We Have Romantic Fantasies About What Dying Truly Is

by orphan_account

Summary

Two of their own get kidnapped. Another is shot. One more is fighting for his life. Will this break the team apart? Or will it bring them together?

Notes

See the end of the work for notes
"If I advocate cautious optimism it is not because I do not have faith in the future but because I do not want to encourage blind faith."
~Aung San Suu Kyi

Cynical Shadows

Chapter Summary

He was late. Oh, he was so late. He was about to get an earful from Daichi once he got to the gym.

"I'm so sorry!" Hinata sank into a deep bow as soon as he opened the gym doors. "My alarm clock didn't go off this morning!"

"Calm down," Daichi said. "It's fine. You're always here half an hour early every other day, so that kind of makes up for it."

Hinata sighed with relief.

"But," Daichi continued, much to the decoy's dismay. "You'll have to do some extra laps to make up for what you missed."

Taking a deep breath and straightening up, he sat down and began stretching. As he did so, his mind flashed back to the ride over when he could've sworn a van had been following him almost the whole way. He barely noticed in his haste as he rushed to get to practice but now that he thinks about it, it's pretty odd, not to mention creepy.

After stretching, he got started on his laps. He was upset to be unable to play with everyone else, but it was his fault for being late. When he caught up and was finally back to the gym, practice was already over. Sighing in disappointment, Hinata fell into step with Kageyama and Yamaguchi on the way to the club room to change. On the way, though. He saw the van again. This was the first time he got a good look at it. It was black and very large, all the back windows painted over. Its license plate read XXXX. Weird.

"Hey," Hinata said. "Do you know who that is over there?" He points with his thumb over to the van.

Yamaguchi shrugs. "No, why?"

"Because..." Hinata was about to say that this person had been following him, now that he realizes it, for a short while, but he thought better of it. "Never mind. I must be paranoid or something."

When class begins that day, he still can't shake the uneasy feeling he's been having in the pit of his stomach. The whole day, he was nervously looking out of the windows and every time he had to walk around campus, he did so warily.

Little did he know that one of his teammates was having same problem.

Suga walked to the gym that morning relieved. The day before, a van had followed him almost the whole way. It seemed like there was a pattern- every two days, he'd be followed by that same van, the one with the odd license plate. The third year tried to shrug it off the first day, but the second time
it happened, it started freaking him out a little.

"Ever get the feeling you're being watched?" He asked Daichi the second morning he'd been followed. His friend gave him a quizzical look.

"I guess sometimes," he said. "Why?"

"I feel like..." Suga chose his words carefully. "I don't know... It feels like someone's been watching me or following me."

"You're probably overreacting," Daichi said. "I know you can get worried over small things sometimes. Let me know if you see anyone though, okay?"

Suga nodded.

Yesterday was the third day he'd been followed and he was sure that he wasn't overreacting. He decided that if he saw the person tomorrow, he'd say something for sure.

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"Okay," Daichi said. "Is everyone ready?"

A chorus of yeses rang through the parking lot as the boys all walked towards the bus. Their match today was at a smaller school, and it was only practice, but they were all excited nonetheless. The school was basically in the middle of nowhere and was almost an hour and a half away from Karasuno.

Hinata was feeling less nervous, as was Suga. The person watching them was nowhere to be seen this morning and he, or she, wasn't in front of the school today. Maybe this was all done and over with, maybe they'd be left alone. Neither of them knew that the other was having the same problem as they were, though, but they'd find out soon enough.

After Hinata got over his normal pre-game jitters, he walked out of the bathroom and went to meet the team in the other building for the match. As he walked across the parking lot, he could've sworn he saw a black van.

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"Thank you for the game!"

The match was over, Karasuno taking the win. The first set was 25-22 and the second set was 25-23, so there was no need for a third set. The team was on their way back to the bus, but for some reason Hinata was feeling sick again and ran to the bathroom.

"I'll stay with him," Ennoshita said.

"I'll stay, too." Suga turned to Daichi. "You guys can go ahead."

The two stood by the exit of the bathroom, waiting for their teammate while the others went on their way to the bus.

"Hinata?" Suga asked. "You okay?"

"Y-yeah." He sounded... scared?

"What's wrong?" Ennoshita asked.
"Hang on."

He flushed the toilet and then came out, washing his hands and splashing water on his face which was abnormally pale.

"Do you ever feel like you're being followed?" Hinata asked.

Suga's eyes widened. "Yeah," he said. "Yeah, I think I'm pretty familiar with the feeling. Why?"

"Someone's been following me on and off for the past week or so."

Feeling like the air had been knocked out of him, Suga tried to stay calm.

"Who?" he asked. "A van? Weird license plate? Like XXXX or something?"

"Yeah," Hinata exclaimed. "Why, do you know anything about it?"

"Ah," Ennoshita said. "Are you guys both being stalked by the same person?"

There was a moment of silence in which Suga put all the pieces together. They were both being followed and on the days when this person wasn't following Suga, he was following Hinata, and vice versa.

"I'm sure it's nothing to worry about," Suga said. "Let's just get to the bus."

He and Ennoshita started walking to the door, but the tiny decoy grabbed Sugawara's sleeve.

"But that's the problem," he said. "I saw him here. In the parking lot."

Suga felt something heavy rest in his stomach. Foreboding. What were they supposed to do?

"Okay," Ennoshita said. "Put your hoods up and keep your heads down. We'll walk there together."

"Hey, guys," Tanaka yelled from the entrance. "You coming?"

"Sure," Suga said.

He and Hinata put their hoods up and they walked out of the building, Tanaka looking at them quizzically. They walked briskly toward the lot where the bus was parked, the wind biting their noses. Suddenly, Suga heard the screeching of tires. He and the others turned to see the van rushing toward them. The van that had been following him and Hinata for almost a week now.

"Move!" Tanaka yelled.

And they did, but Ennoshita didn't move fast enough.

The van hurtled toward him.
"In these times I don't, in a manner of speaking, know what I want; perhaps I don't want what I know and want what I don't know."

~Marsilio Ficino

Chapter Notes

i already have a lot of this written, but updates will come every three days.

Time seemed to go in slow motion. The car came barreling into him and his feet were anchored to the ground, making him simply stand there as it ran into him. The front of it slammed into his body and then the vehicle stopped, making him fly several feet before crashing to the ground in a roll.

"Chikara!"

Tanaka was the first one to snap out of his shock and run to his teammate, Suga and Hinata not far behind, only when he did, the van opened up and three men came out of it. Each man had a mask on their face, and each wore all black.

"Nobody move!"

The three teens immediately froze next to their unconscious teammate and stared up at the men in front of them.

"Get the two we want," said the one in the driver's seat.

The three men all seemed to move at once. One grabbed Hinata under his armpits, slinging him over his shoulder and running towards the vehicle, the decoy screaming all the way. Another ran and grabbed Suga, who struggled enough to earn a punch to the face from the other man. He, too, was thrown into the van.

As the men were all beginning to pile into the van, Tanaka was shaken out of his shock and ran forward, grabbing the man that wasn't quite inside the vehicle yet and throwing him to the ground while his guard was down.

"Hinata!" Tanaka yelled. "Suga!"

When he turned back to the van, a gun was pointed at him.

Inside the vehicle, the cab was empty. It was lined with a bench along the sides of it and above the bench was a long railing stretching from either side. Hinata and Suga were both sat on the bench, their hands tied above their heads to the railing.
"Hinata!" They heard Tanaka yelling. "Suga!"

Suddenly, there was a bang.

Hinata turned his head and saw one of the guys pointing a gun outside of the van.

"No," he said. "No, no, no! Tanaka-senpai!"

He hoped that his shrill scream didn't go unheard as the doors of the van swung shut and they began moving. Was Tanaka shot? Was he even alive right now? Hinata's gaze settled upon Suga, whose face was in a tight grimace as blood dripped from his nose.

"Suga," Hinata whimpered.

He couldn't breathe. He was either hyperventilating or dying- he couldn't tell which. Hinata looked at the ground and cried, his breath coming fast until a slap landed hard on his cheek. His eyes watered even more from the sting.

"Shut up," the man standing above him said.

Biting his lip, Hinata kept his mouth shut and kept his whimpering and crying to a minimum.

"Hinata," Suga said, obviously hiding the waver in his voice. "It's going to be alri-

One of the men started laughing. "Alright? Hah! You two must be thick or something."

"Shut up," yelled the man in the passenger's seat. "We aren't supposed to talk to them yet. We have to let the boss see them first."

They continued their ride in silence, the tension high for the high schoolers, but boredom coming quickly for the men with them. Hinata couldn't seem to keep his terror and nerves from rising and eventually started crying again, receiving another slap from the man nearest to him.

"If you know what's good for you, you'll be quiet."

But he couldn't, that was the problem. The hit just made him cry harder and he was full-on sobbing now.

"Dammit," the man said, standing for better leverage. "Shut the hell up!"

The man raised his fist.

"Don't!" Suga yelled.

But it was too late. The man's fist came crashing down into Hinata's face and hit him in the cheek, the force throwing his head to the side with a yell. His head drooped and he didn't pick it back up again. Suga looked on as the man grabbed his orange locks and picked up his head, showing his face red from the hits and slack with unconsciousness.

"Why'd you do that?" One of the other men yelled. "We were gonna knock him out with the drug anyways, why didn't you just wait till then?"

"I wanted him quiet now."

Suga stared at Hinata in horror. The kid was absolutely terrified and he got knocked out because of it. And what did these guys say? Drug? Oh, Suga was not looking forward to that.
"Speaking of the drug," said the one in the passenger's seat. "You should probably give it to him now. We're almost there."

One of the guys stood up and walked to a box in the corner, opening it and pulling out a small syringe. As he walked forward, Suga began to struggle against his restraints.

"What?" The guy asked. "Scared of needles? I'll try to make this as painless as possible," he said mockingly.

He jabbed the needle in the third year's shoulder and injected the blue liquid that filled the syringe. Suga's vision warbled and turned, his stomach twisting painfully. Eventually, he gave in to the pull of sleep and let himself go limp.

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Hinata's eyes opened slightly. His vision was blurry, but he was awake enough to see a ceiling moving past him, overhead lights appearing every so often. Where was he again? Oh. Yes. He was kidnapped. Looking to his right, he saw a wall. His left, another wall, plain and bricked. Hinata was laying on a metal table being pushed from behind him. He lifted his head and looked down to his hands, which were both secured to the table with straps at his sides.

Too tired to struggle against the straps, he watched the ceiling pass by as he was wheeled down the thin corridor. When he stopped, a he heard the sound of a door opening before he was wheeled into a dim room. The table was stopped on the right side of the room and then Suga was wheeled in next to him on his left. The room was completely empty, save for them. The people left the room. Groggily, he took this moment to collect his thoughts.

My name is Hinata Shouyou. I am sixteen. I'm a first year at Karasuno High School.

I was being stalked for almost a week before the people kidnapped me and Suga from a volleyball match.

They hit Ennoshita with their van. They shot Tanaka. They could both be dead now.

"Suga," Hinata croaked, face still painful from the hit prior. "Suga. Wake up."

But the third year didn't even move. He was out like a light.

"Suga!" Hinata felt dread rise within him. He didn't want to be alone. "Suga!"

A grunt came from the third year and he shuffled a bit. His eyes fluttered open and a look of confusion crossed his face before it was taken over by a grim look as he remembered where he was.

"Hinata," he said. "Are you okay?"

"I think so," the decoy replied. "Are you?"

"Yeah."

Just then, the door opened and three men stepped through. Two of them were from the van, one was new. The new guy wore different clothes from the black ones that the other two men wore. Instead, he wore a black suit with a sharp red tie.

"So," he said. "Let's get down to business. You can call me Z. Sound good? With me are W and V. Do you know why you're here?"
The two teens stayed silent. Z laughed.

"Not very talkative I see? That's okay. I'll just go ahead and tell you why you're here." He walked forward and stood between the tables, smiling eagerly and looking between the two boys. "You're here to be purified."

Chapter End Notes

btw this might get a little cult-ish
Opposing Sentiment

Chapter Summary

"Wisely, and slow. They stumble that run fast."
~William Shakespeare

Chapter Notes

probs OOC but it's whatever.
here's the third chapter, a day early.

BANG.

Just as the gun went off, Tanaka tried to move out of the way of the bullet. Luckily, the bullet ripped its way through his shoulder instead of his heart, where it would've gone prior to him moving. As the van doors were closing, he heard a yell.

"Tanaka-Senpai!"

Hinata.

Tanaka watched in pain as the van backed up and pulled away so they didn't run over Ennoshita again.

Ennoshita.

He scrambled over to his friend and knelt next to him.

"Chikara," he said, shaking his shoulder slightly.

He was covered in scratches and rapidly forming bruises. He certainly had internal damage. Tanaka put his ear on his friend's chest.

He wasn't breathing.

Getting in a good position, he began to push on Ennoshita's chest in rhythm, every once in a while stopping to breathe into his mouth.

"Hey," he heard. "What- What happened?"

"Get help," he said, not even checking to see who it was. "Get help, now! Call- Call the police! Call someone!"

He heard several pairs of footsteps coming toward him, but he still didn't check to see who it was. Tanaka was solely focused on saving his friend. He blocked out everything else, all the voices that surrounded him until he was eventually being pulled from Ennoshita.
"Get off," he yelled. "Stop! I have to save him!"

"Stop," his coach said, keeping his hold on him. "The paramedics are taking care of him. I pro- Are you bleeding?" He couldn't tell in the dark of evening.

"I don't know."

Suddenly, fatigue hit him- well, like a van, and he stopped struggling against Ukai's grip. He fell into it, his coach now the only thing holding him upright.

"Whoa there," his coach said, gently lowering him so they were sitting on the ground.

The next hour or so was a blur. Ennoshita was sent in the ambulance to the nearest hospital where he would be stabilized and then sent by helicopter to Tokyo. That was the plan, at least, if he even survived. Tanaka, on the other hand, was taken by ambulance to the hospital where he would, no doubt, have surgery to get the bullet out of his arm. Despite the intense pain he was in, all he could think of was Suga and Hinata. He rambled on and on about saving them and how they were kidnapped, but he kept being told that "getting medical attention was his first priority."

So now he was sitting there in a hospital bed, having just woken up after the surgery. He shouldn't be here, he should be talking to the police, and Tanaka made sure he let everyone know that. Even his sister, who was almost in tears when he awoke.

"They'll come in and talk to you soon, okay?" Saeko had said. "I'm sure of it. You were shot, for heaven's sake, I'm sure the police will come sooner or later."

"They were kidnapped," Tanaka said in response. "None of us know what could be happening to them. They could be hurt, or they could even be dead by now."

"We'll find them," Saeko said.

Tanaka took a deep breath and tried to calm down, but he couldn't shake the awful feeling he had. Ennoshita could be dead. Hinata and Suga were just kidnapped a couple of hours ago. Why was this happening? Why to them? Why now?

The doctor came into the room followed by two decorated police officers and asked if he was up to talking. Tanaka said yes eagerly and attempted to sit up more, only to be greeted with a stabbing pain through his shoulder.

"Can you describe to us everything that happened?" One officer asked. Tanaka nodded.

"Well," he began. "After the match, Hinata went to the bathroom and Suga and Ennoshita said they'd wait for him while the rest of us went to the bus. They were taking a while, so I thought I'd go and see what was going on. When I got there, they were just standing there, talking, but they looked really worried about something. I asked if they were coming and they said yeah, but Suga and Hinata put their hoods up before they walked out for some reason- I didn't think to ask, but maybe they were being followed?

"Anyway, we were walking and then this van- it came out of nowhere and was coming right toward us. Chikara couldn't get out of the way in time and he..." Tanaka brought his good arm up and scratched awkwardly at the back of his neck. "He got hit. He was down and then these three guys came out of the van and started grabbing Hinata and Suga and... I tried to help, but they put them in the van and then turned back... If I hadn't moved out of the way, I'd have a bullet in my heart."

Saeko stifled a gasp and the police officer kept writing things down before he spoke again.
"Do you think you could describe these men for me?"

"No," Tanaka replied. "They were all wearing masks."

"Alright," said the officer. "I'll leave you now. I hope you recover quickly."

"Wait," Tanaka said. "Is there anything you can tell me about Chikara? Ennoshita Chikara?"

"He's in intensive care," Saeko said. "I didn't say anything earlier because I wanted to let you rest, but he's not in good shape, Ryu."

And there it was. His best friend, one he'd never want to lose, was slipping right through his fingers. The police left and Saeko continued.

"His ribs were crushed and the amount of internal damage he has is really bad. He's still in surgery, but I was talking to his parents and they said he probably won't make it." She squeezed his hand. "I'm so sorry, Ryu."

Tanaka was exhausted. Mentally and physically exhausted. He felt the tears rush to his eyes and he couldn't keep them in. He let quiet sobs wrack his body as his sister held him, listening to his grief.

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The next time Tanaka awoke, he was in even more pain than before. His medicine must be wearing off. Seeing that his sister wasn't in the room, he grabbed the hospital remote and pressed the call button.

"What do you need?" A nurse said when she came into the room.

"Ah, my arm's hurting a bit," he replied groggily.

"It's about time for your next dose, anyway," she said. "I'll hook it up to your IV."

When the nurse was done, Saeko walked in.

"Your team is here to see you," she said. "Are you up to it?"

He nodded and she walked back out, only to come back into the room with Daichi, Nishinoya, Asahi, Kinoshita, Narita, Tsukishima, and Yamaguchi. They were all quiet at first, but then Nishinoya spoke up.

"How're you holding up, Ryu?" He asked.

"Fine," he said. "Anything else on Chikara yet?"

Everyone went quiet at that.

"He survived surgery," Daichi said. "They had to put a bunch of metal in his chest though. And he's, ah... He's comatose. They don't think he'll wake up."

"But he's not gone yet," Tanaka said. "That's what matters. He's still holding on." He paused and looked around the room. "Where's Kageyama?"

"He's really having a hard time with this," Daichi said. "Don't be upset about it. He's barely spoken to any of us."
"Did Hinata and Suga really-" Yamaguchi was cut off by Tsukishima elbowing him, followed by a quiet, "sorry, Tsukki."

"Yeah," Tanaka said. "I think they knew something was wrong. Did either of them say they were being followed or something?"

"Yes, actually," Daichi said. "And we already told the police that. The other day, Suga said something to me about feeling like he's being followed."

"And Hinata pointed out a black van by the school," Yamaguchi interjected. "It had a weird license plate, too. It was just a bunch of Xs."

"That was the van," Tanaka said. "It was them."

He sat up more, ignoring the pain in his arm.

"We have to find them. We have to."
Ratification of Purification

Chapter Summary

"The marks humans leave are too often scars."
~John Green

Chapter Notes

ok change of plans i'm getting a new phone soon so imma just post these pretty rapidly and then i'll go a few days without posting while i get a new phone and start to compile more chapters but fear not it'll be ok

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Suga," Hinata said once they were alone once again.

Suga turned to look at the terrified redhead. His cheekbone was a deep purple color and his eye was swollen halfway shut. His other eye was wide with fear.

"What does he mean by p-purified?"

"I don't know," Suga replied. "But it'll be okay. I'll make sure of it. I won't let them hurt you, alright?"

"Okay," came Hinata's reply. "But... Do you think Ennoshita and Tanaka are dead?"

Suga thought for a moment. Ennoshita was in horrible shape when they last saw him and neither of them saw where the bullet the men fired ended up going.

"I don't know," Suga said. "I don't know, I'm just as worried as you are. Try not to dwell on it too much."

Just then, the door opened. Z and the two men that hadn't been introduced yet walked in and stopped between the tables that the two teens were laying on.

"Hello, boys," he said. "I believe you've met Q and L." The two nodded respectively. "Now, we'll let the purification begin."

He walked around to the wall on the right side of the room and tapped five bricks in a certain order. The wall slid open to reveal several tools, from saws to scalpels, from wires to ropes, from jumper cables to lighters. Hinata gave a whimpering gasp and Suga felt his heart skip a beat. Z reached up and grabbed a knife, long and shining.

"You see," he began, turning the knife in his hands. "There are two forms of purification- mental and physical. Each consists of their own anguish. Mental purification is for those of a braver and more selfless disposition. Physical purification is for those of good physical health, no matter their mental state. And I think I know which one each of you will need."
He walked over to Hinata, placing the edge of the knife against his throat. Hinata gasped and took in heaving breaths. He whimpered and screwed his eyes shut, seemingly trying to calm himself.

"Hmm," Z said, removing the knife and walking over to Suga, whose eyes widened slightly.

He pressed the knife against Suga's throat now and waited for a reaction, but the silver haired teen only gazed calmly back at him. He pressed the knife down further, just barely going into his skin and drawing blood. Suga winced slightly, but didn't break eye contact. Z let out a terse laugh before taking the knife away. He put the knife back and closed the wall before walking back to the door.

"I'll come back later to start."

With that, Z and the others walked out of the room and the door slammed shut, leaving them alone.

"W-what do you think they'll do?" Hinata asked. "Suga, I don't... I'm s-scared."

He began to cry and panic, Suga wishing he could go over there and scoop the first year into his arms.

"Hey," Suga said, trying to get Hinata's attention. "You're going to be okay, alright? But you might... You're going to have to be strong, okay? Can you just try to bear this for a while for me?"

Hinata took a shuddering breath through his sobs and nodded.

Suddenly, the vents in the room opened with a creak. After a few seconds of silence during which the two teens stared down the vents suspiciously, they let out a gasp. They could hear the leak of air and could see the discoloration of it as it flooded into the room.

"Don't breathe it in," Suga said. "Try to hold your breath."

They both did so, but even with their well trained lungs, they both gave in eventually. When they did so, the air burned their lungs and caused them to hack violently until sleep overtook them both.

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When Hinata awoke, he was groggy and disoriented. He'd been stripped of his shirt and was tied up, his arms tied above him and his feet shackled to the floor with long chains. He was in a kneeling position facing Suga, who was already awake and was tied up in the same way facing him.

"Hinata," the third year said. "Are you alright?"

"Yeah," he replied. "Is this the same room? How'd we get like this?"

"I think it's the same place," Suga said. "I guess they changed things while we were out."

The door opened once more. Z alone stepped through it and stood in the middle of the room, looking between the boys.

"Shall we?" Z said with a smile.

He walked over to the wall behind Hinata and opened it once more with an even more complicated code. Hinata couldn't see what he grabbed, but Suga didn't seem happy with it as the redhead watched his eyes widen and his face turn grim.

"So," Z spoke up again. "Do either of you know which kind of purification you're in need of?"
Hinata felt a chill run down his back and he shook his head. Suga didn't. His face was pale and his eyes were wide with anticipation.

Then, the pain came suddenly and all at once. A slashing pain came across Hinata's back and he yelled out. He gasped as his back stung and looked up at Suga, whose face was contorted in horror. The pain came again and Hinata's reaction, though not as loud, was just the same as before.

Suga watched in horror as his kouhai was whipped over and over again, the younger crying out with each lash. There were tears staining the redhead's cheeks and he whimpered in pain.

"Stop," Suga said. "Stop hurting him, please."

But Z only smiled at his begging.

"This," he said. "Is how it's going to be. Would you just look at how much pain you both are in already? And to think that it hasn't even been an hour yet!"

Z laughed. The man laughed at their pain as Hinata slumped over in his chains, gasping in pain, and Suga felt tears coming to his eyes already. This was the worst torture Suga could ever imagine. Having to watch Hinata- his underclassman, his teammate, his friend, someone so innocent, someone who looked up to him, and someone who he wanted so badly to protect- get tortured before his own eyes.

It was at this moment that he knew. They were both in for a world of hurt.

Chapter End Notes

Suga, as the team "mom" is going through the worst pain any mother could imagine—seeing their child- or teammate, in this case—go through unbearable pain that they don't deserve and not being able to do anything about it. I figured Suga was the perfect candidate for this because he just loves his team so much and I'm sorry ;)}
Ruthless Divertissement

Chapter Summary

"If you can't go back to your mother's womb, you'd better learn to be a good fighter."
~Anchee Min

Chapter Notes

helloooo
here's more hell for you guys!

When Z was finally done with his games, he put the whip away and pressed a single button on the wall. The chains holding each of the boys up were released, extending in length and allowing them to lie down on the ground or move around. Suga immediately crawled his way over to Hinata, who lay slumped over on the ground, still except for his shoulders rising and falling at his heavy breathing. The third year could now clearly see the redhead's back. It was torn up and bleeding.

"Hinata," he said. "Shouyou, talk to me."

Hinata moved slightly and then began to push himself off the ground, only to fail and slump back over. He let out a sob and rolled onto his side, curling up into himself. Suga moved forward and put his shackled hand on the redhead's shoulder. He tensed slightly and Suga retracted his hand.

"Shouyou," he said. "Are you alright?"

"Yeah," Hinata whispered. "I'm fine, just... Just let me rest, okay? I'm tired."

"Yeah," Suga said. "Okay."

Suga went and sat against the opposite wall, giving the kid some space. He rested his head against his knees, wrapping his arms around his legs. He watched Hinata's breathing even out and assumed that he was finally asleep, thinking that he should get some sleep, himself. Laying down on the cold, hard floor, he tried to shut off his mind enough to relax, but every time he closed his eyes all he could hear was Hinata's screams.

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When Suga awoke next, he was disoriented. He didn't know what time it was or what day it was. When he sat up, he looked and saw Hinata sitting up, curled in on himself and staring at the door.

"Hinata," Suga said. "Are you okay?"

"I heard something," the redhead replied. "What if he's coming back?"

"I won't let him touch you," Suga said. "I'll... I'll fight him if I have to."

"I heard something," the redhead replied. "What if he's coming back?"

"I won't let him touch you," Suga said. "I'll... I'll fight him if I have to."
Then the door opened, but it was only W. The man came in and placed a glass of water in front of Suga. He didn't know just how thirsty he was until he put the cup to his lips. As he drank greedily, he watched the man walk over to Hinata, who stiffened before taking the cup from him and drinking. When they were done, W grabbed the cups from them and walked back out of the room.

They were left in there for what seemed like days. Hinata slept a lot and his back started scabbing over, but would start bleeding if he moved around too much. Suga felt a rumbling in his stomach. Hunger. His stomach twisted and turned and he knew that Hinata must be feeling the same way.

The door opened once more, Z coming back through. Hinata jumped awake at the creak of the door and sat up, squirming away. Suga got into a squatted position so he could jump up and fight if he needed to. Z walked over and opened the wall back up behind Hinata. He grabbed the whip once again and made his way to the center of the room. Good. Suga was in the perfect position to jump on him.

When Z was at the middle of the room, Suga jumped up and swung his arms up and over Z's head so the chain between his hands was wrapped around the man's neck. Suga thought that he had it, that he was doing something productive, something that could get them out of there, but the next thing he knew he was on the ground on his back.

"Now you've done it," Z said, standing over him.

Z moved to the wall behind Hinata once again and pressed the button that forced them up into a kneeling position with their arms above their head. He grabbed the whip and walked over to Suga, striking it against his back. Hinata, who had been quiet before, screamed.

"No," he yelled. "Stop!"

Suga grunted at the pain, but didn't allow himself to be too loud. He didn't want to cause Hinata the worry and didn't want to give Z the satisfaction of hearing him scream. Suga went through almost twenty lashes of the whip, not even close to the amount that Hinata had gone through, before Z was finally done with him. Suga was in so much pain, but all he could think of was how at least he now understood some of what Hinata had been through before and what he'd surely go through again.

Then, to Suga's horror, Z turned on the first year and struck the whip across his chest, making him scream out. Suga could clearly see the marks he was making and he watched them begin to bleed. All Suga could think was that it'll be over soon, it has to be over soon, but it wasn't. Z wouldn't let up and eventually, Hinata lost consciousness and his screams stopped, but Z kept going.

"This is your fault," he said. "If you'd have just stayed put, just let things happen, you would've spared him and yourself."

Suga felt tears spring to his eyes once again.

"You've never been able to protect him," Z said. "And you never will be."

The tears spilled out of his eyes and rolled down his cheeks as he watched further abuse be inflicted on his unconscious friend. Z didn't stop until several minutes later and he finally released the chains on the boys, Suga immediately scrambling up and towards Hinata. The decoy was pale and sweating and completely unconscious. How could Suga let this happen? Why did this have to happen to Hinata, why not him instead? Suga held his teammate close and didn't let him go, even as the first year's blood stained his pants. He let more tears come, flowing down and onto the floor.

Suga was always able to deal with physical pain. In his second year of middle school, he broke his
leg badly. It had snapped, just like a twig. He didn't cry at the pain, just at the sight of the blood- and even then, he wasn't panicked, he was rather calm. He was always able to deal with physical pain pretty well, it was mental anguish that made him break. When his grandfather died only a year ago, he didn't make it to school for several days and was almost paralyzed with grief. He only made it through because he had his friends to help him.

But now, no one else was there to shoulder the pain with him. Suga, one who always tried to lessen any kind of pain that his friends and teammates dealt with, was being forced to sit and watch as Hinata was hurt.

And Suga wasn't sure how much longer he could bear it.
Culpability and Dubiety

Chapter Summary

"Nothing makes a room feel emptier than wanting someone in it."
~J

Chapter Notes

this is short and kind of a filler but \(\_\(\_\)\_/\)

Kageyama sat in his room. There was no practice today, hell, he wouldn't have gone even if there was. He can't practice. He can't sleep. He can't eat. He can't get his mind off of what could be happening to Hinata and Suga right now.

Hinata. Just thinking of him made Kageyama's heart hurt. The dumbass was the kindest, most innocent of all of them. What could be happening to him right now? Was he hurt? Was he scared, crying? Was he even alive?

Kageyama stood and grabbed his volleyball. He walked outside into the crisp air and tossed the ball upward. The winter season was just fading into spring and he could feel the cool wind bite his nose and ears. He continued to toss the ball upward and catch it again until he was completely immersed in his thoughts. When this happened, he lost focus and accidentally dropped the ball, letting it hit his face and drop to the ground.

Kageyama sat down against the side of his house. He sat and stared at the darkening sky. It would rain soon. He was already feeling the first few drops on his cheeks. Oh, maybe that wasn't rain. Maybe it was his worry, his premature grief staining his face. He wiped it away and picked up his volleyball, turning it in his hands. In those few seconds that he was tossing the ball in his hands, he didn't feel anything. Not even the slightest bit of enjoyment. He couldn't. Not without Hinata. It was only the end of the second day since they'd been gone and Kageyama was already like this. Depressed and worried and a wreck.

Well, Daichi wasn't much better. He, too, couldn't sleep, or eat, or study, or anything. He couldn't stop thinking of Suga, and where he could be right now. No doubt he'd be fussing over Hinata every second that they were gone. The thought made Daichi smile at how selfless his boyfriend could be. At the same time, it made him worry because he knew that even Suga needed a shoulder to cry on every now and then.

Of course, Daichi immediately thought the worst when he found out they'd been taken. His first thought was that they were being tortured. Or that they'd get sold into human trafficking. Then he tried to rationalize himself, to push the thoughts from his mind. Then he remembered that seventy four percent of people who are kidnapped and murdered are murdered within three hours of the initial kidnapping. That did not put his mind at ease.

Suga was strong, Daichi knew that much. He knew that he'd fight if he had to. He knew that his first
priority would be to keep Hinata safe. Yet even that didn't put his mind at ease. He knew that Suga would put Hinata's life before his own at any cost and, while he longed to see the first year safe as well, he couldn't take the thought that Suga would throw away his life at any time.

At least Tanaka was out of the hospital. He was a bit worse for wear, thinking that he could've gone up against all four guys and stopped the event from happening.

"I heard Hinata call out to me," he said. "Just as the van was about to pull away. He... He sounded so scared, and I... It's our job to protect him. I'm such a bad senpai."

"You're not," Daichi said. "You were outnumbered. I'm sorry, but you didn't have a chance against four guys that were armed. You've got to understand that."

"I know," Tanaka said. "I'm just so mad. At them and at myself."

"You're not a bad senpai," Yachi said, emerging from around the corner. They'd been sitting on a bench in town with meat buns, but they weren't eating. "You're a good senpai. You really are."

"And it's not just your job to protect him," Daichi said. "He was being followed for a while, I think, and it was all of our jobs to keep him safe."

When they went their separate ways that night, Daichi left him with a heavy heart. Tanaka had almost died, Ennoshita was still comatose. The people that had Suga and Hinata obviously weren't afraid to kill at all and, considering how they were specifically sought out, Hinata and Suga could very well be dead right now.

Daichi felt guilt creep in. Just as Tanaka felt as if he had to protect Hinata, Daichi felt as if he had to protect both the redhead and Tanaka himself, as well as Ennoshita. Now three of his kouhai were in danger and he couldn't do anything about it. He felt like the worst captain you could ever imagine.
"Sometimes, if you aren't sure about something, you just have to jump off the bridge and grow your wings on the way down."
~Danielle Steel

Hinata awoke with a start, jumping to a sitting position. He winced and groaned with the pain that the motion made and looked down at the marks on his chest.

"Hey," Suga said.

Hinata looked over and realized that he'd been sleeping on the third year who was now awake and alert.

"How're you feeling?" The setter asked.

"Awful," Hinata said. "Why is he doing this? Why is he only hurting me?"

He regretted the question as soon as it came out of his mouth because Suga looked as if he was about to break down into tears. The silver haired setter quickly regained his composure.

"I don't know," he said. "If I could put myself in your place, I would."

Hinata relaxes against the other and lets himself begin to drift off again before he feels Suga shaking him awake. He opens his eyes and sees V standing over them with a tray in his hands. Hinata jumps and scrambles backward, yelling as his back hit the wall.

"He has food," Suga said. "You should take it. You need it if you want to get better."

Hinata sat up and took the tray in shaking hands. On the plate were two small loaves of bread, some rice, and two glasses of water. Hinata suddenly realized just how hollow his stomach was and grabbed one of the pieces of bread, stuffing it in his mouth. When he was halfway done with the bread, he looked up to see Suga not taking a bite.

"Aren't you gonna eat?" Hinata asked, mouth full.

"No," Suga replied. "You need it more than I do."

"I'm not eating all of this," Hinata decided. "You need to eat something. Who knows when the next time we'll get food is?"
Suga sighed, "okay."

They each got some bread and water, but Suga made Hinata eat most of the rice. Before too long, the door opened once more. W walked through and picked up the empty tray and empty cups. He handed them to L, who stood outside the door. L left and W walked back in and asked them if they needed to go to the bathroom. Hinata nodded and so did Suga.

"Only one at a time," W said.

"I'll go first," Suga said unwillingly.

They went and Suga must've rushed himself because they were back within minutes and it was Hinata's turn. W undid the shackles on his wrists and ankles and Hinata moved to stand but was overtaken with dizziness. He stumbled and fell against the wall, but W grabbed his arm in a crushing grip and walked him out of the room. The teen stared at the ground the whole time. Then, Hinata saw something. A phone. A cellphone just sitting there in W's back pocket. Hinata was sure he could grab it if he tried hard enough.

Hinata went into the small bathroom that he was led to and sat down, once again using the silence to collect his thoughts.

My name is Hinata Shouyou. I am sixteen. I'm a first year at Karasuno High School.

I was being stalked for almost a week before the people kidnapped me and Suga from a volleyball match.

They hit Ennoshita with their van. They shot Tanaka. They could both be dead now.

They've been torturing me with a whip to "purify" both me and Suga for days.

At least, I think it's been days. I have no sense of time.

He took a deep breath and finished his business before approaching the door and opening it quietly. W had his back to the door. Hinata slowly reached forward and grabbed the phone, yanking it out of his pocket and quickly closing the door, still being as quiet as possible, locking the door. He turned on the phone and dialed the police, putting the phone to his ear.

"911, what is your emergency?"

"Help," he whispered, just as banging on the door started. "My name is Hinata Shouyou and I'm being held here with my friend Sugawara Koushi."

"Do you know where you are?"

"Get out here!" W yelled from outside, making Hinata whimper.

"No," he said. "But he's h-hurting me and I don't know if I have-"

The banging got louder and W shouted several profanities at him.

"We're tracing the call now," said the operator. "Can you stay on the line?"

"I'll try," Hinata replied.

The banging continued and within a few seconds, the door burst open, revealing W and Q standing in front of him. Just as they lunged toward him, Hinata filled his lungs and let out the loudest scream
he could manage, hoping that someone heard him on the outside. W and Q each grabbed one of his arms and picked him up, dragging him from the room and forcing him to drop the phone, smashing it on the ground.

He was carried, kicking and screaming, to a different room this time before he was slammed down onto a metal table like the one he was brought in on. As he flailed, yelling as loud as possible and trying to break free, his hands and feet were pinned down to the table and secured with straps. They put straps over his chest as well. He screamed his throat hoarse and finally quieted down as they were bringing him into a different room. One closer to the one he and Suga had been in- maybe next door?

"Hinata!" Suga's voice could be heard through the wall. "Hinata!"

"Suga!" Hinata screamed. "Suga! Help!"

He knew it was useless. Suga was still shackled up inside the room and he'd never come. He'd never save him. Hinata looked on, still sobbing, as W walked back into the room with a large knife. He twirled it in his hand for a minute before pressing it onto Hinata's skin and scratching it across, the redhead letting out a yelp. He raised up his head and saw a deep cut on his hip, blood trickling down and onto the table.

And so W cut him. Over, and over, and over again, going deeper each time and even cutting over the whip marks from before. Hinata screamed until he couldn't scream any longer and soon, he went quiet, his breath hitching with each cut. There were shallow cuts, short cuts, long cuts, deep cuts, and several that went all across his chest, overlapping each other. The blood went oozing in a steady stream onto the floor.

When he was done, W undid the straps and he and Q once again grabbed each of his arms, dragging his bleeding body into his shared room with Suga. They threw him on the ground, Suga scrambling to see what state he was in. W shackled him back up and they left the room, slamming the door behind him. That was the last thing Hinata saw before his vision faded.
Kageyama woke up to his phone ringing. His first thought was, "what does Hinata want this time?" Then he realized. It couldn't have been Hinata. He'd been missing for almost four days now. Not just missing- kidnapped.

He turned over and grabbed his phone, looking at the name on the right screen. Daichi. Assuming it must be urgent, he answered it with a tired, "hello."

"Kageyama," Daichi said. "I just heard from Hinata's mother."

"What did she say?"

"Hinata got a hold of a phone somehow," Daichi began. "He called the police and they narrowed down their location a bit. He's not too far, only thirty minutes or so from town is where they tracked them- though they didn't get their exact location."

"Well what are they doing about it?" Kageyama was bordering on frantic.

"They're doing searches in some places, and they're questioning some people. The area's kind of small, only a few kilometers in diameter."

"Okay," Kageyama said. "That's good. But... Are they hurting him?"

Daichi went quiet at that. Kageyama heard him sigh on the other end.

"Yes."

Kageyama felt his heart stop. His chest squeezed painfully and he felt his eyes fill with tears, which he quickly wiped away.

"Dammit," he said. "Damn."

"Kageyama," Daichi said. "You have to stay calm."

"Calm?" He was suddenly angry and sad all at once. "He's stuck in a place where they're hurting
him. Who knows how badly he could be hurt right now? How much pain he could be in? He- he wasn't supposed to leave- he was supposed to be the one person who wouldn't le-ave."

His voice gave a horrible crack at the end.

"Hey," Daichi said. "Kageyama, we're in the same boat here. Suga's there, too, okay? I know how you feel, but... You've just gotta try and hold it together."

"I can't," the setter said, voice cracking again. "I can't. He can't leave."

"He won't," Daichi said. "I know what you're feeling. I know what it's like to be missing someone you love."

Kageyama was almost ashamed to be showing such weakness and emotion, but he couldn't take it anymore. It was one thing to have his spiker missing, but now he was happy that he was alive, but horrified that he was being hurt.

"Okay," the setter said. "Okay. I'm okay."

"Good," the captain replied. "I just wanted you to know that he's alive. If you need anything, I'm here, okay?"

"Yeah."

Kageyama hung up the phone and looked out his window. He listened to the rain patter against the roof and realized that sleep would be impossible now. He stayed up into the unholy hours of the night thinking, wondering.

Finally, there was some hope.

-

Suga sat over Hinata and waited for him to wake up. They were both covered in blood, as he tried to clean the redhead's wounds to some extent. Finally, the spiker's eyes fluttered open. He scanned the room.

"Hey," Suga said, eyes wide with worry. "What happened? I thought you were just going to the bathroom?"

"He had a phone," Hinata said. "I stole it from him and locked myself in the bathroom. I called the police."

Suga felt his chest squeeze and his mood lighten. His jaw dropped and he couldn't keep himself from smiling. What was this feeling flooding into his body? Hope.

"That's- that's great, Hinata!"

"They started tracking our location," the first year continued. "I don't think they finished, but they might have narrowed it down a bit."

Suga's eyes watered. He covered his face, almost afraid to be hopeful. There was so much that could go wrong, and Hinata had already paid a price for trying to get help, but he was still happy nonetheless. Hinata moved to sit up and Suga motioned to help him, but the redhead evaded his touch and did it on his own.

"Are you okay?" Suga asked.
"Y-yeah," the first year replied. "Sorry, I just... Thought it would hurt."

Suga nodded and tried to brush it off before he noticed something. Hinata was pale and sweaty, despite the air being a relatively neutral temperature, maybe even on the colder side. His hands visibly shook, though it looked like he was trying to hide it. Suga slowly brought his hand to the younger's forehead, ignoring his flinch.

"You're burning up," Suga exclaimed.

"Really?" Hinata replied. "I'm actually freezing."

"You're probably sick," the third year said. "Your wounds probably got infected."

He moved to look at the marks all over Hinata's back, concluding that yes, they were infected, because some were yellowish and some were still oozing blood.

"Makes sense," Hinata said. "I'm tired."

Suga moved so he was sitting against the wall and let Hinata lay down with his head on the third year's thigh. He raked his fingers through the younger's hair and kept doing so until Hinata fell asleep. Then Suga was alone with his thoughts. They might be getting out of there. He might get to see Daichi again. Suga was so lonely without him, his lover, his best friend, his other half.

He leaned his head against the wall and let himself drift into unconsciousness, excited to see what dreams would provide a light in the dark world he was stuck in.

-

"Suga!"

He opened his eyes to see Hinata sitting in front of him, eyes wide in panic.

"The- the vents!"

Suga looked up to see the vents smoking again. The air coming out of them was almost greenish in color and it was rapidly filling up the room.

"Hold your breath," he said. "Maybe we can outlast it."

He and Hinata both took big gulps of air in, just about to hold their breaths for as long as it takes. Sadly, they were yet again caught out of breath and ended up breathing in the foul air, coughing and retching until they both ultimately passed out once again.

-

Hinata woke with a start. He looked around and then realized that he was once again strapped to a metal table in the same room, Suga once again strapped down on another table to his left. The third year was already awake.

"Hey," the redhead said. "Do you think he's going to...?"

Suga knew what he was trying to say.

"I hope not," he said.

Z opened the door and sauntered into the room. He did not look happy.
"So," he said. "I heard about our little incident." He looked between the boys expectantly. "Well, I have a little treat for you."

He walked over to the wall and grabbed a knife, wires, a large needle, a battery, and jumper cables.

"Don't," Suga said as Z was walking back over to the trembling Hinata. "Don't touch him."

But Z only smiled as he took the knife and pressed it against Hinata's side, pushing down further and dragging it across his skin, making a large, gushing cut and causing Hinata to screech loudly. He then took the wire and coiled it up before putting it deep inside the cut, eliciting more cries and whimpers from Hinata. Then, he threaded another piece of the wire through the needle and began stitching up most of the cut, only leaving a small space where the wire poked out. Then he charged up the jumper cables and attached one end to the wire.

"No," Hinata said in a whisper, tears leaking down his face. "Please. Please don't do this."

"Don't worry," Z said. "I've adjusted it so that it won't kill you, it'll just be extremely painful and might mess up your brain a little bit."

And so he began.
Chapter Summary

"Pain is temporary. Quitting lasts forever."
~Lance Armstrong

Chapter Notes

Screaming.
There was screaming.
Or, at least, Hinata thinks there was.
His thoughts are all jumbled up, but he was sure someone was screaming. Was Suga okay?
It might've been Suga, but maybe it was him.
The pain radiated through him in waves. It came in rapid, short waves, then long ones.
Pain? Was that the word he was looking for?
No. Anguish. Torture.
Torture. That's what this was.
Unceasing,
Never ending,
Unadulterated,
Torture.
All he saw was white. His vision was fading in and out.
How was his body putting up with this much? Why wasn't he dead already?
Death. That seemed nice.
Deathdeathdeathdeathdeath.
He wanted to die.

Die.

Death.

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Insufferable Affliction

Chapter Summary

"It's so hard to forget pain, but it's even harder to remember sweetness. We have no scar to show for happiness. We learn so little from peace."
~Chuck Palahniuk

Chapter Notes

today has been the worst and i really want to die and if you've read my other stories they're coming to life and i don't know how much of this i can take but here's the next chapter, probably OOC and probably not factually accurate but who gives a shit anymore amirite

Hinata's tortured shrieks filled his ears. Suga watched with a lump in his throat and a squeeze in his chest as the redhead lay in agonizing pain, electricity coursing through him.

"Stop," Suga said. "Stop! Please!"

But Z once again laughed, continuing his sadistic game. Suga could see the wire that stitched the cut burning his skin to the point that it almost melted away. Hinata's body writhed and shook, his back arching and his head thrown back.

"Kill me," the redhead screamed. "Just do it, kill m-me! Please!"

Z stopped the zapping for a minute and fidgeted with the battery. In those seconds, Hinata gasped for air, his breaths coming out in sobs.

"Stop," he gasped. "Please, stop, I-I can't... I can't do this anymore, plea-"

He was cut off as Z turned on the battery again, this time on a higher charge. Suga watched in horror, screaming almost as loudly as Hinata was, as his friend was tortured. He watched the first year's body be assaulted repeatedly and couldn't help but feel guilt as he could do nothing but watch. Eventually, after several repeated shocks, Suga saw blood trickle from his nose. His screaming subsided and Suga knew that damage had been done. Z must've seen this, too, because his eyes widened slightly and he turned off the battery.

He bent down and whispered into Hinata's ear. "Have you learned your lesson?"

Hinata just lay there, unmoving except for the heavy rise and fall of his chest and the occasional blink of his eyes. His face was tear stained and blood still flowed slightly from his nose, his eyes still wide. L and V walked in and unstrapped Hinata from the table, throwing him on the floor and shackling him back up. Suga, who was a crying mess, let them to the same to him. Once the men left the room, Suga scrambled over to where Hinata lay on his side, tears leaking from his eyes.
"Hey," he said, voice nasally. "Hinata, talk to me. Are you okay?"

"N-no," he croaked, voice hoarse from screaming.

"I know," Suga said. "I know."

Hinata let out a sob and Suga grabbed him, scooping him up into his arms and holding him while he cried.

"It'll be okay," he said. "It will, I promise."

But he didn't know if it was a promise he could keep.

"Why won' he jus' k-kill me yet?" Hinata barely whispered.

Suga felt his heart break in half.

"Don't say that," he said. "Please don't say that."

"Sorry," came Hinata's quiet reply.

Z walked down the long corridor, making turns that he'd made so many times before. He was walking to the purification room to prepare it for the next ceremony. It would be happening in a few days.

"The candidates we have are so perfect," he said to W. "This might be the last time we have to do this."

"I certainly hope so, sir," W replied. "The small one was begging for death, I think he's almost prepared."

"Yes," Z said excitedly. "And the older one should be breaking soon, too. Mental purification always takes longer, but they all break sometime soon after the physical one does."

"You made a wise decision with them," W said. "They are, as you said, perfect. The younger one was so innocent and clueless, and the older one had such a parental disposition."

"Yes," Z said. "And now they'll both know the pain that the world has to offer. One can not be truly pure until they've experienced true anguish, no matter if it's mental or physical. And what better mental anguish than seeing someone you love get broken right in front of your eyes."

As Hinata slept, Suga felt loneliness and guilt creep in. His mind kept flashing back to how the first year was literally begging for death, how he was so desperate and saw it as the only way out.

Maybe it was the only way out.

Suga wasn't sure, but he did know that if they hung in there a little while longer, maybe they'd be saved. There was no possible chance of them breaking out, the five men keeping them there were much bigger than both of them. Someone finding them was their only chance at living, at surviving.

"Suga," Hinata said suddenly. "M' head feels funny."
"Like what?"

"S hard to focus an' I can't talk right."

"Just try to stay calm, alright," Suga suggested, not really knowing what to do. "Try to stay awake, too."

Hinata responded with a hum and Suga made sure to move so that he could see the redhead's eyes, making sure they were open. Sometimes they'd fall shut and stay there for a few seconds before opening again, but Hinata was obviously having trouble staying awake. He looked at Hinata and took in all the injuries he sported. The scabbing whip marks and the angry gashes. The wound on his side that was crudely stitched with now burnt wire. The edges of the cut were blistering and burnt and the wire that he was being electrocuted with was still sticking out. Blood was still slowly flowing from it.

If they were going to be saved, it needed to be soon. Suga wasn't sure how much more of this Hinata could take.

Then again, Suga wasn't sure how much more of this he could take, either.
Harrowing Despondency

Chapter Summary

"Numbing the pain for a while will make it worse when you finally feel it."
~J.K. Rowling

Chapter Notes

lol sorry for the wait i'm too busy watching everything fall apart

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Despite Suga's efforts, Hinata fell asleep anyway. The third year let him do so, but woke him up every once in a while to make sure he didn't fall into a coma or die or anything.

It was now that Suga began to wonder how long they'd been there. Was it a week? More? And what was going on outside? Were they anywhere near Karasuno?

His thoughts drifted to Daichi, who he'd been trying not to think about because his name made his heart ache. He missed the other third year so much and wondered how he was dealing with all of this. Did he think Suga was dead? Did they all think they were dead?

Was anyone even looking for them?

Suga pushed the thought out, but it just kept coming back. When you're lonely and all is quiet, nothing can keep your brain from wandering into unwanted thoughts.

"Hinata," he said. "Hey, wake up."

The redhead's face scrunched up, the bruise from getting punched back at the initial kidnapping already healing. He opened his eyes blearily.

"Wha's goin' on?" Hinata asked.

"I just wanted to make sure you're okay," Suga said.

"Oh." The redhead turned over and looked at him with unfocused eyes. "I wanna go home," he said. "I don't wanna be here anymore."

Tears fell from his eyes and Suga ran his hand through the first year's hair.

"I know," he said. "I don't either, someone will find us soon, I promise."

"You keep saying that," Hinata said as he closed his eyes again. "But will they? Really?"

The redhead drifted back to sleep and left Suga alone with his thoughts once more.
Daichi crossed another day off on his calendar. The sixth day they've been gone. People were surely losing hope by now, but Daichi wasn't one of them. They were okay. They'd be okay. You know how you sometimes get these gut feelings about someone you're really close with, say, a soulmate? Daichi had one of those. He just knew he was okay. They had to be okay.

Right?

Suga and Hinata were both the brightest, happiest people he'd ever met. They were both boisterous at times, the younger more so than the older, and always had others best interest in mind. How did they deserve this? They didn't. Daichi knew that. He was still refusing to come to terms with it, still holding out hope.

They always had to have hope.

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My name is... My name is Hinata Shouyou. I am sixteen. I'm a... a first year at Karasuno High School.

I was being stalked for... well, I can't remember how long, before the people kidnapped me and Suga from... from a volleyball match. I think.

They hit Ennoshita with their van. They... They shot Tanaka. They could both be dead now.

They've been torturing me with a... a whip to "purify" both me and Suga for days.

At least, I think it's been days. I have no sense of time.

They... They electrocuted me. I think. I don't know, thinking is hard and everything's fuzzy.

Maybe they'll finally kill me soon.

Hinata finished his thoughts and opened his eyes. Oh. He was still here. He wasn't quite sure for a minute. The redhead had been hoping that, since he was so dazed, this had all been a dream and he'd been in his bed at home this whole time.

He shifted slightly and groaned quietly at the pain the movement caused, his skin ripping open once more. Sitting up, he looked at Suga. He was sleeping sat up against the wall while Hinata had been sleeping cuddled against his legs. Usually the third year woke up whenever Hinata did, but he was glad that the setter finally slept through it. Suga probably hadn't been sleeping barely at all.

If they ever got out of this, what would life be like? Would things just go back to normal? No. Surely they wouldn't. Neither Hinata nor Suga would be the same as they were before this ordeal. And their friends would probably treat them differently, as well.

The door to their room opened again, but Hinata didn't move except to shake Suga awake. L walked into the room and grabbed Suga by the arm, leading him towards the door.

"No," Hinata said. "W-wait, don' leave."

"I'm sure I'll be right back," Suga said, though the terror in his voice was evident. "I promise, I'll be right back!"

The door slammed shut, the bang reverberating through Hinata's skull. He leaned back on the wall,
wincing once again at the movement, and waited for Suga to come back, which didn't take terribly long. The thing is, he came back different. A black tattoo of the numbers "0076" was etched along his collarbone. He looked uncomfortable and bothered, but other than that unharmed.

L came and took Hinata's bicep in his hand and yanked him up forcefully, only making him fall back to the floor. He grabbed him around the waist, reopening the gash on his side and making him yell in pain. He saw Suga cringe in the corner as Hinata was slung over L's shoulder and carried out of the room. He was taken to the room next door and once again thrown on the formidable metal table. Once he was strapped down, L grabbed a weird looking needle and set himself to work.

As soon as it pressed against Hinata's collar bone, he winced and whimpered. It wasn't the worst pain he'd felt while he was there, but the scraping pain was certainly unpleasant. It felt like forever until he was finally done, and Hinata was finally unstrapped. He tried his best to stand on his own, but his weak legs only let him take a few steps before he fell to the ground, L once again painfully slinging him over his shoulder. When he was back inside the room, Suga came up to him.

"Yours says 0075," he said. "What does mine say?"

"0076," Hinata replied weakly.

He lay on the ground, cringing and trying not to look at the wound on his side, which still had all kinds of wires sticking out of it. Hinata just felt so weak, so tired. He wanted to just give up, to just kick the bucket already. But he knew that he had no choice but to keep going, as his life was in Z's hands currently. Hinata wondered when he would die.

Suga awoke, having no memory of falling asleep in the first place. The ceiling above him was a rusty red color, illuminated by several candles that filled the room. How did he get here? He looked around and saw that he was tied to a wooden table that was covered with a blanket. He was tied with rope, Hinata tied to one next to him, face slack with unconsciousness.

"Hinata," he said. "Wake up."

The first year shuffled and his face scrunched up before he opened his eyes and took a look around the room.

"Where are we?" Hinata asked worriedly, voice still slurred.

"I don't know," Suga said. "I don't even know how we got here."

They heard muffled footsteps and the door opened, all five of their captors coming inside. They were each wearing all black cloaks and had solemn faces. Then, Suga realized something else.

They were each holding long daggers.

"Boys," said Z. "This is where your time here must end."

Chapter End Notes

IF SOMEONE MADE FANART BASED ON THE TATTOOS IN THIS CHAPTER I WOULD DIE. I WOULD DO IT BUT IM NOT ARTISTIC ENOUGH.
There's a light at the end of the tunnel. And it's a train."
~Margaret Smith

"This is where your time here must end."

Suga gasped and looked over at Hinata who was staring dazedly at the men. What scared Suga the most in that moment wasn't dying, it was that the first year's eyes were dim. The light was gone and he looked like he'd completely given up.

"Please," Suga said. "Don't kill him."

"Do you know what your tattoos mean?" Z asked. "They're our kill number. You're the seventy-sixth victim, he's the seventy-fifth."

They'd killed seventy-four people before? Suga just realized how much danger he had been in all this time. These people were mass murderers. Surely people had been looking for these men for a long time, but to no avail. Suddenly, a sense of calm overtook Suga. They weren't going to be saved. No one had ever found these men, why would anything change now?

Suga closed his eyes. He didn't want to watch Hinata die, not now, not after all they'd been through. But L grabbed his head and pushed his eyelids open with his fingers, turning his head forcefully to the side so he could see Hinata.

"Watch," L said, letting his head go.

He looked on as all five men crowded around Hinata and held hands in a circle. Were they...

Praying?

"Oh, mighty gods above," Z began. "Take this sacrifice that we have wonderfully broken and now offer to you. Take this, and consider presenting us with the lost souls of the unforgotten, those who we held so dear before they were taken from us. Let this be a token of our humbleness and insignificance as mortals."

They raised the daggers above their heads, all five of them aimed at the spiker's chest and abdomen.

They began bringing the knives down.
Tanaka sat on his couch, staring at the TV without really paying attention to whatever anime was currently on. He was too busy thinking. Thinking about how this was the seventh day since Hinata and Suga had been taken. A full week. Would they ever be found? And if they were, would they be found alive?

Saeko walked into the room with the phone.

"Ryu," she said. "I just got a call from Ennoshita's parents. They said that he's... I'm sorry, he just..."

"Okay," Tanaka said. "I get what you're trying to say."

There was a long moment of silence before Saeko spoke again.

"Are you gonna be okay?"

Tanaka chuckled bitterly. "Of course," he said. "I'm not the one who's dead."

"Ryu," Saeko tried, but the wing spiker was already up and walking away.

He walked out the door, switching his shoes surprisingly quick for only using one hand. He ignored Saeko's attempts to call him back and left, making his way down the street without any specific destination in mind. He walked and walked until he found himself at the entrance of the foothill store. He opened the door and walked in to find his coach at the counter reading the town newspaper. The cover story was about two teenagers that went missing.

"Hey," Ukai said. "What're you doing here? It's kinda late, you should be resting up to make sure that arm heals."

"Chikara's dead."

The coach's eyes widened and he dropped the paper.

"Dammit," he said when he found his voice. "I'm sorry. I know you two were close."

"Don't be sorry," he said. "I'm not the one who..."

He couldn't bring himself to say it again. The anger had faded and only left sadness in its wake. He felt tears come to his eyes and leaned the elbow of his good arm on the counter, holding his head in his hand.

"Hey," Ukai said, putting his hand on the teenager's shoulder. "We can get through this. You know you have support from everyone, not just me."

"Okay," Tanaka said with a snifflie. "I'm okay."

"Have some food," the coach said. "On me."

He got out a meat bun for Tanaka and handed it to him, even though he knew the kid probably didn't have much of an appetite.

"Need a ride home?"

"No," Tanaka replied. "I'm fi-"

"I'll give you a ride home," the coach decided, uncomfortable with leaving a grieving teenager to walk home alone in the dark.
They got into Ukai's car and set off for Tanaka's house.

- 

BANG.

The door opened just as all five men were about to plunge their knives into Hinata's skin. They all stopped short.

"Nobody move!" A voice yelled.

Suga looked at the door and couldn't believe his eyes. Six armed men with bulletproof vests stood at the door of the room and were now storming the place, each of them pointing their guns steadily at Z, W, Q, L, and V. Each of the men dropped their knives except for Z.

"Drop it," said one of the officers.

"No," Z said. "I have to do this. I need this sacrifice. If I ever want to see my daughter again, I have to."

"What are you talking about?" One of the men said. "Who's making you do this?"

"The gods will give her back," Z exclaimed frantically. "I know they will! I've done this so many times, I've been so loyal- They have to give her back."

"Sir, you have to think rationally-"

"No!" Z yelled, visibly sweating. "I have to do this, now!"

Z brought his knife up, in the perfect position to plunge the knife into Hinata's heart.

"No!" Suga screamed as he began to bring the knife down.

Simultaneously, a shot rang through the room and Z fell to the ground, hand pressed to his side. He'd dropped the knife and it clattered to the ground, Suga letting out the breath that he'd held in while he awaited Hinata's fate.

The redhead was heaving heavy breaths and crying as W, L, Q, and V were led out of the room and Z was helped up and led out as well. The remaining officer went and began untying Hinata, as he was in worse shape than Suga was. Someone else came in and untied the third year, helping him stand. Hinata had to be carried from the room.

Suga was in a state of shock. They were saved. They were really being saved.

Chapter End Notes

if you're confused about the background of Z or why he's doing what he's doing, just ask in the comments. i'll probably put some sort of clear explanation in another chapter.
Chapter Summary

"Instead of the weight that sinks us, consequences are often the life preserver that saves us."
~Craig D. Lounsbrough

Chapter Notes

you ain't seen nothin yet boi i have so many plans

Hinata didn't know what to think.

He hazily watched someone come and pick him up, placing him on a bed- a gurney? He felt himself jostling and moving and vaguely heard voices- were they talking to him? If they were, they were out of luck because he was too tired to respond.

Again, he didn't know what to think. Was he happy that he was being saved? Shocked? Or was he resenting that because of the fact that he was so close to death, he was almost done in this world and now the chance to be gone was taken from him.

Hinata watched the world shift around him and after some jostling, he was staring upward at the night sky. He was out. He was free. Eyes heavy, he let himself slip into unconsciousness, knowing that he was finally safe.

"Please let me go with him," Suga begged as Hinata was loaded into an ambulance. "Please, I don't want him to be alone."

"He's in good hands," the medic that was attending to him said. "Now, I need to check you out and get you to the hospital, as well."

Suga reluctantly got onto the gurney and let them back him inside the vehicle. They asked him countless questions, most of them being as obvious as your name and birthday, but soon it was time for Suga to ask his own.

"What day is it," he said.

"March first," the medic replied. "Wednesday."

"How long were we gone?"

"Seven days."

"Will you call our parents?"
The questions went on and on, Suga feeling a strange high after having given up and then been saved. He was full of adrenaline and was far too excited to see his friends and family again. When the ambulance pulled up to the hospital, Suga was taken to a room right away. They had him change into a gown and while he was doing so, he realized just how dirty he was, as his bare feet were covered and his hair was greasy and knotted. A doctor came in almost immediately.

"Your parents have been contacted," she said. "And they're on their way. Is it okay if I begin taking a look at you?"

He nodded and she started with the normal stuff, eyes, ears, listening to his heart. Then she came and got a look at his back.

"This looks like it's starting to get infected," she said. "I'll clean it for you, but I want to warn you that it'll sting a lot."

Suga laid down on his stomach and the woman got out bandages and whatever chemicals she was cleaning him with. It stung at first quite a bit, but it still didn't even come close to the amount of pain he'd endured over the last week. She continued to gently clean his back until his parents walked into the room.

"Koushi," his mother cried.

Suga sat up and held his arms out, his mother running into them. His father came and put his arms around the two as well, the family embracing and holding each other so tight that it was hard to breathe.

Then came Daichi.

When Suga looked up, he saw his boyfriend standing by the door.

"Kou," the captain said.

Suga's parents moved aside and Daichi moved forward, wrapping the setter in his arms. This is what Suga had been waiting for. He was finally home.

Hinata woke up to a bright white ceiling. He blinked the sleep from his eyes before he looked around the room. His mother sat on a chair next to his bed, sleeping, and his sister did the same at the end of the bed. He moved slightly, as his neck was stiff from the thin hospital pillows, and Natsu began to stir. She opened her eyes and looked up at Hinata.

"Shou-chan!" Natsu cried, throwing herself at her brother.

Hinata grunted when she pounced on his chest, but pulled her close into a tight embrace, tears coming from his eyes. He buried his nose in her soft hair and promised himself that he'd never let go.

"Shouyou," Hinata's mother said. "I missed you so much."

She ruffled his hair and put her arms around both of her children.

"How're you feeling?" Hinata's mother asked.

"Okay," he replied quietly.
"Alright," she said. "I'll go tell the doctor you're awake."

When the doctor came in, he insisted on asking countless questions.

"What's your name?"

"Hinata S-Shouyou."

"How old are you?"

"Sixteen."

"What school do you go to?"

"...Karasuno."

"Can you tell me what day it was when you were taken?"

"No."

"Any idea what day it is now?"

"No."

"But Shouyou," his mother said. "I already told you what day it was. You asked earlier, remember?"

Hinata stared at her for a second before shaking his head. His brain was still fuzzy and his memories of the past came in short bursts.

"I-I must've been... tired or something," he supplied.

His mother nodded dubiously and the doctor continued to ask questions.

"Did you hit your head at all?" The doctor asked. "Anything that might cause your memory loss and slowness?"

"No," the redhead said all too quickly.

"Are you sure?" His mother said. "If anything happened, you need to tell us."

"No," he said. "I'm fine."

- 

Suga was allowed to leave after several hours of being questioned and observed. He was finally allowed to go home. But he had something else in mind.

"Could I go see Hinata?" Suga asked. "Just to... to make sure he's okay."

"Sure," his parents said.

He got into a wheelchair, as he was still weak from malnutrition and simple exhaustion, and he and Daichi made their way down to where Hinata was. He knocked on the door before entering and saw the first year's mother sitting on a chair next to the bed. She looked a little worse for wear, as she had dark circles under her eyes. Hinata was sleeping on the bed, hugging his sister who was curled up next to him, though she was awake and waved at him when he walked in.
"So you were with him this whole time," Hinata's mother said. "I'm so glad you boys are alright."

He nodded before looking back over at Hinata, who still looked pale and ill, but would surely get better while he was here.

"How's he doing?" Daichi asked, as if he were reading Suga's mind.

"He's pretty beat up," said Hinata's mother with a sigh. "The marks on his chest and back are infected and the infection got into his bloodstream, but he's on some pretty strong antibiotics, so that should help." She paused. "Did anything else happen? I hate to make you recall some things you'd probably rather forget, but he's been acting so strange- slow, and he keeps forgetting things. Did he hit his head or something?"

Suga visibly paled. "Well," he said quietly. "Ah, there was something else that happened... They... They electrocuted him, and he started acting weird after that. I was thinking that maybe it... did some damage."

Hinata's mother looked horrified for a second before she regained her composure.

"Well," she said. "Thank you for telling me. I'm glad Shouyou has friends like you."

Suga finished his visit and, once he came to the conclusion that Hinata was safe and okay, he left.

"One more thing," he said to Daichi in the hallway. "How are Tanaka and Ennoshita? Are they alright?"

"Tanaka is," Daichi said hesitantly, avoiding eye contact.

"And Ennoshita?"

"Koushi," Daichi began. "I'm so sorry, but..."
"The worst part of holding the memories is not the pain. It's the loneliness of it. Memories need to be shared."
~Lois Lowry

Chapter Notes

okay i like to call this the recovery arc. there could be some triggers in the future including unhealthy coping skills such as drugs and self harm. if you are uncomfortable with this, i suggest you stop reading soon before i get into it. thanks!

Running. He was running through the woods, feet bare and shirt gone once again. He was out of breath, lungs feeling too small and air too far away. His feet snapped twigs and branches, brushed past grass and leaves. They were chasing him. He should've known better than to think they'd escaped. It was all a dream. And now he was alone, running for his life.

He was now on his stomach on the ground. He looked to his bleeding feet and saw a branch right by them. He must've tripped. He was wasting time just lying here and now they were even closer. Before he could scramble his way to his feet, they were surrounding him. There was no escape.

Hinata jumped awake, muscles tense and covered in sweat. He looked around the dark room and listened to the steady beep of a heart monitor, a little fast but steady nonetheless. He was still in the hospital. He was safe. Natsu shuffled around in his arms. He'd been holding her tightly the whole time he'd been asleep. The redhead looked over at his mother, who was once again sleeping in the chair next to him. There were dark circles under her eyes. She must've been a wreck while he was gone.

Hinata then thought about the others. Ennoshita, Tanaka... What about them? Were they alive? The scenarios that could've played out raced through his head. What if Ennoshita didn't make it? What if Tanaka was shot through the skull? What if they were both alive, but they were both taken to a different location and were being tortured the whole time?

The spiker squeezed his eyes shut and tried to rationalize himself, tried to stay calm, but he only made himself break down into tears. He was crying quietly, the tears falling silently into his sister's hair. As he shook with sobs, his sister awoke.

"What's wrong?" She asked.

"Nothing," he said. "I'm just... I just had a nightmare, that's all."

"Okay," Natsu replied. "You don't have to be scared, okay?"

"Alright."
Despite her words, he was still terrified. Terrified of being taken back. Terrified of the dreams that would come if he slept. Terrified of the unknown.

-

Suga woke late the next day. He wasn't aware he was so exhausted until his head hit the pillow and he fell asleep immediately. The only problem was that his dreams were plagued with screams of anguish.

And that he couldn't stop thinking about Ennoshita.

How could he let the second year get hit like that? And Tanaka too? He'd been shot in the arm, and Suga couldn't do anything about it. Hinata was in the hospital, and he couldn't do anything about it.

Ennoshita was dead, and Suga couldn't do anything about it.

He felt tears spring to his eyes and quickly wiped them away, only to have more pour out. He gave up and got out of bed, making his way to the shower. He'd washed his hair the night before, luckily, but it still felt too greasy and he needed to wash it again. Suga cringed as the warm water hit the scabs on his back. His tattoo was scabbing over as well, but he didn't like to think about that. He didn't like to think about how his body would be permanently marked without his consent.

He hopped out of the shower and put some clothes on. They were a tad baggier than he remembered. When he made his way downstairs, he was glad to see Daichi sitting on the couch with his parents, who took the day off work because they'd just been reunited with their son, for heavens sake.

"Koushi," his mother said. "I'm glad to see you up. Would you like me to make you anything to eat?"

He nodded eagerly. He'd eaten at the hospital, but he was so excited to taste his mother's home cooking, he couldn't wait. The four of them sat at the table and Suga ate, the others having already had something.

"Everyone's dying to see you," Daichi said. "Is it okay if they come after school?"

"Of course," Suga said. "I'd like that."

When they did come, they weren't as loud and obnoxious as Suga had expected. They were more somber and quiet.

"Hey, guys," Suga said when they came in.

He moved to stand but was hit with dizziness. He was still weak from how little he'd eaten over the last week. Daichi saw him sway and grabbed his arm, steadying him.

"You okay?" Nishinoya asked.

"Yeah," Suga replied. "Yeah, of course."

He moved in and gathered everyone in a hug, as awkward as it was for Tsukishima and Kageyama especially. When he let them go, he tried to make conversation.

"So," he began. "How... How've things been? What did I miss?"

"Things haven't been the same," Asahi began. "I'm just glad you're safe."
There was more awkward conversation- Suga just couldn't figure out why everyone seemed almost nervous to be around him- before the boys all had to leave.

"Make sure you go visit Hinata in the hospital," Suga said to Kageyama before he walked out the door. "I could even give you a ride, but I'm sure he misses you."

The setter nodded and proceeded to walk out the door.

-

He didn't understand himself.

Kageyama didn't understand why he couldn't bring himself to see Hinata in the hospital. He already despised himself for not going to see Ennoshita, and he still felt bad that he didn't go see Tanaka, but he still couldn't make himself go. It was a miracle in itself that he went to see Suga.

Did Hinata really miss him? Surely not more than Kageyama missed his spiker. He thought about him day in and day out- it was starting to get weird. Well, Kageyama almost didn't care about that. He wanted to make sure the redhead was okay, but he was also too nervous and socially awkward to do so. Well, he supposed he kind of had to go and visit him, since Suga texted him saying he was coming to pick him up in twenty minutes. He didn't have much of a choice now.

He got into the car with Daichi and Suga and they took off toward the hospital. He noticed how Suga would fidget with his hands and pick at his skin and whenever they came to a stoplight, Daichi would put his hand on Suga's hands. The setter would stop and they'd share a look before the car would continue to drive. When they first got to the hospital, Kageyama felt anxiety fill his chest.

"Now," Suga said. "I've been in contact with his mother and she said he didn't want any visitors, but I'll see if I can get him to see you guys."

"Maybe we shouldn't," Kageyama said. "I mean, how do you know he'll even listen to you?"

"I spoke to him over the phone," Suga replied. "He said it was alright if I came, but he just didn't want to see anyone else yet."

They made their way up to the hospital room, slowly because Suga still got dizzy every so often. When they reached Hinata's room, Suga was the only one to walk in.

"Hey," Suga said. "How're you feeling?"

There was a quiet reply from within the room and Suga spoke again.

"Is it okay if you have two more visitors?" Another hushed response. "Daichi and Kageyama."

"No," they heard Hinata say. "I don't... wanna see anyone else."

It wasn't a preferable answer, but Kageyama was so unbelievably happy to hear the middle blocker's voice that he almost cried. More talking resulted in Suga coming back out with an accomplished smile.

"You guys can come in," he said. "Just don't be too loud. His head hurts."

They stepped through the threshold.
Persistence and Willfulness

Chapter Summary

"Maybe one day I can have a reunion with myself."
- Sebastian Bach

Chapter Notes

an explanation.

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

When Kageyama walked into the room, the lights were dimmed and the window was shut. It was strange, he didn't expect the room to be so gloomy.

Then there was Hinata himself. He sat in the bed in the middle of the room that was definitely too big for him. He looked thinner than before, almost to the point that Kageyama wondered how it was possible for a person to lose that much weight in only a week. The redhead had dark circles under his eyes and was incredibly pale. He had an IV in his arm that filtered medicine into him. He, just like Suga, had remnants of bruises everywhere- his face, his arms, surely everywhere else as well.

"Hey, Hinata," Daichi said. "How're you feeling?"

"Fine," the redhead replied, still frowning. He didn't initiate any further conversation.

"We've missed having you around," the captain tried. "How long until you can get out of here and back on the court?"

"I dunno," Hinata said bluntly, clearly avoiding eye contact.

Kageyama stood there as Daichi skillfully tried to make conversation. It seemed like it started to work at times, as Hinata actually looked him in the eye a few times. But Kageyama was just standing there, not saying a word. The redhead was his best friend, for crying out loud, why couldn't he bring himself to speak up?

"I missed you," Kageyama blurted out before he knew what he was saying.

Everyone in the room went quiet and just stared at him for a second before Kageyama swore he saw Hinata's lips begin to curve into a small smile.

"Thanks, Bakageyama," he said, voice only slightly slurred. "I missed you too."

Kageyama missed him more than he'd like to admit. Life wasn't the same- and it certainly never would be. But maybe they could mend things a little bit now.
Suga and Daichi began to drive away after dropping Kageyama home. It was nice to see Hinata alive and being cared for, especially since Suga watched him come so close to death just the day before.

"He looked better today," Suga said. Daichi turned to look at him.

"Better," the captain questioned. "How? He looked pretty awful to me."

"I don't know," Suga replied. "He just does. Maybe it's that his wounds are covered. They were pretty... bad."

"Kou," Daichi said quietly. "You know if you ever need to talk about... What happened... You can come to me. I'll hear it at any time."

"Thanks," Suga said. "But my parents already want to put me in counseling, so I think I'll be okay."

When Daichi dropped Suga off at his house, Suga's parents were waiting for him.

"Koushi," his mother said. "The police told us more about the men that took you." She hesitated. "It gives a little reason to the whole thing. Would you like to hear it?"

Suga gulped.

"Sure."

-

Tanaka didn't want to do this.

He didn't want to be alive. He could've been the one dead right now, not his friend. He wished that's how it turned out.

Did you know that the van that hit Chikara was just a foot away from hitting Tanaka's body? That's how close it was. He felt the car breeze past him and before he knew it, his friend was on the ground. Dying.

Why did it have to be like this?

He sat on his bedroom floor, clutching his Karasuno team picture in a death grip. Silent tears fell on the glass. Tears of grief. Of regret. Of longing. Longing not only to have his friend back, but to trade places with him as well.

Longing for death.

The glass in the frame shattered with a loud crack.

It reminded him of his own broken heart.

-

"The leader's name was Zander Saito," Suga's father began. "He used to be married, he had a kid, too. Then his wife and daughter got into a car accident and died. Apparently, he sort of went off the deep end. His neighbors and close friends said they'd seen him praying to some deity, but his prayers were morbid when you heard them. He always talked about religion and it seemed nice to the naked eye, but he also always told people that they'd be condemned to eternal suffering if they didn't change their ways."
"The others were named Lee Kobayashi, Quentin Ito, Wilson Takaha, and Victor Suzuki. They'd also lost somebody in some way and Zander put them under the impression that that person would be revived if they made enough sacrifices. So they started looking for people who fit their criteria, whatever it was, and they'd capture them, break them, and kill-

"Stop," Suga said. "I don't... I don't want to talk about this anymore."

"Sorry," his father replied. "I guess I went a little... Overboard."

Suga stood and went upstairs, only to come right back down after his thoughts began to get too loud. It was strange, he never got so lonely before, but now he was almost afraid of being alone. He supposed it was just how his past had changed him.

Chapter End Notes

literally i've been so inspired these last few days but then i guess i just hit a wall and idk how to end this. updates might be slow because i'm going to be super busy all weekend.
Hinata didn't know what was wrong with himself. He didn't want to go back to playing volleyball. Something about it made his stomach uneasy. But, then again, so did everything these days. Talking to people, the thought of going back to school, being alone, also not being alone. He was in a perpetual state of paranoia.

The thought of volleyball didn't excite him. Usually whenever he'd see a volleyball or hear the word volleyball or even see one of his teammates, he'd get so excited and talk at a mile a minute. But now, the thought didn't make him feel anything. He didn't care about when he would get back onto the court again.

Hinata's bruises were fading, and he was getting stronger. He was able to walk by himself steadily and his discharge date was in a few days. He couldn't tell if he was excited or not, but he was definitely feeling physically better. The doctors said that he'd lost mostly muscle during the week he was gone and when they'd been found, he and Suga were both so dehydrated that they had to be put on IV fluids for a few hours. They both had to start out eating small amounts of light foods, but by now their hunger had caught up with them and they were both eating a large amount to make up for the week with so little.

The wounds on his back and chest were another story. They were disgustingly scabbed and blistered and he could barely move without intense pain shooting all throughout his skin. It began to itch at times and would bleed whenever he showered. The large gash in his side where he was electrocuted was complicated. They couldn't stitch it because the edges of the cut were so badly burnt, so they glued it and securely wrapped his abdomen. His tattoo would stay on his body forever. The scars would fade, but he'd always have that reminder of what happened.

"Shouyou," his mother said. "I'm going to pick Natsu up. Will you be alright here on your own?"

He wanted to shake his head because he didn't want to be alone, but he nodded instead.

"I'll be fine," he lied. He even put on a smile for good measure.

"Alright," his mother smiled. "I'll hurry right back."
And he was alone. The silence crept in and he was, for a split second, back in that room again. He could feel his heart race and a pang in his chest before he realized that he was okay, he was safe, he was in a hospital, not back in that gloomy, musty room. Should he call a nurse? Anything to keep from being alone. His heartbeat picked up again and his breathing sped. Eyes watering, he brought his hands to his face and wiped at his nose as he began to cry. He gave in and picked up the remote, calling the nurse into the room.

"What do you- oh, honey, what's wrong?" The nurse questioned worriedly.

"Can you stay in here?" Hinata gulped. "I just... Don't want to be alone."

"Of course," she said.

Hinata would be getting discharged tomorrow and Suga knew he had to go and see him again to congratulate him on a quick recovery.

"Hey, Hinata," he said. "Ready to get out of here?"

He nodded. "Suga," he asked. "What happened to Ennoshita? No one will tell me."

Suga felt his smile fall. "Why don't we talk about this another time?"

"No," Hinata insisted. "I need to know if he's okay." He paused. "Suga... Is he dead?"

The third year opened his mouth to respond, but no words came out. Hinata went pale.

"He is," the first year gasped. "Oh, God..."

"I'm sorry," Suga said. "I'm really sorry."

"Just leave."

"What?"

"Just leave me alone."

Suga backed out of the room, Hinata's mother walking back in.

"What happened?" She questioned.

"He found out about Ennoshita," Suga said. "I'm sorry."

"It's not your fault," she said. "I'll take care of him."

Suga walked down the hall and out of the building with a lump in his throat.

It was Suga's first day back at school and boy was he nervous. As he walked into the school, too many eyes lingered on him for too long. Daichi walked with him and, though Suga couldn't see, he was sure the other third year was scowling at those staring at him.

He entered his first class and collected his missing work which, sadly enough, was a rather large stack. By the end of the day, his book bag was filled to the brim. He went to the practice the team
was holding, but sat and began his work instead of participating. The team didn't do much, anyways, as they were missing Suga, Hinata, and Tanaka as he hadn't gone back to practice since Ennoshita passed.

Suga knew that their team would never be the same. Everyone looked hesitant and depressed in their play, barely making an effort. It was sad, to be honest. He was sure that things would pick up again once Hinata was back, as barely anyone had even talked to the first year since they'd been rescued. They'd all be happy to see the first year and it would surely boost their spirits.

He hoped.
The days passed and Hinata was going back to school. Even at home he declined any and all visitors. He walked alone into the building and the first thing everyone noticed was how dim his eyes were. They had dark smudges underneath them still and they were just... Blank.

"Hey, Hinata," a classmate said, slinging an arm around his shoulder and making him jump. "It's good to have you back!"

"Thanks," he said quietly, ducking under the arm and walking away quickly.

He didn't even want to think about the monstrous stack of work he'd have waiting for him. He'd been kidnapped for heaven's sake, couldn't the teachers cut him a little slack?

"Hinata," Suga called to him from down the hall. "Will you be coming to practice today? You don't have to play just yet, but I think it'd be good if you go."

"Sure," he said.

When he did walk into the gym, it went silent. Nishinoya was the first one to move as he stood from where he'd been stretching and charged at Hinata, wrapping him in a tight hug. Yamaguchi came next, wrapping his arms around the two. Slowly, most of the others joined in before Hinata said he couldn't breathe and they had to release him.

"How've you been doing?" Yamaguchi asked.

"Okay," he said with a weak, probably fake smile. All of his smiles were that way these days.

Daichi rounded everyone up and they got to practicing, Suga getting back into participating. Eventually, Tanaka even decided to show up. As soon as he walked in the door, everyone went silent again. Hinata stared at him from his spot on the bench.

"Hey," Daichi said. "I'm glad you came. Now we have everyo-"

"No we don't," Tanaka said. "We'll never have everyone again."

"Sorry," Daichi said. He opened his mouth to speak more, but Hinata cut him off.

"You don't have to be sorry," he began. "I think we all know whose fault it was."

Everyone sat in silence, waiting for him to elaborate.

"Oh, come on, it's obvious. It's ours," he said to Suga. "It's all our fault. They were after us and Ennoshita was just collateral damage. It shouldn't have happened- wouldn't have happened- if those guys weren't after us."
"Hinata," Suga said, horrified at the mere thought. "You- you can't possibly think that. W-we had no control over the situation."

"And you can't possibly not believe it," the first year snapped. "If we weren't his friends, if he didn't offer to wait for me at the bathroom door, he'd never have gotten hit by the car and he'd never have died."

Silence filled the area once again, the boys and their coach all staring in shock at Hinata's words. It was one thing to blame himself, but he was placing the blame on Suga, as well. He stood and walked towards the door.

"If you wanted a reason for his death," he said to Tanaka, who was standing shocked in the doorway. "There it is."

Hinata walked out the door and towards the bike rack, ignoring the calls from Daichi and the coach. He unlocked his bike and mounted it, heading toward home. He didn't want to be at the school anymore and he didn't want to talk to anyone. He'd go home and act like everything was fine.

- The days passed and Hinata stopped going to practice. There were days when Suga wouldn't go and Daichi had to convince him to step through the gym doors. The captain was watching his boyfriend fall apart. The guilt was eating at him. Bad.

"Suga," he said one day when they were sitting on Daichi's couch watching a movie. "How've you been dealing with all this? You've barely spoken about it and... I'm just worried is all."

"You don't have to worry about me," the co-captain responded. "I'm fine. It's people like Hinata and Tanaka that we should be worried about."

"Kou," Daichi said. "You've got to be kidding me. You were kidnapped. You were hurt, you can't actually be okay."

"Well I am," he said. "Drop it."

- Kageyama was nervous. He'd been watching Hinata intently and, though he didn't have the best people skills, he could tell that he was vastly different. Watching him now, he was hanging out with a pretty sketchy group of students who, apparently, thought his tattoo was pretty "badass."

"What's it mean?" One of them asked.

"None of your business," Hinata snapped. Since he got back, he had a much more angry persona and wasn't afraid to speak his mind.

"Come on," another person asked. "You've got such a cool tattoo, it's gotta have some sorta meaning behind it. Especially since you got it when-"

"Enough," the redhead said sternly. "Just drop it, okay? Then maybe I'll tell you later."

"If you do tell us," a third person said, "then maybe we'll give you a little something to help with whatever stress you got. Sound like a deal?"

Hinata was silent for a minute. "I guess," he said, obviously unsure about what they were meaning.
not that Kageyama was sure, either.

One thing Kageyama was sure of, though, was that he needed to snap him out of it. Sometime soon, before he makes decisions he might regret.

"Hey, uh... Hey dumbass," Kageyama said, mentally face palming. "Can I talk to you for a minute?"

"Who're you calling a dumbass?" One of Hinata's new friends said.

"It's fine, guys," the redhead said. "It's just Bakageyama. I'll be right back."

They went into the hallway and Kageyama turned to talk to him.

"What are you thinking hanging out with them?" he asked. "You know they're bad news."

"It's fine," Hinata replied. "I'm smart enough to take care of myself, thank you."

"And why won't you come to practice? We got creamed in our last practice match without you."

"I guess you guys will just have to figure it out," the decoy said. "I'm not coming back."

"Why?" The setter demanded. "You love volleyball. Why on earth would you just give it up?"

"I've changed," Hinata said. "I'm different now. The old me loved volleyball, the new me doesn't really care. You're just going to have to get over that."

Hinata turned and walked back into the lunchroom and towards the table where his new friends sat. He barely smiled anymore and nothing seemed to excite him. Maybe he was right. Maybe he did change.
"But if you bury your sadness under your skin instead of letting it out, what else can it do but grow in your veins, to your heart?"
-Nikita Gill

Running. Running again. Has he been here before? Maybe. All he knows is that he was stupid to ever think he was safe. Sweating. Running. Panting.

Awake.

Hinata sprung into a sitting position in his bed. A nightmare. Of course. He swung his legs over the side of his bed and walked into the bathroom, turning on the faucet. His alarm clock read 5:15, almost time for him to wake up for school, anyways. He got into the shower, cringing when the hot water hit the thick scarring on his back and chest. The skin there was rough and raised, impossible to miss.

He looked in the mirror and saw the bags under his eyes. Suga had them, too. Neither of them had been sleeping since they got back. They couldn't do so without being catapulted into a horrible nightmare. Hinata knew that whatever stress relief his friends said they had, he needed it. He didn't care what it was, he needed some sort of break. Something to make him feel happy again, even if it was only for a short while.

Suga, too, was in need of a stress reliever. He constantly walked around with a lump in his throat and an emotional, uneasy pain in his chest. He needed something, anything, to get rid of this sense of hopelessness. Not to mention the developing hatred he had for himself. He was referred to as the team mom. But if he was, he must be a pretty bad mother. He'd let so much happen to those he loved that he could hardly be considered anything close to a parent.

Suga hid his face in his hands, sitting on his bed and ignoring his phone. It buzzed frequently with Daichi's texts, as the other third year was constantly checking up on him and making sure he was okay. Suga appreciated it, really. He didn't want to be alone in all this and he was glad he knew that Daichi would always be there for him. But it was almost getting annoying. He didn't want to tell Daichi what happened. He didn't want to talk about it. He didn't know what on earth would make him feel safe again.
Once again ignoring the buzz of his phone, Suga stood and made his way to the bathroom. He found relaxation in showers, and he was taking them frequently. It was almost like it was an excuse to get away from people and just relax. But they weren't as relaxing as they were right in the beginning. He needed to find a new coping mechanism. What could he do?

Suga was willing to go to any length to just relax.

- 

Daichi was worried.

Over the past few days, Suga was almost all smiles. But when the setter thought nobody was looking, Daichi saw those smiles fall and saw looks of complete and utter despair on his face. It was scary, seeing someone like that. Suga had changed so vastly but was so obviously trying to cover it all up.

And now, as Daichi walked with him towards the gym, he worried about how Suga was dealing with all this. He still hadn't said a word about his experiences and even Suga's parents had asked Daichi to try to get him to say something, anything, about what had happened to him. Daichi tried but to no avail. Suga wouldn't budge. Maybe he had to try a different approach.

"Hey," he began. "Uh... I just wanted to let you know that... I don't know what you're going through. I don't even know what happened while you were gone. I'm not going to keep asking because I know you'll tell me when you're ready, and I respect that."

Suga stopped walking and turned to look at him.

"Dai," he said with a smile. "You don't have to worry about me. I promise."

"If I don't have to worry," he began, saying what he'd been wanting to say all along. "Then show me your arms."

Suga's smile fell and he brought his arms down to his sides.

"No," he said.

"If you don't want me to worry, then show me your arms," Daichi repeated slowly.

Suga still didn't budge and the captain grabbed his arms and rolled up his sleeves, the other third year not even resisting. On Suga's arms were red lines stretching across. There were big ones, small ones, shallow ones, deep ones. Daichi looked to the setter's face and saw him grimacing and looking at the ground, the same desperate face that Daichi would see when he thought nobody was looking.

"Why?" Daichi dropped his arms. "Why wouldn't you just come to me?"

"I don't want you to know how weak I am," Suga whispered, tears falling from his eyes.

"You're not weak," he said. "You're so strong, but even strong people have a breaking point."

"I'm not strong. I let them hurt Hinata. I even wanted to die even though they would barely lay a finger on me. I can't even... I couldn't even do anything to stop them."

"That's not your fault," Daichi said. "I'll tell you what. Let's just go back home and we can talk to your parents, okay?" He saw Suga jump to deny the need for that, but stopped him. "I'll be there with you every step of the way. I promise."
Where was that dumbass? Hinata had promised to meet him at the gym just to try out some spikes since they didn't have practice today, for whatever reason. Did he bail on him? Kageyama exited the gym and began to walk around campus. Hinata had to be around here somewhere, and when Kageyama found him, he'd drag the shorty to the gym and keep him there until he spiked at least one ball. When he found that dumbass-

"Are you serious?" Kageyama heard a voice from around the corner of the building and stopped to listen. "Why don't you want that tattoo? It's cool!"

"It's just a reminder," Hinata's voice came. The redhead's tone was giddy and didn't match his words. "I don't want to remember what happened."

"Just take another hit then," another voice said. "It'll be fine, there aren't any cameras over here. We looked."

There was a silence before a small cough and some laughter.

"Maybe I am okay with the tattoo," Hinata said with a laugh.

More banter and laughter followed before Hinata's friends left, walking the opposite way. Even though he was alone, Hinata didn't leave where he was. Instead, Kageyama saw him sit down with something in his hand. Was that...? Oh, that dumbass.

"Hey," Kageyama yelled, walking over to the redhead. "What the hell are you doing?"

"Nothin'" Hinata said. "It's none of your business, anyways."

He brought the blunt to his lips and breathed in again, Kageyama grabbing it from him and throwing it on the ground.

"You do realize that if you get caught, you'll get in serious trouble, right?"

"I don't care," he said. "I'm failing my classes, anyway."

"You know you could always just ask for help," Kageyama said, getting more annoyed by the minute. "Yachi would definitely be happy to help."

"She can't, Bakageyama," Hinata snapped.

"Why?"

Then Hinata mumbled something to himself, Kageyama unable to discern what he was saying.

"What?" The setter asked.

Hinata sighed and mumbled the same thing only a little bit louder.

"You've got to speak up," Kageyama said.

"I can't read, okay," Hinata yelled. "They electrocuted me and it messed up my brain and I can't fucking read anymore. Happy?"

Kageyama was dumbfounded for a second. He didn't really know what to say.
"Have you told anyone?" That was the question that first left his lips.

Hinata hesitated. "No," he said. "I don't want anyone to know that I'm too stupid to read anything. The words all jumble up and it just looks like gibberish to me."

"Hey," Kageyama said sternly. "You're not stupid." He paused. "Have you been smoking ever since you got back?"

"No," the redhead replied, looking up at him with red eyes. "I just started within the last few days and I don't want to stop."

Kageyama held out his hand and helped Hinata stand.

"We can figure this out," Kageyama said. "We can."

Chapter End Notes

i'm currently working on something new and i'm pretty excited for it. go give my other works a lookover, especially my songfics series because i'm really proud of it and my story Storms. thanks!
Steadfastness and a Blunder

Chapter Summary

"Feet, what do I need you for when I have wings to fly?"
~Frida Kahlo

Chapter Notes

in case you've forgotten about tanaka, here he is again. pray for me cheerleading tryouts are within a few months and i'm lowkey freaking out aaaaah

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Suga and Daichi sat at the kitchen table across Suga's parents. They'd just caught them before they left for work and Daichi made them sit down and talk, which led them to where they are now. Suga's mother sat across from them with tears staining her cheeks and his father was staring at him with these sad, sad eyes.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I didn't mean to make you upset."

"Koushi," his father began. "It doesn't matter that we're upset. What matters is your wellbeing. We want to keep you safe. Things will definitely be changing around here and we're going to keep a better eye on you."

"But you have to start talking to us," his mother said. "Please. Don't shut us out, you don't need to deal with this alone."

"Alright," the third year replied, looking at his feet. "I'm sorry."

"Don't be," Daichi said. "Just don't do it again. Or whenever you feel like it, just talk to one of us instead. And you're not burdening us," he added, as if he were reading Suga's mind.

"Okay," Suga replied.

He wasn't sure, but maybe things would actually be okay. Keeping this secret had been taking a toll on him and he was insanely glad that Daichi put the puzzle together and figured it out himself. Now he could focus on getting better.

"Do you want to go to school," Daichi asked.

"I probably should," Suga replied. "I still have work missing."

And so they stood, getting ready again and making their way to the school.
"You've got to tell your parents," Kageyama said. "About everything."

"What?" Hinata exclaimed. "No!"

"Yes," Kageyama said. "We need to tell someone."

"Please," Hinata whined. "I'm not ready yet. Please don't tell anyone."

The setter sighed, conflicted. "Okay," he said. "I'll give you a few days but then you have to say something to someone."

"Fine," the redhead said, crossing his arms unhappily. "I don't get why you care so much."

"Why wouldn't I?" Kageyama deadpanned. "You're my friend."

The two stood there in silence for a while. Kageyama watched the hardened look on Hinata's face, which he'd been wearing ever since he returned, disappear.

"I should get going," the redhead said with a sniffle. "My, uh... My mom will probably be worried if I don't get home soon. She's been getting like that a lot lately."

"Makes sense," Kageyama said. "I'll walk you home."

They walked quietly down the road, cars zipping past them. Kageyama looked at road signs and posters on buildings. Hinata really couldn't read any of that? It must be so strange not being able to read all of a sudden. But then it dawned on Kageyama- it wasn't just "all of a sudden". There was a cause. Hinata said they'd electrocuted him. Kageyama hadn't heard any specifics of what they'd been through since they got back, but he really wasn't expecting to hear that they'd used electrocution as torture.

Hinata must've been in so much pain.

"Hey," Hinata said, seemingly reading Kageyama's mind. "Uh, you won't... You won't look at me different now, will you?"

"What do you mean?"

"Now that you know some of what happened, you won't think differently of me, right? It won't affect our relationship?"

Relationship? What exactly was their relationship?

"It won't," he said. "I promise."

Tanaka was at the graveyard. Again. That's where he spent most of his days now. He sat at the stone that marked where his friend was buried. The funeral had been small and private and he'd been one of the few people invited. It still hadn't provided him with enough closure.

"Hey, Ryu!"

Tanaka turned around at the voice and saw Nishinoya running up to him.

"I knew I'd find you here," the libero said, sitting down next to him. "What's up?"
"Nothing," Tanaka replied.

"Want to come to practice?" Nishinoya suggested. "It'll be fun, I promise."

"No, thanks," the other second year replied. "I don't think I can."

"Come on," Noya replied. He paused. "Can I tell you something?"

Tanaka looked at him curiously. "Sure."

"I thought about quitting the other day," the libero began. "I had my mind set on it. The club won't ever be the same and I thought it'd be better to quit. But then I thought of Chikara." He saw Tanaka's eyes widen and knew he was paying attention now. "What do you think he'd say if I quit? I'm sure he'd be pretty pissed. He would've made a great captain." Noya stood and began to walk away. "I guess what I'm saying is... You can't actually think he'd ever want you to quit. And that applies to volleyball and life itself."

The libero walked away feeling accomplished and Tanaka was left with his thoughts. Maybe Noya was right. Maybe he should just persevere. Maybe, instead of giving up, he should do things for Chikara. Maybe he should keep going.

- 

"Shouyou," Hinata's mother called. "I'm going out for a bit with Natsu, okay? Try not to burn the house down!"

"Okay!"

Hinata heard the click of the door and knew she was gone. Finally gone. He stood and went into the bathroom down the hall, opening the medicine cabinet. His eyes landed on the medicine the doctor had prescribed for his now frequent panic attacks and nightmares. It calmed him down then, maybe it could make him continue to feel better if he just kept taking it?

Popping five out of the bottle, he swallowed them. Apparently the medication was strong, so he'd start to feel affects soon, right? He hoped so. And hopefully it'd wear off by the time his mother got back. But maybe five wasn't enough? He swallowed five more, just to be sure.

Hinata sat down and waited and before too long, he started to feel something. A little dizziness. Okay, now what? What was next? It might've been nerves, but he was nauseated as well. Soon he stumbled over and laid down on the couch, staring at the swaying ceiling. The dizziness wasn't exactly fun. Maybe this wasn't a good idea after all. He wasn't sure when, but he eventually fell asleep. A dreamless, blissful sleep.

Chapter End Notes

one part left!! it'll be posted tomorrow. thanks for sticking with me this long!!
"Before I met you, I wanted to be dead all the time. I still do, because of the, y'know, mental illness, but now that you're here, I don't want to want to die anymore."
~Neil Hilborn

When Hinata woke up the next day, he had an insane headache and was throwing up. His mother decided to keep him home, thinking it was something he'd eaten, but he knew it wasn't. The sick part of this was that he didn't regret his decision. He wanted more. More of the deep, uninterrupted sleep he'd gotten after he took those pills.

Kageyama called his phone in the middle of the day.

"Where have you been, dumbass?"

"I'm sick," he said.

"Are we still telling your mom today?"

Hinata froze and Kageyama heard his breath hitch.

"Um," he said. "S-sure, I guess. Come over after school?"

"Alright, but I'm blaming this on you when Daichi gets mad about me missing practice."

They hung up and Hinata waited anxiously for Kageyama to show up. He began to feel better physically throughout the day, but the mental stress only piled on. When his mother got home from work that day, Kageyama wasn't far behind. They walked in within minutes of each other.

"So what did you want to talk about?" His mother questioned when they all sat around the kitchen table.

"Well," Hinata squeaked. "I, uh- I just... I don't-"

"Do you want me to do the talking?"

The redhead nodded at Kageyama gratefully.
"Okay," he began. "I don't really know how to say this... But I've talked to Hinata recently and he's told me a few things. The first is that the reason he's failing his classes is because... He says he can't read."

Hinata saw his mother's eyes widen.

"What," she asked. "You can't...? How? I mean... Why didn't you tell me this?"

"They electrocuted me," he said. "And I think that's why. It messed with my brain and I haven't been able to read anything since I got back. The words won't stay still."

Hinata's mother brought her hand to her mouth and her eyes watered.

"Okay," she said. "I'll... I'll call the doctor about it. Thank you for telling me."

"That's not all," Kageyama said.

Hinata turned an looked at him with wide eyes, shaking his head.

"I found him smoking marijuana the other day."

"Shouyou!" Hinata's mother stared at him. "Is this true?"

"Maybe," he mumbled.

"Is there anything else you should be telling me?"

"I, uh... I may have... sort of... taken a lot of my medicine yesterday. More than necessary."

"Oh, God, Shouyou," she said, putting her face in her hands. "What were you thinking?"

"I don't know," he replied.

"Well now that you know," Kageyama interjected. "What are you planning on doing to make sure it doesn't happen again?" He seemed like he felt bad to say something so insensitive.

"Well you're obviously grounded indefinitely," she said to Hinata, who winced. "But I'm keeping a better eye on you and I'm taking those pills from you."

"Okay," he said quietly. "I figured."

She turned to Kageyama. "Thank you for looking out for him," she said. "I think I'd like to talk to him alone now."

He nodded awkwardly and bowed before leaving, giving Hinata a look of sympathy on his way out. His mother stood there with crossed arms before speaking.

"I don't know what to think," she began. "Why on earth would you do that?"

"You'd think it was stupid if I told you," he said.

"Just tell me," she said. "I want to help you."

"It helped with stress," he said. "And it helped me stop thinking about... Things."

"Okay," she said. She came forward and ruffled his hair. "We can figure it out. Now let's go and get Natsu from school, okay?"
The next day, Tanaka didn't go to the graveyard. He went to school for the first time in a long time. He could only imagine what Chikara would say if he knew he'd skipped so many days. He would've had Tanaka's head over it.

As he walked through the school, he felt lighter than usual. More secure. Happier. He felt at ease, almost as if Chikara had his back from the afterlife, no matter how cliched it sounded.

"I'm glad to see you," Daichi said, clapping a hand on his shoulder. "You seem better than before. What changed?"

"I just realized a few things," he said. "Chikara wouldn't have ever wanted me to walk around feeling sorry for myself."

"That's true," Suga said, emerging from behind the captain. "If you need anything from here on out, don't hesitate to come to us."

Tanaka nodded and the two third years walked away. He thought of all the things Chikara would've been proud to see him do. Who knows? Maybe he'll just start making more of an effort in school.

"He looks like he's doing well," Suga said after they walked away from Tanaka. He frowned. "I just wish I could say the same for Hinata. I'm really worried about him."

"I know," Daichi said. "We just have to get him to the point where he wants to get better, then he will." He paused. "Speaking of, how are you doing?"

Suga knew what that meant and rolled up his sleeves. There were white scars mixed with pink lines from his fingernails. Daichi didn't seem too pleased.

"When did you do that?"

"Last night," he said. "I had another nightmare. My psychiatrist is prescribing meds for it, though, so that should help."

"Good," said Daichi. "But the next time you have a nightmare, call me. My phone's never on silent anymore, you know that."

And he's right, it wasn't. It had gotten the captain into trouble with teachers before, but it was worth it to him if it meant making sure Suga was alright.

And Suga was alright. He was getting there. He was becoming alright, slowly but surely. He didn't know when he'd get to the point where he was considered fine, but he knew he'd get there eventually. How could he not, what with his wonderful boyfriend and amazing teammates?

Suga still couldn't get rid of the worry he felt deep within his stomach. Hinata had been looking worse for wear lately and he still hadn't been going to practice. The first year had been through more than any of them and Suga still felt that it was his responsibility to make sure he was okay, despite how he'd failed in the past.

Maybe they would be okay. Maybe it was just going to take some time. He had high hopes.
"Hey," Hinata said when he got into his first class with Kageyama.

"What'd your mom say after I left?" Kageyama questioned.

"She just wanted to know why I did it."

"Well," the setter began. "Why did you do it then?"

"Why do you care so much," Hinata demanded. "I don't understand why you care all of a sudden."

"I just do," Kageyama said. "I can't explain it, I just care."

"Why?" Hinata was getting angry. "You never cared before but now that I'm doing drugs or whatever you're suddenly all worried! Why?"

"I like you, you idiot!" Kageyama said louder than he meant to, making everyone around them stare. He sighed. "I like you, okay?"

Hinata's expression softened. "That's okay," he said. "I like you too. That's how friends are."

"No, not like that."

"L-like what then?"

Kageyama sighed. "I don't know, just forget about it."

He stood and went to leave before Hinata grabbed his collar, making him bend down. The redhead stood on his tiptoes and kissed his cheek. At school. In front of everyone. Turning deep red, Hinata turned to run out the door. Kageyama grabbed his arm and pulled him back.

"Like that," he said. "I like you like... that."

"Oh," Hinata said. "Good. Or else that would've been awkward."

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That day at practice, everyone was there. Hinata finally showed up and so did Tanaka. They were, for the most part, reunited.

Yet Daichi couldn't bring himself to say, "glad everyone's here." Because everyone wasn't there. They were missing one vital person, the one who he'd been planning to name captain the following year. But he'd never show up to a practice again. He was gone.

They began practice like normal and it was the best one they'd had in a very long time. Hinata was spiking almost all of Kageyama's tosses, Nishinoya was receiving serves from the others, and Tanaka had already lost his shirt twice. It was lively and overall successful. Kageyama and Hinata even asked to stay late that day to practice more. When Daichi and Suga began walking home, a thought crossed the captain's mind.

"Kou," he said. "I think... I think Hinata's going to be okay. Same with Tanaka." He paused. "I also think you're going to be okay. I believe in you."

Suga smiled. "I think so, too," he said. "Maybe we really will be okay." He chuckled. "If you'd told me that just a few weeks ago, I would've laughed in your face."

"I probably would've done the same," Daichi replied.
"But now things are getting better," Suga said. "And to think that so many people could've died."

"To think one of us did."

The remark was followed by a moment of silence in which they lowered their heads, thinking of their lost teammate.

"But we're okay," Suga said. "We'll be okay. And that's a promise."

Daichi nodded and laced his fingers with Suga's.

"I'm sure of it."

Chapter End Notes

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