two of you. The pleased smile on his lips widens even more when the first thing that greets him this morning is your peaceful sleeping face. He reaches up a hand and carefully brushes some stray strands of your hair away from your face. Zen's gaze flickers down to your slightly parted lips, and warmth crawls up to his cheeks as he remembers the events of last night and the number of times he kissed those very same lips and how they kissed him in return.

The actor recalls the way you felt around him and the warmth of your sweat-coated body flush against his. He can still vividly remember the way your voice moaned for him and cried out his name over and over again. Zen's hand travels down along your body, his eyes following it as he smiles in satisfaction at all the marks he's left on you. They're both reminders and proof that what the two of you felt for each other is true and deep.

Zen's gaze flickers back to your face. He has no doubts that you must be tired after everything last night. The actor wanted to give you a chance to rest and to let the moment sink in, but he just couldn't bring himself to stop. It's been so long since he last loved someone so deeply like this; he was starved. Zen almost felt guilty about it, but you wanted him just as much as he did last night—perhaps even more. You accepted everything he gave you, and you in return gave all of yourself to him.

"I think..." Zen quietly speaks his thoughts out loud as he continues to stare with complete adoration at your slumbering form. "I think I'd like to introduce you to the RFA one day soon... They're like a family to me, and I want them to meet you and know just how important you are to me..."

The actor lets out a small sigh and continues speaking, despite the fact that you were still sleeping. No, that wasn't it... Perhaps it was exactly because you were still sleeping that Zen decides to continue speaking his thoughts out loud. "I'm sorry I'm always so busy with work, and I'm sorry that I never talk about my past or my family even though you want to try to get to know all of me. I know it must be hard for you, always waiting for me..."

Zen continues to run his hand along your body, finding comfort in the action and having you by his side as his troubling thoughts continue to fall from his lips. "You're always so patient, and even though you say it's fine, I can see how it still hurts you. I'm sorry, and thank you. I promise I'll give you nothing but joy from now on. I'll return all the love and support you've given me tenfold."

The young man brings his hand up to your face and strokes your cheek. He takes a moment to admire its warmth, and his expression softens as he finds himself leaning closer and closer to your face. "Everything..." Zen whispers. "You are my everything, and I will give you everything that I can and am."

Zen leans forward and places a soft kiss on the crown of your head. He was just leaning back to admire your features even more when your ringtone sounded, filling the room. You groan in protest, finding yourself to be quite comfortable and warm, and instead of reaching for your phone, you bury yourself even more into the warmth beside you, not knowing that it was Zen himself.

The actor chuckles at how cute you're being as he wonders to himself as to whether or not he
should wake you up so that you can answer your phone or to just let it continue ringing. When you breathe out a small sigh against Zen's skin, he decides to be selfish and just hold you closer, tangling his legs with yours. Whoever it was that was calling you could always call later.

You wake up a few minutes afterwards, your eyelids fluttering open and trying to blink away whatever remaining sleep there was. You feel some shuffling movement beside you before warm lips press upon the crown of your head. "Good morning, my beautiful princess," Zen's familiar voice greets you, and you sigh.

"I don't usually like mornings, but you make them so much better..." You let out a small yawn before untangling yourself from Zen so that you can stretch out your body.

"Attractive," Zen comments from beside you with utmost sincerity, and you snort in response, moving to lightly smack his arm before rolling on top of his body. You lean your head down, allowing your messed hair to curtain around the two of you, and you offer the actor a lazy smile as he gazes up at you. "How are you feeling?" He asks, afraid that he might have gone overboard last night, especially since it was your first time together.

You tilt your head to the side and smile. "I may work with flowers, but that doesn't mean I'm as delicate as one. Besides, you were very gentle with me throughout. I feel great."

Zen visibly relaxes, and you exhale a small laugh of amusement at his concern. You lean your head down and allow it to rest on the actor's chest, listening to his comforting heartbeat. "I want to stay like this forever..." you admit with a wishful sigh, and Zen fully wraps his arms around you.

"I do too," he agrees, closing his eyes to fully enjoy the feel of your body atop his. Perhaps still feeling rather sleepy or rather content and distracted himself, Zen forgets to filter his thoughts, and he accidentally lets slip, "I want you to ride me..."

You immediately snap your head up to look at him, and his face flushes several deep shades of red when he realizes he spoke his thoughts out loud. You look at him with wide eyes as he sputters, trying to correct himself but only managing to form incoherent babbles. You throw your head back to laugh, and Zen only flushes even more, burying his face into his hands to hide.

You give a soft giggle before prying Zen's hands away from his face, and you smile at him, innocent. "A little morning workout wouldn't hurt."

This time, it's Zen's turn for his eyes to widen, but he can't find it in himself to argue or anything when you're already reaching for a fresh packet from his bedside drawer. The actor makes a mental note to buy a few more later, especially if the two of you will continue at this rate.

You move back and shift the blanket around, revealing that Zen was already starting to get aroused, and you can't help but flash him an amused smile. After cleaning up after yourselves from last night's events, the two of you didn't bother putting any of your clothes back on and decided to sleep with your naked bodies flush against one another. Now that things were like this, you were glad that was what the two of you decided since now you can just get straight to it.

You trail a finger along Zen's length, and he responds by taking a deep breath. You grip onto the flesh, eliciting a small gasp from the male before pumping him to a full erection. You've definitely grown bolder, but there was still a slight tremble from your hand which Zen notes. You tear open the packet and roll down the condom along Zen's cock, and the actor offers you a small groan, his fingers clutching onto the bedsheets underneath him while closing his eyes in anticipation of what was to come.
Even though Zen said that he wanted you to ride him, you can't help but want to be selfish for a bit, and you suddenly take the actor's cock into your mouth without warning. Zen's eyes snap wide open in surprise and shock. "Wha—" His question is cut off with a loud moan and head thrown back as you give the hardened flesh in your mouth a harsh suck.

Zen lifts his head to look at you, a soft groan leaving him when he's met with the sight of your lips around his cock, arousing him even more. You start to bob your head along his length, your actions awkward and uncertain as you're not quite used to doing this, but Zen gives appreciative moans and sighs, encouraging you and telling you what feels good.

The actor's completely thrown the idea of you riding him out the window now that his member was enveloped in your wet and warm mouth. He is used to improv, after all. Zen moves to sit up to get a better view of you sucking him off, and you shift yourself around accordingly. Zen gazes down at you with lidded eyes, his face completely flushed and breaths coming out ragged as he watches his cock disappear into your mouth.

Zen lets out a low moan and combs his fingers through your hair. "Mm, just like that babe. A-Ah, you're doing such good job right now, sweetheart... Use your tongue—" Zen takes a sharp inhale of breath when you follow his instructions, and he curses underneath his breath as he bows his head.

The actor places his free hand on the mattress and digs the heel of his palm into it to support his weight as he starts to thrust his hips. Zen tries to be considerate towards you and control himself, but you just feel so good around him, and when you look up at him through your lashes, Zen can barely think straight anymore.

Zen pulls you off of his cock, afraid that you might not be able to handle him ramming the throbbing flesh deep inside your mouth and instead pulls you in for an intense kiss as he finishes himself off with his own hand. The actor moans against you, not wanting to part from your lips throughout his orgasm, and small whimpers are added to the mix afterwards when he starts to come down from his high.

Zen breaks the kiss apart with a sharp gasp, trying to catch his breath. Your hands cup his face, prompting the young man to look at you with a delighted expression. "Sorry," you apologize, but you don't sound that sincere about it. "I know you wanted something else, but I ended up being selfish."

The actor chuckles and shakes his head, pulling you to his lap before kissing along your neck and shoulders. "Didn't we already agree that we can be selfish with each other?"

Neither of you know how long the two of you remained in that position with Zen trailing kisses along your skin, but the moment is interrupted by your phone. You whine in protest, not wanting to move, but after a few insistent rings, you finally get off the male to retrieve your phone. You look over the caller ID, and you tilt your head to the side when an unfamiliar number greets you.

Meanwhile, Zen discards yet another used condom and places a quick kiss to your cheek before heading to the bathroom to freshen himself up and give you your privacy. You go and answer the call, "Hello?" Your eyes widen when an all too familiar voice greets you, and you take a deep breath to calm yourself. "Is there something you need with me, Jun?" Despite wanting to be civil, you can't help but spit out your ex's name with pure venom in your voice.

"I've been trying to contact you," the male explains, and you furrow your eyebrows, offering an exasperated sigh.

"You're the one who said that we should probably cut off all contact from each other," you remind
him.

Your ex makes a sound of guilt on the other side of the call. "I-I know, and well... I was wondering if we could meet up? There's... There's something I'd like to say to you."

"Can't you tell me over the phone?"

"No." Jun's response is firm and determined, and you take a moment to consider the idea. It's been a bit more than a year since your breakup, and though the two of you ended on a bad note with some lingering contempt from you, you've learned to move on. Maybe you can even finally say your piece that you've wanted for a long time now. A defeated sigh slips past your lips.

"Alright. When and where?" You ask, hoping you wouldn't regret this decision.

Both you and Jun make plans to meet up later in the afternoon as he said it was something he wanted to get out as soon as possible, and you end the call with yet another sigh. As you do so, Zen comes back into the bedroom, and his lips mar into a frown when he sees your troubled expression. You jump slightly from surprise when you suddenly feel warm lips on your neck, Zen's hair tickling your skin while his arms snake around your waist from behind.

"What's wrong?" Zen asks, nuzzling his cheek against you which makes you laugh.

You turn around to face him and answer, "It's nothing. Just my ex." At that, Zen's eyes widen before he stitches his eyebrows together, unsure of how he feels about that. You wrap your own arms around him, hoping that it's enough to reassure him. Wanting to be completely truthful as to avoid any possible misunderstandings, you continue, "The two of us will be meeting up later today. Apparently there's something he wants to tell me."

"Can I come with you?" The question leaves the young man before he can even think of stopping it, and he grimaces at himself. Even after everything, the thought of you being alone with a man that you once possessed feelings for sparks a sense of unease in his heart. The actor feels disappointed and disgusted with himself, and he unknowingly pulls you closer towards him.

"Zen." Your voice is gentle as you try to gather the actor's attention to you once more. Zen brings his gaze towards you, and it amazes him how it only takes you one look to wash away his worries. Your eyes are only looking at him, and his heart dances and flutters. The actor dips his head low, bringing his face closer to your eyes that he loves so much. The same ones that continue to gaze at him, unwavering.

"My lovely Zen," you start with a loving whisper that practically has the actor melting even more for you. "Nothing will happen between us, and if he tries to do something, I'll be sure to call you."

"I... O-Okay. You're right. I'm sorry."

Your expression softens, a tinge of sadness hidden behind it when you hear his apology. You reach a hand up and stroke his cheek. "You have nothing to apologize for. You did nothing wrong."

Silence settles in between you two before Zen reluctantly pulls away, his hands lingering for a moment around your waist. "We should probably get ready for the day," the young man decides to change the subject, and you nod. Zen's eyes watch your retreating figure as you go to clean yourself up, and as soon as you leave the room, the actor lets out an aggravated sigh, running his hand through his hair in frustration while muttering to himself.
I don't know why, but these chapters always end up becoming longer than intended.
Chapter 20

You go about your usual day before it's time to meet up with Jun. You leave your shop with a sense of apprehension and start heading towards the designated meeting spot which isn't too far away. You see your ex from afar, finding that he hasn't changed much in the year since you last had contact with him, and you steel yourself for whatever he has to say after all this time. You walk up towards the male, and upon hearing your footsteps, Jun looks up and makes eye contact with you. There's a heavy tension in the air as neither of you know where to start or what to say.

"I'll get straight to the point," Jun starts, and you nod, thinking it might be for the best. "I want to apologize for what happened between us." Your eyes widen in surprise, not having expected that to be the topic of discussion, but you remain quiet and allow for the young man to continue. "I shouldn't have doubted you, and I should have listened to what you had to say."

"Damn right," you scoff, crossing your arms over your chest as you remembered all that heartache you went through.

The young man flinches at your hard tone before moving to rub one of his arms, his eyes downcast. "I have no excuse. I was horrible to you, I realize that now."

"It took you a whole year to realize that? After we've been together for about a year, you believed your friend over me, and then it takes you another year to figure out that you were a complete and utter dick?" You narrow your eyes, and Jun shrinks back a bit. He chooses to stay quiet and bites down on his lower lip, so you take that as your cue to continue.

"Do you understand how painful it was for me? After everything we've been through, you honestly thought that I would cheat on you? I loved you! With all my heart! I gave you everything, but you still thought that I was hiding stuff from you? Were my words not enough to prove it to you? The time I gave for you? The effort I put into the relationship? My entire body that I willingly gave to you like how you gave me yours? Were they not enough to chase away those doubts?"

Jun flinches once again when you start raising your voice, but you don't care. This was something that's been eating at you for a long time now, and you finally get the chance to say them. "You didn't even bother listening to me or try to believe me! For fuck's sake, I thought our relationship was better than that."

"I know," Jun finally speaks up, finding his voice again. "I know, and I'm sorry. Truly!"

You stare hard at Jun, and you see that his apology is sincere. You take a deep breath and calm yourself now that you've said your piece, a tired expression crossing over your features. "...I believe you."

"...Actually," Jun continues after a small pause, hesitation and uncertainty laced in his voice. "There's one more thing I want to ask."

"What is it?"

The young man takes a deep breath, his hands clenching to fists by his side as he struggles to get the question out. "I was wondering...if you can give me another chance? I-I promise, I'll be a much better boyfriend than I was before! I won't doubt you, and I'll always listen to what you have to say before jumping to conclusions. I...I tried dating other people after our breakup, but they weren't like you. You were kind and sweet, and I miss you, and—"
"Jun," you interrupt the male, raising up a hand, and he stops talking. You decide to get straight to the point for both of your sake. "I have a boyfriend."

"O-Oh..." Jun replies lamely at this piece of information, his shoulders slumping. "I see... I-I hope you're happy with him."

You nod, not hesitating for a single second with your response. "I am. He's wonderful and sweet, and he loves me just as much as I love him."

"That's... That's good. I'm happy for you."

Silence settles in the air between you two before the two of you decide that there's no need to prolong this meeting. You both say your awkward farewells before going your own way. You turn on your heel and retrieve your phone from your pocket. You pull up Zen's contact information and text him. "Mind if I come over tonight?"

It doesn't take long for Zen to reply, the words on the screen making you smile. "You're welcome to come over any time, princess."

You stand outside the actor's apartment as soon as you're done with all your responsibilities for the day, waiting for Zen to answer the door as you recall your conversation with Jun from this afternoon. A part of you feels relieved to finally put those feelings to rest now that you were able to voice them out, but when you remember how he tried to ask for a second chance after all the bullshit he put you through, you can't stop the irritation that grows in your chest.

Zen answers the door, and you try to flash him a reassuring smile, but it seems he was still able to catch the way you were furrowing your eyebrows. He grabs your wrist and pulls you towards him, but there's something in the action that seems off. You can feel the slightest of trembles from Zen as he wraps his arms around you, and you realize it was more of a reassurance for himself rather than a reassurance for you.

"I'm sorry I doubted you," the actor whispers against your hair, and for a moment, you're confused as to what he means by that. The realization then clicks in your mind that he must have been tormenting himself with his thoughts on whether or not you were going to leave him for your ex, and you return the male's embrace.

"I understand."

Zen pulls you inside his apartment, his arms still stubbornly wound around your form before kicking the door closed. He rubs his cheeks against yours for comfort, and you tighten your embrace around the actor which prompts him to pull your body flush against his and breathe out a sigh. Zen then asks, "How did it go?"

This time, it's your turn to sigh. "Let's go sit on the couch first."

The actor nods, pulling away from you and giving an exaggerated bow, holding his arm out for you. The corners of his lips tug into a smile when he hears your delighted giggle before taking his arm. He guides you to the couch with a straightened back and serious expression befitting for one of a butler to a princess, and you laugh even more.

Zen drops the act as soon as the two of you reach his couch. He flops down on the furniture before grabbing you by the hips and pulling you onto his lap, the sudden action eliciting a surprised yelp from you. Zen's hands move to stroke your legs, and you make yourself comfortable on his lap, straddling him and placing your hands on his shoulders as the two of you stare at each other.
"He wanted to apologize to me for believing that I was cheating on him," you start, tilting your head to the side as your fingers play with some of the actor's hair around his shoulders. "And he wanted me to give him a second chance and to start dating again."

"What did you say?" Zen asks with worry, pausing with his strokes on your legs.

You offer the male a reassuring smile as your fingers dance across his shoulders and travel to his neck, tracing the column of it before moving to trace the shape of his collarbones. "I told him that I already have a wonderful boyfriend."

A smile splits across Zen's face, and he hums delightfully when your hands roam around his body, feeling the shape of his muscles underneath the thin material his shirt. "Yeah?" He asks to confirm with an almost smug smile, his own hands snaking around to your ass and pulling you closer towards him.

You slip your hands underneath the hem of the actor's shirt, his skin warm underneath your touch, and Zen exhales a sigh of satisfaction at the contact. "Mm-hmm," you nod, answering his question. "A wonderful boyfriend who is super sweet and loves me as much as I love him."

Zen chuckles in response before moving to kiss your neck, his hand sliding to trace the curve of your spine. The kisses on your neck are deep and intense, and you tilt your head to give the actor more room to work with. You breathe out his name, giving a single roll of your hips against Zen's, and he offers a low moan against your skin. "Babe... If you do that, I'll want to keep you here for the night again."

You bring your lips close to your boyfriend's ear and whisper your question. "What if that's what I want too?"

Shivers course through the actor's spine before his lips leave your neck so that he can look at you. You gaze back at him with such strong eyes that it makes him weak. Your fingers trace his jawline, and Zen captures your wrist. He kisses your fingers with pure reverence, allowing his eyes to slip shut to appreciate the moment before you softly call out his name once more. It doesn't escape your notice the way Zen's eyebrows crease together, deep in thought, and you can't help but worry the slightest bit.

"Can I...ask for a favour from you?" The actor brings himself to ask, chewing on the corner of his bottom lip. "Actually, no, it's more like a request. Or wish, really. Um..."

Zen stumbles with his words, his eyes downcast as he tries to explain himself. You cup his face, interrupting him, and guide his face back up to look at you. "What is it?" You gently urge the young man to continue.

The actor takes a deep breath before answering, "I...want to hear you call me by my real name."

"Do you mean 'Hyun'?" You ask to confirm, and Zen nods his head, a smile plastered on his lips. You then continue, guilt laced in your voice, "I'm sorry, did you not like me calling you by your stage name and not your real name?"

Zen shakes his head, his arms moving to wrap around you. "It's not that I don't like it. It's just that...holding you in my arms like this and remembering the love we showed for each other last night, I couldn't help but wonder how my name would sound like if you said it."

"Oh... So then, Hyun, do you like it when I say your real name...?"

"I do," Zen answers without skipping a beat, a smirk creeping its way onto his features. "And I
think... I would like to hear you scream it."

You don't get a chance to reply, Zen suddenly standing up from the couch and bringing you with him as he heads towards his bedroom. "The couch would have been fine too, you know," you comment idly, prompting the actor to laugh.

"I know," he replies. "And as much as I want to make love to you as soon as possible, the bed has more room for us, and I want to make sure that my princess is comfortable."

"Ever the gentleman," you hum before giving a delighted giggle, and Zen smiles before capturing your lips into the first searing kiss of many to come for the night.

The actor opens the bedroom door and kicks it shut behind him before making his way over to the bed to set you down. He's gentle when he does so, but then his lips are fierce when he plants them on yours. There's a certain desperation behind it, no doubt the lingering sense of doubt he felt when you went to see your ex-boyfriend.

Zen wastes no time at all in removing your clothes, his actions much more confident than the first night the two of you spent together. He throws your shirt and jeans off the bed with a flick of his wrists before allowing his hands to explore your body. You hum in satisfaction as his warmth glides around your skin in smooth and sensual motions.

Eventually, the actor stops with his ministrations to snake his hands to your back, his fingers unclasping your bra with ease. His hooded eyes meet with yours as he slips the straps off your shoulders and down your arms, leaving your chest bare for him. Zen discards the bra to lie wherever in the room as his mouth descends to latch onto one of your breasts, causing you to gasp.

Zen's tongue twirls the sensitive bud around and hums against your skin, the small vibrations sending heat down to your core. Your hands travel up to behind the young man's head and thread through his hair, your breathing becoming much more shallow from his ministrations.

The actor separates himself from your mound and switches to the other one, repeating the same actions. His lips then travel over to the valley between your breasts, and he sucks at your skin. His mouth starts to descend your body, kissing and sucking at your flesh while his hands grip you at the hips.

Your eyes close in anticipation as he approaches your sex, and your legs start to tremble. Zen hooks his fingers underneath the band of your panties and slides them off with a bit of impatience behind his actions. He looks up at you and pauses, causing you to open your eyes once more to see what was wrong.

"Say my name," Zen tells you, and your heart beats erratically against your ribcage.

You decide to say more than just his name though, your voice incredibly sweet as you whisper just loud enough for him to hear, "I love you, Hyun."

Zen's eyes widen before something in him snaps. His lips suddenly wrap around your clit, sucking harshly at it while he dives a finger inside your folds without warning and starts pumping at a relentless pace. You throw your head back and curse out loud at the sudden stimulation as your fingers grip at the actor's hair.

He moans against your heat while inserting another finger, coating his digits with your arousal. Zen doesn't stop at all, twirling his tongue around the bundle of nerves while he slides his fingers in and out of you at a furious pace in tandem with your quickening breaths. You feel yourself start
to get close, but you somehow manage to keep yourself at the edge.

"W-Wait," you barely manage to get out, and Zen heeds your order, stopping with his actions, and you bite back your whine at the loss.

"Is something wrong?" The young man asks with furrowed eyebrows, afraid that he might have done something to upset you.

You shake your head and flash him a reassuring smile, propping yourself up on your elbows as you move to sit up. Zen sits up as well, the apprehension still on his features, but then he gasps when you push him backwards on the bed and climb on top of him. His cheeks become flushed as you rock your hips against him, your hands sliding underneath his shirt and finding their way to his nipples and pinching them.

"B-Babe..." Zen starts, only to trail off into a low moan as you tweak his nipples and press yourself further against his strained erection.

"I want you to feel good too," you explain, and Zen can only nod his head in response, his jaw falling slack from the growing pleasure coursing inside him.

It's a bit uncomfortable to grind your bare sex against the material of Zen's clothes, so you take a moment to slide them off and let his hard cock stand at full attention. You can't help but giggle at just how aroused he is from just all this before going to the bedside drawer to take out a packet while Zen slips off his shirt as well, finding the room to be way too hot for it.

You crawl back where Zen is and open the packet, rolling down the condom onto his length which twitches at your touch. You then take his cock into your hands and guide it to your entrance. Both you and Zen cry out simultaneously when you descend onto him in one smooth and quick motion.

A soft whine immediately follows from Zen as he revels in your warmth that encases him. He plants his hands on your hips and locks his gaze with yours, a loving smile on his features that widen even more when you give an experimental roll of your hips.

"Mm, do you like that, Hyun?" You breathe out, emphasizing his real name that he gave you permission to call him by. It was something so simple, but it brought the two of you closer together.

"Yes," Zen hisses out through gritted teeth, his fingers digging into your skin as he lifts you up and slides you down onto his throbbing cock to help guide you. "Fuck, babe... You're so good to me."

You can't bring yourself to respond, too far gone in your bliss as you ride him, planting your palms flat against his heaving chest for support. Zen squeezes at your flesh, bucking his hips off the bed to bury himself into your clenching walls. He can feel himself slowly approaching his peak, and the actor growls at the feeling.

With a few more grunts and sharp gasp, Zen slams you down hard on his cock and cries out with his release, his grip on you hard enough to possibly leaves bruises. His body falls lax afterwards, and the young man struggles for a moment to catch his breath as you climb off of him, but not before placing a loving kiss to his reddened cheek.

You make yourself comfortable on the bed as Zen goes to discard the condom, but then you hear the bedside drawer slide open once more, capturing your attention. You turn your head to see the actor taking out another packet, and the look he gives you makes your body temperature rise as you unconsciously rub your thighs together for some friction.
The mattress dips underneath Zen's knees as he crawls his way over to hover over you. He wraps his fingers around his length and starts to stroke it to full hardness once more, his gaze never leaving your face.

"You still haven't cum yet," the young man whispers with a seemingly innocent tilt of his head. "I want to feel you cum around me."

You swallow the lump in your throat as Zen rolls a new condom onto his member, and your teeth graze along your bottom lip at the unspoken promise behind his words. The actor makes sure you're lying comfortably on your back before running the head of his cock along your folds.

Your hand travels up to stroke your lover's cheek, and you utter his name. "Hyun..."

Zen smiles down at you before inserting his length, a shaky breath leaving your lips at the wonderful stretch. It doesn't take long for you to adjust, and before long, the actor starts to move in a slow and steady rhythm. He wants to prolong this moment and make sure that the both of you feel everything. The push and pull.

You appreciate the way Zen makes you feel, both physically and emotionally, and your arms wrap around his broad back to hold him close to you. The moans and sighs you offer into his ears sends delightful shivers down the actor's spine, and the way you call his name over and over again just spurs him on.

Hot. Everything feels too hot, your body feeling like it's aflame as Zen continues to thrust into you, but you aren't complaining. How long have the two of you been at it? You don't know, but you do know that quite some time has passed since the two of you became tangled up in one another. It's your second night with Zen, and you're surprised and impressed once more at his ridiculous stamina.

You're broken out of your thoughts with a sharp gasp when you feel Zen rub against your clit. A soft whimper tumbles out of your lips when you feel yourself getting close. "H-Hyun," you whine out the actor's name for the umpteenth time that night. "I-I can't—"

"I know," Zen breathes out, his thrusts starting to become more frantic while his cock continues to throb against your walls. "I-I'm close too, babe... Fuck, let's cum together, okay? Cum with me, babe... Cum with me—!!"

Your body easily gives in to Zen's request, the two of you finding release within seconds of each other, clawing and tightly grasping onto the other almost in a desperate attempt to mold both of your bodies together. Zen collapses on top of you after pulling out, but of course still being considerate and making sure he doesn't crush you with his weight.

You're both breathing heavily against each other's ears, swallowing every now and then as you try to catch your breaths. As soon as Zen is able to find the energy, he disposes the condom before lying down beside you and pulling you into his arms. His fingers comb through your hair, brushing away the strands that stuck to your face during your activities.

"I have a day off coming up soon. I was wondering if you'd like to go on a date then," Zen asks as he lightly trails his fingers back and forth along the length of your arm in slow and lazy motions. "It'll be a simple one: walking hand in hand, sharing treats, getting lost into each other's eyes..."

A small delighted and amused laugh leaves you as you bury your face into the actor's chest. "That sounds wonderful."
Zen hums a cheerful tune to himself, a bounce in his steps as he walks back home after a quick grocery run after the day's rehearsal. You've been spending lots of more time at his place, and he wants to make sure that there's enough food so that you're comfortable there and don't ever go hungry. He's always had a bit of trouble keeping food in his fridge. He got better when he and his ex-girlfriend used to live together, but after their break-up, the actor had fallen back into only keeping just beer and water.

Things are different now though. Zen wants to make sure that you're eating enough, and he wants to be healthy himself so that he can spend more time with you. He wants to improve himself for the both of you. Without even realizing it, a wide grin spreads across Zen's lips when he finds that his thoughts have drifted back to you once more, and his heart races as he brings up the image of your face into his mind.

Usually, Zen didn't know what to do on his days off. He would almost always spend them either working out or practicing, but right now, he's more than excited to spend the day with you. The actor wonders about what he would like to do for the date, only to realize that he doesn't particularly mind as long as he's with you.

Zen is walking by the park he hears small footsteps running towards him. Before the actor can turn around, he feels something crash into and wrap around his leg.

"Big brother Zenny!"

The young man's face lights up instantly at the familiar voice and smiles down at the child holding onto his leg. "Hello Haneul," Zen greets her while patting her head, and delighted giggles bubble out of the little girl's chest. "It's been a while!"

Haneul lets go of the actor's leg, nodding her head with huge motions in agreement. She opens her mouth to speak but is cut off by a new voice calling her name. Zen looks up and is greeted by a young woman that the actor recognizes as Haneul's mother the last time he accompanied you to drop off the child back home. It seems as though the woman recognizes him too, and her eyes widen in surprise.

"Oh, you're Zen—" The actor nods his head and offers a small introduction which the young woman then returns, "I'm Mi-na, Haneul's mother. I'm glad you're here; I've been wanting to talk to you, when you have time."

"I have time right now," Zen answers with a shrug, tilting his head to the side from curiosity on what it could have been that Mi-na wanted to talk about.

Mi-na nods and gestures towards the park for the two of them to talk. The young woman takes Haneul's hand and walks with her to the park before telling the little girl to play while she and Zen have an important discussion. Haneul accepts it without much fuss and runs over to the slide to play and kill time.

Both Mi-na and Zen sit down on a nearby bench before the young woman starts, "So I heard that you and [Name] are dating."
"Yes," the actor answers simply, somehow finding himself to be a bit nervous. After all, you had told him before that Mi-na was like a sister to you, so the young man feels an odd sense of wanting to put a good impression.

"I see... I'm sorry if I sound rude with this question, but what is it about her that you like?"

At that, Zen exhales a laugh and runs a hand through his hair as his eyes look far into the distance. "Oh god, I don't know where to start. She's supportive, patient, and understanding. She's kind and knows all the right things to say to make me laugh. And then, when she smiles, I just..." Zen trails off, unable to find the words as his expression melts to a lovestruck grin.

Mi-na glances towards Zen, her own expression changing to one of relief. "I'm glad. She's strong, but she can be fragile and sensitive sometimes, so I'm glad she has someboy who deeply cares for and loves her like you by her side. Please continue to take care of her."

"I will," the young man promises right away without a single hint of hesitation his voice.

"Good. ...I will never forgive you if you make her cry."

Zen tenses at that, but not because of the underlying threat hidden underneath, but rather at how it sounded like it wouldn't be the first time. The young man laces his fingers together in front of him, his grip strong enough that his arms shake. "Were...they close?"

Mi-na understands immediately who Zen is talking about, and for a moment, she remains quiet. "Has she told you about him?"

"A little bit, yes. She told me about how they met and why they broke up."

"Then, do you doubt her feelings for you?" Mi-na continues with her interrogation.

Zen shakes his head, seemingly baffled at the accusation. "No, of course not!"

"In that case..." Mi-na starts. "Yes, they were close. She actually considered bringing up the idea of discussing marriage with him at some point but dropped it overall when he started accusing her of cheating. It affected her greatly, but your performances helped her get through it, so I wanted to thank you for that. And even now, you're helping and changing her in becoming a better person by giving her all of your love and affection, so thank you."

"I should be the one thanking her. If it weren't for her, I don't know where I would be," Zen admits, an uncertain smile playing on his lips.

"I'm sure she shares the same sentiment," the young woman replies as she stands up from the bench, calling her daughter back over. "...I have to get going now. It was a pleasure meeting you."

The actor stands up as well, slightly flustered. "Likewise."

Haneul makes her way over to her mother and grabs her hand. Both Zen and Mi-na say their farewells, and Haneul peers up at the actor. "Can I see you again?" The little girl asks, eyes wide with hope.

Before Zen can reply, Mi-na speaks up, "Oh! You should consider going to or staying over at [Name]'s place starting this weekend. I have to go on a business trip for a week, and I've asked her to look over Haneul in the meantime. I'm sure she'd love your help and company, and it'd be great practice if the two of you ever decide to have children."
The actor chokes on air for a brief second at the young woman's added sentence at the end. "Th-th-th-That's—That's—That's a bit..."

Mi-na laughs at Zen's flustered state before waving her hand in a dismissive manner. "Of course, it's something that the two of you should discuss seriously if you two ever consider the option. Children are rewarding but can also be hard work. Speaking from experience, it isn't something that should be taken lightly, but I don't think I have to worry with the pair of you."

The young man furrows his eyebrows in confusion, so Mi-na continues, "What I mean to say is that there's no need to rush in your relationship. Appreciate the moment that the two of you have together, and don't make such life-changing decisions so hastily."

"...Thank you," Zen responds awkwardly, taking the woman's advice to heart. He waves at both Mi-na and Haneul as they leave while he allows the previous discussion to sink in, and Zen starts to wonder just where he wants his relationship with you to go in the future.

Chapter End Notes

Apologies for a short chapter, but I wanted to take a small break from all the fluff and smut to look further into Zen's thoughts towards Reader and their relationship.
As promised, after a few more days of normal and uneventful things, Zen finally has a day off which the two of you decide to take to your advantage and go on a date. A heavy sigh reaches your ears, and you bring your gaze over to your friend who's slumped over on the counter. "Why do I have to watch over your store while you go out with your boyfriend?"

"Byeong-Ho, please." Your voice comes out exasperated as you roll your eyes at the older male who seems to act more like a child around you. "You're on break anyways with nothing else to do, so you might as well. Besides, it's not like this is the first time I'm asking you to do this, and I'm paying you too."

"But it's so boring," Byeong-Ho whines out. "Ahhh... I want to go on a date too."

"Well, unfortunately for you, you single virgin, you're stuck here while I go on my date." You laugh at your friend while giving him a jab, and Byeong-Ho sticks his tongue out at you in protest at your cruel teasing. "I'll be going now. As always, I'll text you later if I need you to close up shop or not."

The male's eyes watch you leave the store, an amused smile on his lips when he sees the bounce in your steps. Despite his prior complaints, it warms his heart to see you so happy, and he sends you off with a warm farewell and wave of his hand. "Have fun, and stay safe!"

You head over to the small bridge that's sort of become a special place for you and Zen, and the actor's already there, waiting for you. He straightens up immediately when he sees you before leaning down to greet you with a quick kiss to your lips as soon as you're close enough. When Zen sees your eyes light up and lips curve into a smile at his display of affection, he kisses you again just to see that same reaction one more time. Your cheeks flush this time, and you whine out the actor's name in protest as you try to push him away in a half-hearted manner, but this only spurs Zen to capture your wrists and instead pull you up close against his body.

"You're so fun to tease," Zen admits with a laugh near your ears but eventually pulls away, one of his hands trailing down the length of your arm and intertwining your fingers together.

You roll your eyes at his honest confession, but there's not a single hint of spite behind the action. Instead, you lean your head against the actor's arm and allow him to lead you through your date. It's a simple date, merely strolling through the streets while hand-in-hand with a bounce in your steps and appreciating the beautiful weather as well as your boyfriend's company.

Zen gently tugs you closer towards him, the pair of you talking about mundane things with the occasional laughs and giggles. You and Zen are so lost in your own little world that neither of you notice the looks that the people passing by give you two at how sickeningly sweet you're being with each other.

Eventually, the two of you decide to get some snacks and purchase some fish-shaped bread. You and Zen head over to sit down on a bench, finding the area to be clear of other people. Before you can take a bite out of your treat, Zen holds his own treat out towards you with a large and toothy grin on his lips, and you can't help but laugh. You take a bite from Zen's snack before offering your own to the actor himself for him to taste.

The young man's gaze flickers over to your lips and then back to your eyes. There's some mischievousness hiding behind his expression that you barely catch, and you're just about to
comment on it when Zen speaks, "You have some bean paste on you."

Without waiting for your response, the actor leans forward, sticking out his tongue to lick at the corner of your mouth before pulling back, smug satisfaction on his features as he licks his lips that tug into a smirk. It takes you a moment to process what just happened, and when you finally do, your face flushes several deep shades of red. As soon as you recover, you smack Zen's arm as his laughter rings out in the air.

"You're so cheesy!" You sound exasperated as you lean back, but your eyes hold abundant joy in them.

"It's because I'm super in love with you," Zen coos, nuzzling his cheek against yours, and all you can do in response is roll your eyes and laugh.

The two of you continue to eat your snacks with the occasional flirtatious banter in between, and once the two of you are done, Zen grabs onto your wrist without warning. The actor tugs you towards him, and he plants his cheek flat against yours, squishing both of your faces together. His free hand fishes through his pockets before eventually taking out his cell phone.

Zen holds the phone out, the camera app already open and pointed towards the pair of you. Unable to deny Zen's unspoken wish to take a selfie, you give a good-humoured sigh of exasperation before turning your attention towards the mobile device and smile. Just when you think the young man is about to take the picture, he suddenly turns his head, his lips pressed against your cheek as the distinct click of the camera sounds in the air.

Chuckling at your lag in processing what just happened, Zen brings the phone closer to his face so that he can check if it ended up looking good. A wide grin splits across his face when he sees how perfect and cute it looks, and the actor wastes no time at all in fiddling with his phone's settings so that he can make his latest selfie with you his lockscreen.

You purse your lips into a pout. "No fair," you say almost childishly. "I want one on my phone too with me kissing your cheek."

"Of course princess!" Zen is more than happy to give you what you want, and he offers you his cheek, his lips curving into a smile when you plant a lingering kiss on him as you get ready to take the photo.

However, being the mischievous person he is, Zen swiftly turns his head and presses his lips against yours. You gasp into the sudden kiss in surprise, and the young man's hand slides over to behind your head to keep you in place. You melt against him, your initial frustration of not being able to take the picture dissolving away the more Zen pulls you towards him.

The both of you reluctantly break apart in need of air, but the actor doesn't like being apart from you and so opts to rest his forehead against yours, his fingers tangling in your hair. Zen closes his eyes, taking a moment to just admire the moment and bask in your presence while you, on the other hand, stare lovingly at his features that were so close to yours. You would have continued staring; however, a familiar face flashes in the corner of your eye.

Your lips press together in a firm line as you start to lean back away from Zen, prompting him to open his eyes. He follows the direction of your gaze and sees a young man he's never seen before, but judging from your reaction, the actor is able to make a good guess of who it is.

"That's my ex-boyfriend, Jun," you explain with a hint of annoyance in your voice, confirming Zen's suspicion. You breathe out a small groan, mumbling to yourself in a quiet plead, "Please don't
come here..."

But of course, Jun happens to catch sight of you, and he starts to head over despite your wishes. Heaving an aggravated sigh, you try to at least muster a civil smile just as the young man approaches you, Zen's hold on you tightening the slightest bit. Jun's eyes flicker over to the actor, and he takes in the sight before him, his features slowly turning to one of dissatisfaction.

"Are you two dating?" He asks straight away without even offering a single greeting. "Is Zen your boyfriend you told me about?"

"Yes," you answer with a hint of annoyance towards his rudeness towards not only you, but towards your boyfriend as well.

There's a small pause before Jun starts to speak again, "I don't mean to sound rude, but...are you sure he's the right one for you? How can you be sure he isn't going to throw you away?"

You bristle at the young man's implications, and you abruptly stand up from your seat. Meanwhile, Zen remains quiet, an unreadable expression on his face as he considers the situation. "Just what are you trying to get at?" Your eyes narrow along with your question, but Jun stands by his own thoughts.

"I'm just worried you'll end up getting hurt if it turns out that he's just using you for your own enjоyme—"

Jun's words are cut off with a resolute slap, your palm making contact with his cheek. Silence immediately looms over, both Zen and Jun too stunned to even make a sound. Your hand stings from the impact, but you're too annoyed to pay it any mind.

"How fucking dare you?" You seethe, your voice containing a sharp edge. "How dare you make such accusations when you don't know a single thing about my boyfriend. You have no right."

Exhaling an aggravated breath, you grab Zen's hand who's still stunned and drag him away, leaving Jun to watch your retreating figures with a look of slight guilt and great concern. After a few minutes of mindless wandering, you finally manage to cool down and turn to face the actor, your eyes apologetic.

"I'm sorry about all that," you mumble with your head bowed low.

"Don't be," Zen reassures you, cupping your chin and tilting your head up to look at him. "Actually, I think I just fell in love with you all over again."

Your frown slowly changes to that of a small smile at his words. "I really am sorry about what he said. I know you aren't like that at all."

The young man shakes his head, wrapping his free arm around your waist and pulls you close towards him. "As long as you believe in me, I'm happy."
Chapter 23

After that frustrating encounter with your ex, both you and Zen decide to spend the rest of the day cuddled up with one another on the couch in the privacy of his home. As fun as it is to be out and about together in public without a single care in the world, nothing was better than being alone with each other.

Zen has his arm loosely wrapped around your waist as he guides you back to his home in silence. His fingers drum against your sides in a distracted and rhythmical fashion as the actor goes over the words that Jun spoke. Of course, Zen isn’t anything like Jun’s accusations, and you already told Zen that you believe in him, but he just can’t stop thinking about it.

Maybe you don’t deserve someone like Zen after all. Maybe you should be with somebody better. …No, he shouldn’t think like that. The actor may have his faults, but they are not the only things that define him. You taught him that, and you continue to teach him that with the love and kindness you always give him.

“…Oh,” Zen makes a small sound of surprise, stopping with his steps when his eyes happen to make contact with all too familiar ones.

You recognize the young woman standing before the two of you. It’s none other than Zen’s ex-girlfriend. Both Zen and his ex stare at each other in silence while you fidget slightly off to the side from the awkward silence. The young man is the first to speak, clearing his throat.

“Hey,” he greets his fellow RFA member with a strained voice.

“Hi,” she returns with just as much difficulty, swallowing a lump in her throat. The young woman’s eyes flicker over to you and then down to the arm around your waist. Her stare lingers for a moment, and you’re not sure if you want to move away from Zen to relieve the tension in the air or to move closer to him to make a silent statement.

The party coordinator forces a smile as she brings her attention back to the young man. “Are the two of you dating?”

“Yes,” Zen answers without a moment’s hesitation that it catches you by surprise along with the young woman.

“Oh, I see…” she replies lamely, her expression faltering for a second as she brings her gaze back to you. “You’re very lucky to have him.”

Her voice is laced with guilt and disappointment, and it ends up rubbing you off the wrong way. She was with Zen before; she was on the receiving end of the actor’s abundant love, care, and trust, and she threw it all away and betrayed him. When you first saw the party coordinator in the news when Zen made their relationship public, you thought that the two made for a good match, but now, you can’t help but feel disgusted by her.

It’s not the fact that she was Zen’s ex that upset you. It’s because she hurt someone so sweet and innocent that you can’t forgive her, nor do you think you ever will. Realizing that you were taking too long to respond, you snap back to reality.

“Yes, I am,” you reply with an underlying tone that you know the young woman can catch, and her expression finally falls.
It’s gotten late, and both you and Zen have just finished up watching a few movies, cuddling on the couch to end of the day. Wanting to get your mind off of the unpleasant events in the day, you decide to excuse yourself to the rooftop while Zen cleans up around the area, telling you that he’ll be there with you in a bit.

The cool air is welcoming upon opening the door, and you breathe it in as you step out to gaze at the stars. You remember the first time Zen showed you this view, and it looks just as beautiful now as it did back then. But then you remember the memory he shared with you about his ex-girlfriend, and so you in turn remember the people you bumped into in the afternoon. A heavy sigh escapes you as your eyes never leave the sky, hoping they would serve as a good distraction.

“Are you still upset about what happened today?” Zen’s voice reaches your ears from behind your form, and it isn’t long before you feel his arms winding around you and pulling you back to his chest.

You know that the actor will be able to tell if you’re lying, so you answer with reluctant honesty, “…Kind of.”

The young man hums approvingly at your truthful response, and his grip around you tightens while he buries his face into your hair. “Don’t worry about them, babe,” he whispers lowly, his voice sending tingles throughout your body. “Let’s just focus on us right now…”

“You’re right,” you agree with a smile as you allow your mind to only focus on what’s happening now.

Almost as though waiting for that answer as your approval, Zen’s hold around your waist loosens. His hands slowly start to unwind themselves, his palms gliding across your stomach and over to your sides. His fingers trail down to your hips and continue with their descent to your thighs. His touch, though simple, sends your mind and heart racing.

Zen’s hands trace the shape of your legs, moving along to rub your inner thighs in a sensual manner, and you’re finally aware of where this is going. Feeling how tense you’re starting to get, Zen says, “Tell me to stop, and I will.”

You consider it for a second but shake your head. “No…don’t stop. Please.”

You swear you can see the actor’s smile of satisfaction from behind you as he answers with a husky voice, “Then I won’t.”

Silence falls between the pair of you once more as the actor’s fingers work their way to loosening your pants in slow motions that you’re not sure if he’s teasing you or not. One of his hands slips underneath the band of your panties which causes your breath to catch in your throat as he ghosts over your sex. Zen’s fingers find your clit with ease, and he starts to rub the bundle of nerves in a slow and sensual manner as his lips move to place deep kisses to your ear. The exaggerated smacking sounds he makes is almost enough to send your mind spinning.

Zen continues to stimulate your clit with increasing speed as his tongue licks along the shell of your ear, eliciting a small whimper from you. Your vision of the night sky above you becomes hazy, and the vague awareness of being outside on the rooftop as Zen pleasures you from behind sends even more excitement to shoot down your spine at the possibility that his neighbours might hear.

Seemingly much more comfortable and confident, the actor finally slides a finger inside your wet folds, drawing out a dragged out moan from your parted lips. Zen keeps his finger still as you both
try to process and adjust this position. Just a few minutes prior, you had found the night air to be cool on your skin, but now it feels like you’re burning up with the way Zen touches you in the most lovingly sinful ways.

The young man starts to pump his finger inside you in a steady rhythm, your breathing becoming much more heavy with each stroke. “Z-Zen…” you whine, tilting your head back to rest upon his chest as you feel your knees grow weak and legs tremble. You’re not sure if you can continue to support yourself if this keeps up.

Zen’s free arm wraps around your torso in a tight embrace, holding you firmly against his broad chest. “I got you, babe,” the actor reassures you, his voice deep and husky as he struggles with keeping his breathing even. “Don’t worry…I won’t let you fall. I got you.”

You bite at your lower lip, afraid of making too much noise in case any of the neighbours might hear, but it gets harder to control yourself when Zen slides two more fingers inside, trying to find all those spots that just drive you insane. It’s a bit difficult for the actor to pump his fingers due to the constraints of your clothes, but the whole restriction and closeness of them seems to heighten everything and makes this act all the more sweet and sinful.

With a sharp gasp, you bend forward the slightest bit to grind your ass against Zen behind you and use his fingers for your own pleasure. The young man keeps a strong hold of you, making sure that you don’t fall like he promised. You force yourself to keep your eyes open as moans and sighs continue to spill out from you, wanting to take in the gorgeous sight in addition to the sensations that fill you. The sky looks beautiful from this angle, and you want to sear it into your mind.

“Zen!” You cry out in the most cutest voice that the actor’s ever heard from you which seems to encourage him even more.

Zen leans forward so that his chest is against your back once more, his heart thumping loudly and erratically as he grinds his erection against your ass, the friction of both of your clothes adding more to the feeling. He’s diligent with his fingers, almost desperate to bring you over the edge as you continue to plead while repeating Zen’s name over and over again in needy whimpers. You feel his body shudder against yours as he growls in response.

You can feel your gut tightening, on the verge of release, when Zen catches you off guard and bites your shoulder, and that sudden feeling is what sends you over the edge. White fills your vision, crying out loud as your body squirms and writhes against the actor as the heightened pleasure courses through you. The young man holds you steady throughout your orgasm, all the while uttering words of praise in your ear which seems to amplify the overwhelming sensations even more than before.

With a few shuddering breaths, you start to come down from your high with a few occasional twitches now and then. You can’t find the energy to stand fully on your own just yet, but Zen is reliable and doesn’t let go of you for a single second. He helps you to stand back up to full height, and you lean back against him for support as you try to get feeling back to your legs again.

Zen’s fingers leave the hold of your now soiled panties, and he brings his dirtied fingers up to his lips. Your eyes flutter close as you listen to him suck on his digits to clean them, all the while humming in a way that you can’t tell if he’s exaggerating or not. “Have I ever told you how great you taste?” Zen asks after popping his fingers out of his mouth.

You barely manage to exhale a short laugh, shaking your head at how ridiculous the actor’s being. “I’m all dirty now,” you complain with a hint of accusation laced in your voice. You turn around on the spot to face the young man and rest your arms on his shoulders.
Zen gazes down at you with an innocent expression, acting as though he didn’t just finger you to one of your best orgasms in the middle of the night on his rooftop where people can hear. He places a quick kiss on the crown of your head. “You can use my shower as always,” he offers. “And my clothes.”

“Good,” you reply with a nod of satisfaction. The young man chuckles before placing another kiss on your temple, guiding you back inside his apartment for the rest of the night.
Zen hears the distinct sound of the bathroom door closing shut, but he doesn't hear the lock click in place. After all, there really isn't any reason for you to do so, considering how intimate you and Zen have been already, but nevertheless, it makes Zen's heart swell that you trust him enough like that.

The sound of the shower comes to life, muffled behind the door, and the actor goes to make himself comfortable on his bed. He doesn't plan to sleep just yet and decides to wait until you're in his arms with you wearing his clothes and with his scent on you. The image causes the young man to bite at his lower lip, and he tries to think of something else to get his mind off this dangerous track.

That may have made things worse though because now, his thoughts start to go back to that intimate moment just a few minutes ago on the rooftop. The actor never did manage to relieve himself. He was too focused on making sure you felt good to distract you from your negative thoughts that he didn't pay much mind to himself.

Now that he's all alone, however, the memory of the sounds and touches overwhelm him, and he finds himself becoming increasingly aroused. The young man's breaths come out uneven, and his chest heaves as he tries to control himself. Zen squirms a bit on the bed, trying to ignore the amazingly tight strain in his pants, but he can't.

The actor's gaze flickers over to the door, and he can hear the shower still running. He isn't sure how much longer you'll be in there, but he hopes that he'll have enough time. Zen slides his pants down, bringing his underwear along with it and allows the articles of clothing to pool at his knees rather than taking them off completely.

He's far too impatient, and a low groan rumbles out of his chest when his erect cock is finally exposed to the cold, open air. Zen grips his length without a second thought, and he starts to stroke himself at a quick and almost frantic pace. The actor's teeth dig into his bottom lip to muffle his sounds.

Zen clenches his eyes shut and tightens his jaw, the grip of his hand around his heated cock firm while he continues to pump himself. It's not as good as being inside you, but for now, this will do. The actor's eyebrows stitch themselves together as he concentrates on the pleasure that builds up within him, bucking his hips off of the bed with strong thrusts.

Low and shaky growls manage to slip past his lips, and the actor is so focused on trying to chase his release that he doesn't realize that the shower is no longer running. He's so close now, his pace
growing in speed and intensity as his muscles start to clench and toes curl. The actor tilts his head back, burying it into the pillows as the moans he was trying to so desperately suppress start to flow out.

The sound of your voice letting out a small surprised yelp causes Zen's eyes to snap open and lift his head. He lets out a strangled gasp when he sees you standing there in his clothes after your shower, completely frozen with your jaw open and eyes blown wide at the scene that greets you. Zen's hand immediately lets go of his throbbing cock despite being on the precipice of his orgasm, and his entire face grows hot with embarrassment at having been caught touching himself.

The silence in the room is almost deafening, both you and Zen staring at each other as his thick and red cock just stands there at full height, dripping with precum and twitching for attention once more.

Swallowing the lump in his throat, Zen tries to laugh of his embarrassment, but his voice is incredibly shaky. "B-Babe, th-this isn't..."

The young man trails off, his words dying in his throat. This isn't what it looks like? This is exactly what it looks like, he realizes, and it makes matters worse that his cock is still perfectly hard and aching for release. If anything, this whole situation just arouses him even more.

After overcoming your initial shock, you clear your throat. "Well, uh... Don't let me stop you."

"What?" Zen asks in disbelief, the pitch of his voice much higher than usual, and he almost chokes on the word. His eyes widen even more as he registers your words into his mind.

With extremely flushed cheeks, you vaguely gesture towards him. "Go on," you tell him, your words wavering the slightest bit. "Don't mind me and continue."

Though rather tentative, the actor encases his member into the warmth of his hand once more, his eyes locked with yours as he slowly strokes himself. Both you and Zen remain quiet as you take this whole thing in while staring at each other, and the only sounds that fill the room are the young man's ragged breaths and slickness of his skin.

You take one uncertain step towards the actor who continues to pleasure himself before you, and you take another. As you approach him, Zen groans and comments, "I-I didn't think you were...into this sort of thing."

Your gaze alternates between his face and the large cock in his hand, and your teeth graze along your bottom lip as warmth starts to rise inside you. "Didn't I tell you before? There's a lot of things you don't know about me. ...God, you look so gorgeous like this. I could watch you forever."

The young man bites back a moan as he gives an involuntary buck of his hips at your words. You remember the first time you touched Zen in such an intimate manner, and you remember the reaction he had when you praised him. Sitting on the side of his bed, you can't help but stare at the dripping length and the way Zen touches himself to his own tune. He knows his body well, and it's glorious.

You leave a light trail of your fingers along the actor's exposed thigh, eliciting a suppressed whine. Daringly, you decide to speak, "Look at you. Look at that big, hard cock of yours. It's so...perfect."

You're a bit awkward with your words, red dusting your cheeks since you weren't familiar with speaking like this, but it seems to have an effect on Zen, his pumps faltering for a brief second as he moans out your name. His grip tightens around himself, and you grow a bit more bold. "Is this
all for me? This beautiful display of art that you are?"

"Mmm..." Zen answers with a shaky hum as he gives a few short nods of his head. "All for you, babe. All for you and you alone."

Zen watches your lips curl into a smile at that, and it makes him smile in turn. Gathering his courage and resolve, Zen moves to support himself on his knees instead; he hasn't let up with his strokes in the slightest. The shift in position has him at a taller height than you now, and he looks down at you with an encouraging smile.

"Tell me what you want to see. What you want to hear," he sighs as he runs his free hand all along his body while exaggerating his thrusts, hoping to put on a special show just for you.

You tilt your head to the side and let out a thoughtful hum, your eyes scanning the actor's figure with hooded eyes. After a short pause, you answer, "I only want to see you in complete rapture. Voice out your thoughts. I want to know what you're thinking about as you touch yourself like this with me watching you."

"What I'm thinking about..." Zen starts, struggling to find the words as his mind grows hazy. "I'm thinking about how good you make me feel, even without touching me. The effect that you have on me. Just your mental image alone is enough to get my heart racing. Enough to get me so hard..."

Zen dips his head back with a throaty groan as he starts to lose his rhythm. He tries to continue to voice out his thoughts, but his mind is completely clouded over with pleasure, and all he can manage is a few incoherent murmurs of his love for you. His eyes clench shut for a moment, and he grits his teeth.

Forcing himself to look at you once more with your attention never having left him even once, the actor moans, "F**k, I'm so close. Babe, can I—unagh, f**k! Can I cum on your face, princess? Please? God, I—f**k—I want to see your pretty face with my cum. P-Please..."

Your heart thuds against your chest at his request, and although your hands shake with uncertainty, you want to know what it would feel like. You want to try it, so you nod your head and give the actor permission, making sure to keep your eyes closed and lips pressed together in a firm line. Within seconds, you hear Zen growl loudly from above you before you feel something warm and sticky hit your face.

You flinch at the sudden sensation, but at the same time, it makes you shiver in delight as Zen's groans fill your ears. The actor watches with complete fascination as his pulsating cock spurts out ropes of his cum, painting your face and some of your hair with it. The sight makes his spine tingle as he's left panting and gasping for air.

Without giving you a chance to open your eyes again, Zen drops down to your height. He takes your face into his hands and kisses you hard on the lips, a muffled sound of surprise leaving you. The force and momentum brings you crashing down to your back on the bed with Zen still liplocked above you, his weight pressing against your body.

Zen moans into the kiss; the taste of his cum that he spilled on you fills his senses when mixed with the taste of you, and he pries your lips open with his tongue, sliding the wet muscle inside to taste even more of you. The kiss is deep and intense, and Zen can't get enough of it. Enough of you.

You manage to separate yourself for a moment to take a sharp intake of air before the actor captures your lips once more into another passionate kiss, the two of you moaning and groaning
against each other's mouths. Zen keeps your face cupped within his hands while you grip onto his shirt, shivering from the intensity of his tongue swirling around yours.

You're not too sure how long the two of you stayed like that, but by the end of it, both you and Zen are left staring at each other with lidded eyes, cheeks perfectly flushed and chests heaving for breath.

"That... That was something," you finally speak to break the silence.

The young man just laughs before getting off of you and leaving the room to retrieve a warm washcloth. He wipes away the sticky substance still decorating your face before cleaning himself up.

While he was cleaning up, you consider asking Zen a question that's been nagging at you for quite some time. You bite at your lower lip as he lies down and makes himself before settling yourself beside the actor on the bed.

Gathering your courage, you finally ask, "Hey, Zen?"

The young man hums to acknowledge you have his attention, his body turning to the side so that he can wrap his arms around you. "What is it?"

Swallowing the lump in your throat, you're unable to bring your gaze to meet his as you question him, "Do you think at some point that maybe we could try some...light bondage...? Like...um, like having you tie me to the bed..."

You inwardly cringe at the way your voice wavers at the end, that previous confidence of yours slipping away. Zen tenses up the slightest bit as he processes your question, and he's silent for a moment which only heightens your nervousness. Afraid that you had made the young man uncomfortable, you're frantic to add, "We don't have to if you don't want to! I-I was just curious if it's something you'd consider, b-but please don't feel like you're obligated to do it! I completely understand if you refuse!"

"I don't mind."

Your mind seems to turn blank as you snap your head upwards to look at your boyfriend. "What?"

With a soft smile, Zen repeats, "I don't mind trying it out if that's what you want. I mean, I'm not sure how it will go and turn out, but... I want to try it. With you."

All your previous fears and doubts dissipate with his words, and you return his smile as you move to stroke his cheek as relief washes over you. "Thank you. And if at any time you become uncomfortable or want to stop, then we will. We can discuss about this more in length when we have time, but I'm a bit sleepy right now..."

"You and me both," Zen chuckles, brushing away a stray lock of your hair before allowing his fingers to run along your cheek. "Sweet dream, princess. I love you."

"I love you too," you breathe with a smile, leaning forward to give your boyfriend one last quick peck on the lips before burying yourself into his arms.

Chapter End Notes
I'm currently in the process of trying to cross-post this fic onto my Tumblr; I won't be working on the next chapter until I've finished cross-posting which might take a while, sorry!
When you wake up the next morning, you find yourself to be quite cold. With your eyelids still heavy from sleep, you blindly grope around the side of the bed to wrap yourself up in your boyfriend's arms to keep yourself warm, but all you end up grasping is just empty air. You whine in protest and force yourself to open your eyes, and you glance around the room, but Zen isn't anywhere.

Before a sense of apprehension can settle itself into your heart, a pleasant scent wafts into the room and fills your senses. If you strain your ears enough, you can even catch the sound of Zen's familiar voice humming to himself. Breathing out a sigh, you fling the blankets off of you and swing your legs over to the side of the bed. You take a moment to stretch and wake up your muscles before standing up and heading towards the kitchen where the smell and sounds are coming from.

Your still sleepy eyes fall upon the actor's back as he prepares breakfast, and you can't help but smile to yourself. Waking up like this every day didn't seem like a bad idea. Covering your mouth with your hand to suppress a yawn, you make your way over to where Zen is and hug him from behind, resting your head atop his broad back.

"Good morning princess," Zen greets you with a low chuckle, his attention still focused on the food in front of him.

"G'morning..." you mumble back in greeting before shifting around to kiss your lover on his cheek and then proceeding to sit down at the dining table. You prop your elbows onto the table and rest your chin atop your palms as you wait patiently for Zen to finish up. It's a comfortable atmosphere, and you feel at complete peace. As you wait, your eyes start to aimlessly wander around; it's almost a surprise to you that you've already managed to memorize the little details of Zen's modest apartment and know where each thing is.

You're pulled back to the present by the sound of a plate being placed in front of you on the table, and Zen leans down to plant a kiss on your cheek. It seems so natural of an action on his part, you can't help but blush a bit.

The actor takes his seat in front of you, and the pair of you eat in comfortable silence. After taking a couple of bites of the food Zen so generously prepared for you, the young man tentatively asks, "How is it? Is it good?"

You nod your head, an assuring smile on your lips. "It's a bit salty, but it's good."

Zen smiles sheepishly and appreciates your honesty. He bows his head a bit and rubs the back of his neck. "I'm still not used to cooking, especially for somebody else, but I'll do better next time."

His words make you remember once more that Zen's dedication doesn't only apply to his career,
and it makes your heart flutter. Grateful for his consideration towards you, you reply, "I'm sure you will. I can be a bit picky at times with what I eat, but I like the stuff you make for me. Next time, maybe we can cook together."

The actor's face lights up instantly at that, and he nods his head enthusiastically. "That sounds fun!" He beams with a cheerful voice, and his joy is infectious.

The both of you continue eating breakfast while making light and easy conversation. At some point, Zen bumps his foot against yours, and you respond by bumping your foot back. Before you know it, the two of you are wrestling your feet underneath the table like it's the most normal thing in the entire world.

As soon as you and Zen finish breakfast, you both get up to clear the table and wash the dishes, both of you easily dividing up the roles without any form of verbal communication. The two of you just move in tune with each other, almost perfectly in sync. While washing the dishes, Zen decides to bring up the topic from before.

"So, about what we briefly talked about last night..." he starts, his cheeks slightly tinged with a shade of pink. You understand what he's talking about straight away, and you end up blushing as well. Clearing his throat, the young man continues, "Like I said, I don't mind trying it with you, but I just want to make sure that it's what you want."

Keeping your gaze focused on the dishes in the sink in front of you, you nod and confirm, "Yeah. I want to try it. Nothing too hard, of course..."

"How, um... How 'hard' do you want to take it?" Zen questions further. Even if it is a bit awkward for him to talk about, he wants to know where your limits lie so that it can be a pleasant experience for the both of you.

You hum thoughtfully and answer, "Just binding my hands for now. Everything else will be as they always are."

Zen doesn't miss the "for now" comment, but he doesn't press it any further. Yes, for now, this will do and take things slowly from here to get used to them before going any further. "Okay," he affirms as he moves to wipe his hands dry. "Do you... want to try it now...?"

You think about it for a moment, drying your hands as well before shaking your head. "Maybe later," you answer timidly, bringing your gaze down to the floor. Even if it's what you wanted, you still need some mental preparation.

The actor's expression softens in understanding, cupping your chin and tilting your head back up to look at him. His smile is warm, and it speaks volumes to you. He leans down to kiss you, the contact brief but gentle and assuring. When Zen pulls away, you remember a small detail that you should probably tell him.

"Oh, I almost forgot," you exclaim a bit abruptly, prompting the young man to look at you curiously. "I promised to babysit Haneul for a week starting today, so I won't be able to hang out with you for a while."

"That's fine, I actually met with Haneul's mother, and she told me as such," Zen replies. "Would it be okay if I still came over to your place? Maybe I can help look after the little princess?"

You quirk an eyebrow, a hint of laughter behind your eyes. "Little princess'? I know she's fond of you, but has she grown on you that much?"
The actor laughs, unable to deny your words. "Yeah, she has, surprisingly enough. And besides, if it weren't for her, I don't think we would be where we are right now."

Thinking back on it, Zen did have a fair point. If Haneul hadn't run into the young man those times before, then the two of you might not have had the chance to get to know each other. "Yeah, in a way, you're right," you admit, "but at the same time, you were the one who decided to give me a chance. Even though you were still hurting from your ex, you gave me a chance to prove myself to you."

Zen exhales, a wry smile on his features as he looks away, almost ashamed. "You make it sound like I'm a good guy, but I think I was just trying to run away from the pain of it all, and you just seemed like the closest one available... I'm sorry."

Keeping a neutral expression, you ask in a quiet and even tone, "And what about now? What do you think of me now?"

Wordlessly, Zen wraps his arms around your waist and brings you closer to him. He rests his forehead against yours and stares into your eyes for a moment before allowing his eyelids to fall shut. His face is peaceful as he takes a deep breath. "Now, you're the most important person in my life. I don't deserve somebody like you, but I don't want you to leave me either. I can't help but beat myself up over how I treated you back then."

"You've always treated me kindly," you tell him softly, lifting up a hand to stroke his cheek.

"No," he replies with a guilt-laced voice. "I...couldn't bring myself to trust you then. I couldn't confide in you about myself, and I always pulled myself away whenever you wanted to get closer to me and know more about me. Even now, there are things you don't know about me and my past, but... I trust you now. I want you to know more about me. I want to open up to you even more."

"Oh, Zen..." You don't know what to say, but it seems like Zen isn't done talking yet, so you remain quiet to let him continue.

Pulling away from you, the young man asks, "Do you have some time right now? There's some place I want to take you."

You direct your attention towards the time and nod your head, "Mi-na said she'll be dropping Haneul off at my place around nine, so if you can bring me back home by then, then yes, I have time."

After cleaning yourself up and getting changed to some cleaner extra clothes you kept around Zen's apartment, he leads you by the hand towards his motorcycle. The actor prepares to assure you that you would be safe riding with him, but when he turns to give you his helmet, he's surprised to find your eyes sparkling with excitement.

"I kinda expected you to be more hesitant," Zen comments as he hands you his helmet, seeing as he didn't have an extra one.

"I've always wanted to try riding one ever since I found out that you used to be in a motorcycle gang," you bashfully admit, graciously accepting the protective gear. "What about yours?" You ask as you gesture towards the helmet in your hands.

Zen casually shrugs his shoulders. "I don't have an extra one, unfortunately. I'd rather you wear mine just in case something happens, but I'll be sure to be careful on the road."
After getting on the motorcycle, you wrap your arms around Zen's waist and press yourself against his broad back. You can't see it in front of you, but the young man has a wide grin spread across his lips as he revs up the bike and starts heading towards his destination. The wind whips around you, and the scenery blurs on by, but you feel completely safe with Zen.

As time passes by, and as the actor approaches the place he had in mind for you, the cityscape starts to disappear, instead replaced with lush greenery. It's a fair distance away from his apartment, but Zen parks his motorcycle and helps remove the helmet from your head. You can see that he's slightly nervous as he takes your hand and guides you up a bit of a climb.

When you both reach the top, your breath catches in your throat as the sight of the city below greets you. The actor watches as you take a few steps closer towards the railing to admire the scenery.

"This is something like my secret spot," Zen explains from behind you. "I come here whenever I need time to think."

"It's a gorgeous place," you comment, turning around to face him.

The actor's eyes look distant as he says, "Asides from a friend of mine, you're the only one I've shared this view with. My ex knows that I have a secret place like this, but even she doesn't know where it is. I never brought her here."

"Zen, I... I don't know what to say..."

"You don't need to say anything," Zen replies, moving forward and lacing his fingers with yours. "I just... wanted to share this with you. I love you. I know you might get tired of hearing me say it all the time, but—"

"I will never get tired of it," you interrupt him, hoping he would never think like that ever again. "It makes me happy to hear you say that you love me. I will always enjoy hearing you say you love me, and I will always love you."

Zen closes his mouth shut, and he swallows the lump in his throat. His eyes become glossy, and his lips quiver the slightest bit as they curve upwards into a smile. His chest feels tight like it's about to burst with overwhelming joy, and you feel him squeeze your hand. With a shaky breath, Zen brings his face closer to yours, his lips just mere centimetres away from your own.

"I love you," he whispers before giving you a gentle kiss.

"I love you," he repeats once more as he tilts his head to the other side and kisses you again.

"I love you," he murmurs against your mouth, his eyes lidded and heavy with emotion as he stares at you.

"I love you, forever and always..."

Chapter End Notes

I decided to take a break from the smut and go back to the fluff/emotional stuff since I don't want the focus of Zen's and Reader's relationship to be just the sex (I say this, but I plan to have smut in the next chapter, hah)
Also, would you be more interested in reading drama involving MC/Reader's ex, or drama involving Echo Girl? Not to worry, the drama won't be anything major nor will it take too much from the story, but I have something in mind to use to further deepen Zen's and Reader's relationship. I just can't decide which drama route to take.
Both you and Zen stand there in silence for a while longer, wrapped in each other's arms and listening to each other's quiet breaths. The two of you would have probably lingered even more if you hadn't felt something wet plop onto the top of your head. Curious, you pull away from your boyfriend just enough to look up, and even more water droplets start to fall from the sky. Before long, the rain picks up speed, and both you and Zen quickly try to find some shelter underneath the trees seeing as there was nowhere else to hide under.

"I didn't think it would rain," Zen muses. "Sorry, but it's probably better if we stay here instead of going back. Plus it wouldn't be safe to ride in this weather."

"It's fine," you hum in response as you lean back against the trunk of the tree behind you. "We still have time anyways, and if we're late, I can always call Byeong-Ho to look after Haneul in the meantime."

Unfamiliar with the name that left your lips, Zen tilts his head to the side. "Who?"

"Oh, he's a childhood friend of mine," you explain. "He's studying abroad to become a doctor, but he's on break right now and decided to come back home. He's also the one who manages the store when I'm not around; you know, like when you whisk me away to those lovely dates."

"You make it sound like I'm a bad guy, kidnapping you and everything," the actor chuckles, running a hand through his wet hair and brushing his bangs away from his smiling face.

You fidget with the hem of your outfit before bowing your head. "If you've been bad, then maybe you need to be punished," you suggest slowly, peeking up at the young man through your lashes to gauge his reaction.

Zen's eyes widen at the implication of your words, and you can see colour rush to his cheeks. Hiding his mouth behind the back of his hand, he stutters, "W-Well, th-that is..."

Your expression becomes soft, and you gently reach out to take hold of Zen's hand and tug it away from his face, the rain still continuing with its downpour around you both. "Sorry. Listen, if... Please tell me if I ever make you uncomfortable. I'll stop whatever it is and won't do it again, and I won't get angry, so..."

"It's not that!" Zen hastily replies when he sees the worry behind your eyes. His voice becomes much more quieter as he continues, "It's just... kind of... weird, I guess."

"Weird?"

"Not in a bad way," the actor answers. Without even realizing it, the atmosphere shifts, and Zen rests his head on your shoulder while his hands rest on your hips. "It's kind of weird discovering all these new things about you that I never knew, and it's... exciting."

You suddenly become aware of how fast your heart is beating against your chest when Zen's lips brush along the skin of your neck. His hands slide around to the small of your back and pulls you closer against him as he trails fluttering kisses up the column of your neck and along your jaw before stopping at your ear. His breaths come out hot and heavy as he whispers, "I want to know more about you... The things you don't show to anyone else..."

"I..." you start before pausing to swallow the lump in your throat. Zen tantalizingly nibbles on your
earlobe as he waits for you to continue. "I want to know more about you too. You never talk about your past with me... I don't want to force you to tell me, and you don't need to tell me if you don't want to, but... But I love you, and I want to know just what it was that made you into the man I love today."

There's a short pause before the actor sighs deeply and squeezes your body flush against his. "Yeah... We'll discover more of each other, little by little."

Zen pulls away and flashes you a smile that makes your heart melt. Strands of his hair stick to his face from the rain, and some droplets fall from the tips of his bangs, making your handsome boyfriend look even more attractive. While you're busy staring at his face, his eyes betray him and travel down along your figure, admiring the way your soaked clothes hug your body.

"You look so cute all wet like that," he comments.

It's supposed to be an innocent comment, but the both of you realize how lewd it sounds without context, blushing at the same time. Neither of you speak after that, merely allowing your bodies to move in what feels right. Zen steps closer towards you, pushing you back so that you're pinned between him and the tree behind you.

He kisses you hard, pressing his hips against your own. There was something in the conversation the two of you were having just moments prior that makes him seem more... raw. His hands grab at your chest and squeezes them, drinking in your moans at his ministrations. The actor rolls his hips, rubbing his growing erection against your sex and sighs against your mouth at the friction.

You reach up and wrap your hands around his neck. Your fingers curl around some of his locks and give them a short tug. Zen's reaction is exactly what you're looking for. He breaks the kiss apart to let out a breathy moan as his hips snap forward. You pull at his hair again, a bit stronger than before, and his moan is a bit louder than last time.

Your teeth bite down on your lower lip, and your fingers leave the actor's hair and instead shoot down to fiddle with the zipper and button of his jeans. Not giving Zen enough time to react, you tug his clothes down to reveal his length, and you grip him tight in your hand which elicits a strangled gasp from his mouth.

You stroke him carefully, making note of all of Zen's reactions to see what he likes best. It was almost always you on the receiving end, so this time, you decide it's your turn to give. There's something exciting about doing this outside in the middle of the rain. You want to see how loud Zen can be out here in the open, and you speed up your pace.

The actor groans, bowing his head and placing his forehead against yours. His legs quiver from the sensation and excitement of the situation, and the young man presses his palms flat against the tree behind you to support himself. He opens his mouth to speak, but before he can do so, you reach behind him with your free hand to pull at his hair while your occupied hand flicks the head of his cock.

Zen throws his head back and cries out. His eyes are clenched tight as he feels himself getting closer and closer to his peak. The actor almost sounds delirious as he curses repeatedly in the open air. "I'm gonna cum... fuck—babe, I'm gonna cum, I'm gonna—a-ahh—!!"

Zen shouts your name at the top of his lungs, his voice echoing in the area along with the pouring rain as he comes undone, staining your clothes and hand with the sticky white substance. The actor gasps deeply for air, whimpering slightly from the lingering jolts in his body as he starts to cool down and regain his surroundings.
You take out some pocket tissue you keep on hand and clean up as Zen's cheeks don't lose their flushed nature when he realizes just how loud he was, hoping that nobody heard. He buries his face into his hands and groans in embarrassment. "You're really something, you know that?"

A giggle bubbles out of your lips as you make the two of you decent again before moving to kiss your boyfriend. Zen wraps you up in his arms and presses his cheek against yours as the both of you wait for the rain to let up. You take out your phone and glance at the time, sighing to yourself that you might not be able to make it back home fast enough to greet Haneul and her mother. With deft fingers, you text your friend Byeong-Ho to request his assistance.

"Hey, could you head over to my place and look over Haneul while I'm gone? I'll be coming back soon, but it might take a while. You have a spare key, right?"

"Why is it always me? Yeah, aight. Fine. But you owe me."

Satisfied and filled with relief, you take Zen's arm and walk with him back to his motorcycle so that he can take you back home. Along the way, the two of you talk about random things, but with Zen, it's always interesting.
Update

I'm sorry I haven't updated this fic in so long, ahhhh--

For those who don't follow my Tumblr, I'm taking an indefinite hiatus from writing. I'm currently working on a piece for a Saeran fanzine as well as some commissions that are way overdue. Once I finish with those, I'll see if I can get back to working on this particular fic, but I can't make any promises.

Sorry for the wait, and I thank you for your patience and continued support!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!